

Brad Buckley and | Introduction

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To introduce one's discourse is to attempt to situate it within a field, to measure what it shares with, how it differs from, other discourses within the same field, to define its specificity. Yet such an analytical posture, which is the stuff of criticism and presupposes a certain distance, no matter how minimal, from the object of inquiry, remains fundamentally unavailable to anyone attending to his or her own discourse. One cannot be, at the same time, embedded in a field and surveying it from above, one cannot claim any secure ground from which one's own words could be read and judged as if written by someone else.

Yve-Alain Bois,
"Introduction: Resisting Blackmail"¹

Yve-Alain Bois's introduction to "Resisting Blackmail" confronts the blind spot, which we all suffer when thinking about issues that we are deeply involved with and committed to. So, rather than approaching the issues as a solo author or even as collaborators, one strategy that allows some distance from the field of inquiry, and perhaps introduces a degree of objectivity, is to assemble a group of artists, cultural theorists, and writers to consider some of the pressing questions about the role and place of the art school in the twenty-first century. The contributors to *Rethinking the Contemporary Art School* are drawn from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Norway, and the US; and what they have in common is a sophisticated, long-standing engagement with and commitment to the education of artists.

Rethinking the Contemporary Art School also sets out to examine the reasons for the art school's continued existence, its role in society, and what should be taught and learned there in the context of today's globalized art world. The book also considers different art school models, from innovative graduate programs to independent stand-alone schools such as Rhode Island School of De-

sign (RISD), Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD University), and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Art. It considers, as well, those art schools that are departments or schools of major research universities and the problems they face in operating from a position that US cultural theorist James Elkins describes as “marginalised in university life.”² We also examine a problem that exists in numerous countries where art schools are part of universities, such as Australia, New Zealand, the US, and, more recently, Japan: the pressure to amalgamate smaller schools in response to the economic rationalist’s obsession with scale.

Rethinking the Contemporary Art School sheds light on the debates about what is the appropriate terminal degree. In the US, the MFA (Master of Fine Art) remains the terminal degree, but Australia, Britain, and some European academies have had PhD programs for more than a decade. What does this qualification ceiling in the US indicate to academics working in other disciplines? What does it indicate about how we, as artists, value contemporary art? Is the outcome of creative work or research by artists not of the same value as intellectual inquiry in other fields? In light of these questions, who should be teaching in the studio in the contemporary art school? The book also includes chapters on new media “in an expanded field,” to borrow Lucy Lippard’s term, examining whether or not the contemporary art school offers the right context for this discipline.

The chapters are arranged alphabetically by contributor rather than in separate categories, facilitating an intertextual, cross-disciplinary, and cross-cultural reading of the issues raised. While there are many overlapping ideas and problems, we begin by articulating some specific matters related to different cultural settings and circumstances.

| Where are art schools housed, who runs them, and why?

Britain has pursued a policy of amalgamating colleges with universities and, from 1992, creating new universities (sometimes referred to as “plate-glass universities”) by granting polytechnics university status; from these changes to the British higher education landscape emerged an innovative model of the art school. In 1986 the London Institute was created by bringing together several independent schools of art and design and new media. It was granted university status in 2004 and was re-branded as the University of the Arts. This model, unlike art schools that were merged with or are parts of universities, allowed the continuing evolution of the ecosystem that is peculiar to the art school and the education of artists.

In 1990, following similar trends in Britain and Canada (which were later wisely rejected, for the most part, by our Canadian cousins), the tertiary education landscape in Australia was dramatically altered by federal Labor education minister John Dawkins. These changes forced all publicly funded colleges into

amalgamations with public research universities. The result, while not exactly the same, is similar to the US state university system. These amalgamations were really more akin to shotgun weddings than genuine mergers. Until then, colleges which granted degrees did not have a research culture as such; they tended to refer to the work produced by academic staff or faculty as professional practice, and generally provided the tier of education which housed schools of art and design, conservatoriums of music, and disciplines such as nursing, agriculture, and education.

These amalgamations were poorly managed both by the Australian Government, which provided no financial or logistical support, and by the universities, which resented their closed world being occupied by these upstart colleges and considered the disciplines and academic staff or faculty of the colleges to be merely distant family members. We suspect that at the heart of the Dawkins changes, although never stated publicly, was a desire to shake up the universities from their position as providers of degrees to the upper levels of society to places that began to provide what the country needed: open, dynamic, culturally aware institutions.

These changes continue with the release, in 2008, of the *Bradley Report*,³ which projects that by 2020, Australia will require 40 per cent of all 25- to 34-year-olds to graduate with at least a bachelor's degree in order to meet the competitive challenges of the global knowledge economy. In a word, the *Bradley Report* argues for the necessity to maintain the relative international performance and position of the Australian tertiary education sector. This is to be achieved, it says, by harnessing knowledge and research to productivity, "living standards," and the wealth of the nation.

While the *Bradley Report* articulates concerns in the context of Australia, the same issues are just as pressing in Canada, the US, and all other Western democracies, as they are in those nations aspiring to the living standards of the West. The Europeans, in the 1999 Bologna Declaration, set out to achieve a "Europe of Knowledge" by recognizing that a highly mobile and integrated university system with "easily readable and comparable degrees" was critical for the continued cultural, social, and economic well-being of all the European nations. The Declaration states:

A Europe of Knowledge is now widely recognised as an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component to consolidate and enrich the European citizenship, capable of giving its citizens the necessary competencies to face the challenges of the new millennium, together with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space.⁴

Let us return to the *Bradley Report*, which questions the conventional scholarly elite of the university system. It envisages two outcomes: (a) boosting the participation amongst the disadvantaged and the lower socio-economic groups, thereby increasing the skilling of the Australian broad population; and

(b) markedly increasing the number of young graduates with at least a bachelor-level qualification. Ultimately—and regrettably—the report continues the trend in recent Australian higher education debates of being fixated on funding and structures at the expense of addressing how universities may become self-critical, porous environments for learning, teaching, and research.

Unfortunately, the *Bradley Report* does not address, in any meaningful way, the problems faced by the specialist art schools since their amalgamation with universities. Eighteen years on from these amalgamations, while universities have generally flourished (despite a decade of conservative government and a prime minister who openly despised universities), art schools are the real casualties. A collapsing of art schools into smaller and smaller units within larger departments so that the art school culture or ecosystem is effectively diminished or diluted and then finally lost has been apparent across Australia.

The few art schools with the status of a faculty or division that are left in Australia regularly have deans appointed against the expressed majority wishes of the academic staff or faculty, with the appointees mirroring the conservative values of the senior university bureaucracy. They seem never to be artists, but to be drawn from disciplines such as cultural theory, and business. They seem to have no engagement with or interest in contemporary art but simply use it as another move up the institutional ladder. Can one imagine a school of medicine appointing a dean who was not a qualified medical practitioner? Of course, these types of appointments are not just occurring in Australian universities; they are seen in university administrations in Britain, New Zealand, and the US.

The obvious question is, why appoint people who are not artists to run art schools? Why appoint deans of art schools who do not possess an intimate conceptual, cultural, and pedagogic knowledge of contemporary art, who do not understand the fluid and experimental character of studio art production and research? In essence, such appointments are made because they serve the overriding bureaucratic and managerial rationality of today's mega-university systems.

Having artists as deans of higher learning institutions, people who are aware of the transformative and immersive experience of the contemporary arts, people who can and do represent their art institution's community of artist-academics, is too threatening a proposition for the senior managerial academics of a typical Anglo-American university. It is too unsettling to their idea of the academy, art, and research. Furthermore, art academics are problematic to the core identity of a university and to the conflicting discourses about its identity in these times of cultural, fiscal and geopolitical turbulence.

In their social and psychic lives, artists who teach, and their students, are not only engaged in the (new) art-historical, mixed-media, generic, and pedagogic intricacies of their evolving art forms (little understood by their non-artist academic peers); they are also concerned with intellectual emancipation and experimentation. This goes against the free-market ideology that is seeping into our universities, art schools, museums, and other cultural institutions. Art-

ists who teach often see themselves as “foreriders” of aesthetic and cultural critique; they prize reflexive knowledge and open-ended, research-oriented pedagogy that is located within the students’ own existential horizons. This “one-to-one,” mutually enhancing teacher-student relationship in the studios of the art school questions the utilitarian and vocational instrumentalism of the modern university and its imbrication in this century’s New World order.

Artist-teachers and artist-students are, therefore, situated in an experimental learning and research ethos because the contemporary visual arts as a discipline is exceptionally creative in terms of concepts, forms, processes, and strategies. Both parties are intuitively engaged in navigating the uncharted waters of creativity that are represented in all creative disciplines, those that deal with, according to Gilles Deleuze’s apt expression, “the formation of space-times.”⁵ Thus, as Deleuze wisely notes, we can speak of our own specific creative activity and its impact on the public sphere to each other, but not of the highly solitary act of creation itself.⁶ So in dealing with students on a one-to-one basis in the (art) academy, artist-teachers aim at developing a critical consciousness, stimulating curiosity about the world at large and our presence in it, and mobilizing a critique of resistance to the commoditization of art, culture, and life. Art education is a dynamic expression of eagerness, total intellectual energy, and inquisitiveness; it is, as Edward Said once said, “an experience of investigation and discovery.”⁷

Today’s art students, with their Web 2.0 literacy are, in fact, opening the teachers to new vistas of knowledge and creative pedagogy. The question is whether our art schools are flexible enough, given their power structures and values, to accommodate ideas and knowledge that problematize the institutional boundaries of the humanities and the sciences. Generally speaking, students—particularly those in art colleges and schools—appear to be unruly mavericks, questioning the university’s top-down control of its community. And students in general are, through the Internet, Wikipedia, and online sharing of photos and videos, introducing innovation, social change, and shared networked knowledge.

We know it is not just students: people in general are becoming familiar with computerized models of cultural and social evolution that are shaping the expectations and outcomes of higher education today. Universities, in their characteristic glacial stance towards adopting the newer forms of knowledge, know that art colleges are now emphasizing post-Conceptual art, bio-art, interactive digital and virtual media, installation art, performance, and sound art. They are in a perpetual state of “moral panic” as to how to deal with these new art forms of extraction and immersion. This is further complicated by the possibility that a fair few non-art academics in senior university management, although familiar with the more established arts in very general terms, may be—judging by their pedagogic rhetoric—(contemporary) artphobes.

Also, art schools, as a rule, due to their pre- and postmodern critical, cultural, and pedagogical concerns and histories, are sites of competing discourses of fine art, craft, and the newer non-representational art forms. Consequently,

there has been a critical questioning of the structure of art schools, which has meant, over the years, a radical rethinking of art education (both ideologically and practically) away from the Central European master-apprentice model, as Julie Ault and Martin Beck remind us, and towards a more contemporary post-object model of study that valorizes collaboration, social process, topicality, and discursivity.⁸

Whatever else is happening in our art schools, Brian Eno's recent observation that a "real revolution" is taking place in our world may be manifesting now, because the world is forming into global consensual blocs far removed from the short-term expediencies of our nation-states and the possibilities of a viable democracy. Eno's description of how people are starting to "listen to music and look at art that is emergent, not predetermined," and to "accept the wiki model of open-source evolution of knowledge" is a daily cultural reality in art colleges and schools.⁹ This has huge implications for the vexing nexus between studio art production and university management and life. Are art schools the more concentrated, open expression of this new, emerging shared knowledge of connectivity, immersion, and transformation in our various university faculties and departments?

The intersections of art, culture, technology, and dissent are vividly embodied in studio art production and teaching, signifying that art education functions as a discursive irritant in the larger context of the classical-modern university and its ideology of scientism and vocational education. Art education, ideally speaking, should be critically defined and practised beyond the (art) market. It is constantly rethought, restructured, reinvented. Art schools are concerned with the transgressive, with the single—and singular—artist dissecting contemporary reality. Art is a cultural conversation that is acutely aware of the predominant mythologies of our everyday life, which means art is both politicizing and political.

In the late 1970s, a different set of political issues emerged in Canada, which was overwhelmed by the number of US artists with MFAs applying for academic positions across the country. It raised serious questions about the nature and complexity of migration for a nation built on immigration. Who should be appointed to key cultural leadership positions, particularly to those roles in art schools? What effect would large numbers of US artists have on Canadian culture? The Canadians eventually responded by passing tough legislation: all positions must be offered to Canadian citizens or residents first, and only if no Canadian is found to be appropriate can a foreign citizen be appointed. This was a smart move on the part of the Canadians, who were already being swamped by US popular culture and media, as it allowed a space for the continued evolution of a distinct culture. Perhaps this was a taste of the vortex of globalization that would soon create a "borderless" world, with its seductive promises and wide-ranging disappointments, which we are now all experiencing.

Global education, based on varied critical scholarly standards, is spawning the spectre of the (art) educator as a kind of corporate conquistador, flitting from one tertiary site to another, as if on an elevator to celebrity stardom. Little

or no respect is given to the local cultural and pedagogic ecology and knowledge of a given country; in other words, in Australia and New Zealand, foreign senior appointments (especially from Britain) to art schools are made as if A.A. Philip's "cultural cringe" did not exist.¹⁰ In countries with relatively small populations, such as Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, the parachuting of people into positions of cultural leadership has a disproportional effect on the culture and society; the effect is quite different in the US, which has roughly ten times the population of Canada. After a decade of a conservative government in Australia, with a prime minister who supported the continuation of the role of the monarchy here, it is little wonder that we are still allowing colonization via the appointment of mostly British academics to key appointments in our art schools and museums.

In terms of the trends in higher education, it will not do, as Jamshed Bharucha has recently—and rather simplistically—argued, to merely say that “knowledge knows no borders and learning shouldn’t either.” As educators, artists, and citizens, we all agree on this, but Bharucha does not underline what the main drivers of this internationalization of knowledge production are and what they suggest in terms of access, class, culture, identity, and power.¹¹

The older Canadian universities (such as the University of Toronto, founded in 1827), and their counterparts in the US (such as Harvard, the first “institute of higher learning,” founded in 1639), were based on the British model and were later also influenced by the nineteenth-century German model, which included liberal ideas about the importance of freedom and seminars in universities. These universities were founded by men of religious learning to educate an appropriate class of scholars and leaders for the New World. Australian and New Zealand universities were, historically and rhetorically, shaped by the three different kinds of British universities so acutely delineated by Stefan Collini in his withering cultural and ideological analysis of British higher education as represented by the 2003 White Paper “The Future of Higher Education,” appropriately entitled “HiEdBiz: Universities and their Publics” (also 2003).¹² To paraphrase Collini, there are three kinds of British higher education institution: (a) the Oxbridge model: character forming, residential, and tutorial; (b) the Scottish/London model: meritocratic, professional, and metropolitan; and (c) the “civic”/ “Redbrick” model (a later twentieth-century development): aspirational, local, and practical.¹³ To characterize what universities are and what their future may be, and in the process, try to identify an ideal of university education, is extremely difficult precisely because of these varied historical origins and cultural meanings.

Anyone who has taught in Australian or New Zealand (art) academies will testify as to how the long ideological shadow of British higher learning institutions has indelibly structured ours. And as Collini correctly argues, in more recent times, it has been the universities of the US (particularly the great sites of graduate research and advanced scientific research) that are held up as the institutions to be emulated across the international university world.¹⁴ Specifically, universities are often seen as problematic for populist governments in

market democracies like ours. They are acceptable to the public in the following order of electoral priority: if they carry out medical and technological research that has economic benefits; if they are used for skills training and vocational manpower planning; and, finally, if they are used for the cultivation, preservation, and transmission of cultural heritage.

Whatever else universities may be, they do not resemble, despite their current managerial ideology, commercial companies. Furthermore, as Collini observes, it is extremely difficult to measure (though not to evaluate) creative and intellectual activity.¹⁵ Artist- academics understand, as do their students, the limiting force of justifying the intellectual activities of a university exclusively in terms of increased economic prosperity. The contemporary visual arts are deeply connected to the overall cultural DNA of our society and its ongoing capacity to imagine, innovate, and experiment. In contrast to the prevailing new worldism of accountability, “partnerships with industry” and “investing in the future,” and so forth, (art) academics vividly contest the crippling commercial analogies that are frequently made in the name of the modern university, suggesting that its uncertainties are only further intensified by “placing them in the lap of a deity called ‘the market.’”¹⁶

In a clear-eyed critique of what has been ailing British (read also Australian and New Zealand) universities as spaces of academic enquiry, creativity, and freedom during the latter half of the twentieth-century and the new one, Mary Evans’ *The Killing of Thought* persuasively argues (as does Collini) that universities have become gross distortions of the foundational values of the academy.¹⁷ Instead, as we all know, they are becoming enmeshed in the values of the economy, mass production, and the rational bureaucratic state. If education is to be of any critical value in our world, it is vitally important to acknowledge that it should not be equated with intellectual and social conformity and the increasingly relentless regimes of assessment and appraisal.

As (art) academics, we are starting to appreciate that (a) universities are substantially becoming devoid of creative engagement and critical thinking and (b) the newer generations, alert to the negative developments of the emerging bureaucratic contemporary university, may take their ideas, energies, and talents elsewhere. With the brutalization of the very culture of the academy being an everyday reality and the increasing emphasis on training rather than on education (the latter as represented by critical debate, discussion, difference, and nuance), art schools within universities will become parodies of their former selves. Finally, Evans raises a point that is frequently overlooked in discussing the present condition of university education: often, more creative work is accomplished in the less well-ordered context.¹⁸

We need to be careful not to invoke the past in nostalgic terms in order to question the present, and to realize, in the wake of Virginia Woolf’s sceptical views of the merits of education itself, that higher education in itself does not necessarily produce, as Evans puts it, “more democratic, more generous or even more open-ended people.”¹⁹ It is just as likely to generate individuals who see themselves as privileged and who have a sense of their own entitlement

to whatever they can get in a “dog-eat-dog” Darwinian environment. Higher education has become an essential part of an obscenely calculating culture. What is encouraging to note, however, is that with the increasing use of new media technologies and the open-source software ethos and its “rhizomatic” distributed networks of knowledge, younger generations are creating new public spheres of creativity and cultural enquiry.

It behooves us as art educators, as students, and as individuals of a new global citizenry that is concerned with the unfolding narrative of a viable democracy of access, alterity, and equality to cultivate a self-questioning, ethical intelligence that problematizes the relations between class, culture, knowledge, power, and space.

According to Jacques Rancière, modern democracy means equality as in “counting the uncouted,” and this is concretely foregrounded, among other contexts, in the education system, which is quickly becoming “the site of society’s fantasmatic self-identity.”²⁰ The Canadian historian John Ralston Saul has made a similar observation on this corporatizing of the citizenry, in which the individual is expected to have an allegiance to the special interest group or corporatized sector; real democracy, on the other hand, carries with it the responsibility to act for the civil good, not to conform or be obedient to narrow interests.

While art schools in Australia have been profoundly damaged by their treatment since amalgamation with universities, the Canadians, as they have shown on so many issues, from First Nation land rights to the Iraq war and universal health care, found an intelligent and inventive way forward. Conscious of the changing global economy and the rapid movement to a post-industrial society, and rather than opting for forced amalgamation of the many important stand-alone art and design schools (such as Emily Carr University of Art + Design and the Ontario College of Art & Design which describes itself as Canada’s “university of imagination”), they began a process whereby these schools and colleges could become universities.²¹ This is a very clever way of engaging with the knowledge economy and producing a generation of artists and designers who are fully cognizant of the challenges faced by Western democracies—and perhaps it showed an uncanny Keynesian foresight in light of the near collapse of the world financial markets. The Australian economist David Throsby has recently reflected that John Maynard Keynes’s once unfashionable views about “counter cyclical fiscal policies and aggregated demand management” are now being embraced by various governments; but what Throsby highlights is how Keynes “saw the arts as an essential ingredient of people’s lives as well as an important part of the economy.”²²

Across the 49th parallel, the behemoth to the south, the US, faces a raft of different problems, inflamed by the partial or near collapse of the banking system. The US’s private and public university systems and art schools are facing serious problems, because they rely more on individuals to finance their own higher education. Often, this support is through a complex web of student loans, financial aid, part-time jobs, scholarships, and in many cases, added

support from parents and grandparents. This means a much greater cost to individuals than in Canada where fees are substantially lower than in the US; or in Australia, where the fees for all research degrees are paid by the Australian government; or in northern Europe, where higher education is basically free or, more accurately, is seen as an investment in future national prosperity and, as such, is funded by the government. Even the Ivy League universities in the US, such as Yale and Harvard, are experiencing a significant downturn in their endowments, and while this is unlikely to affect the way they operate, the downturn will have a much greater impact on the private and stand-alone art and design schools. These schools, by definition, have much smaller endowments and tend to rely more heavily on tuition fees, which can be as much as US\$35,000. When you add the cost of housing and other expenses, the real cost is more like US\$50,000 for one year.²³ This raises a different set of questions about who can afford to attend schools where the tuition costs now place this level of elite education out of the reach of the majority. The cost of education is now a major concern for many college presidents across the US. How do you maintain a culture of meritocracy if the institution cannot support the “best and the brightest” with financial aid or scholarships? This is a real conundrum for many of the US’s stand-alone private schools, which are some of the most innovative and clever institutions, relatively small in size, and highly specialized. What does the future hold for them? Will it require amalgamation, not by political decree as in Australia, but through the financial necessity of merging with larger universities just to survive?

The Europeans have also been struggling with reform and the place of the art school or academy in the context of the Bologna Process. The first public academy in Europe, the Accademia del Disegno, founded in Florence in 1563, placed art among the humanities, creating a precedent for the education of artists in Europe, where the students studied both theory and studio, to use contemporary language.²⁴ In terms of the modern academy, perhaps the most influential institution was the French Academy, which became the model for many other academies across Europe. In Scandinavia, the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts was established by Royal charter in 1754 by King Frederik V. The Academy was created according to the “French model,” and its first director was the French sculptor François Joseph Saly, a rather interesting historical example of the exporting of culture for purposes of colonization. Though the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts is 255 years old, it has, through various strategies of renewal, positioned itself as one of the more important art schools in Europe. One of those strategies is that professors are appointed for a maximum of seven years, after which time they must depart the Academy. No concept of tenure here.

Inevitably, the Bologna Process’s circle of a three-year bachelors degree and a two-year master’s degree created some tension with the academies. The academies in northern Europe, many of which are funded by ministries of culture, not education, have enjoyed a privileged and elite position, quite separate from the university system. They mostly have small numbers of students who study

with a professor rather than taking courses in the Anglo-American sense. What also distinguishes the academies, for the most part, is that they did not adopt the nineteenth- or early twentieth-century British model of combining schools of art and craft. Craft is still, for them, regarded as having a utilitarian function and is therefore more appropriately taught outside the academies. These academies have, over a long period, evolved an ecosystem that recognizes differences in the way artists learn and who should teach them.

The academies faced a host of issues with the implementation of the Bologna Declaration: the major one was moving from awarding a diploma after six or seven years of study to awarding a BFA and an MFA after five years. In some cases, this is having a negative effect on the level of funding and on the idea of the academy as a place of freedom. The Bologna Process has worthy aspirations, but it is yet to be seen whether and how its stated aims will improve the lot of art schools in Europe:

The Bologna process aims to create a European Higher Education Area by 2010, in which students can choose from a wide and transparent range of high quality courses and benefit from smooth recognition procedures. The Bologna Declaration of June 1999 has put in motion a series of reforms needed to make European Higher Education more compatible and comparable, more competitive and more attractive for Europeans and for students and scholars from other continents. Reform was needed then and reform is still needed today if Europe is to match the performance of the best performing systems in the world, notably the United States and Asia.²⁵

| Work and research in the university art school

Teaching and researching in art schools or colleges that are merged with universities are highly problematic activities in the light of how governments and universities have thought in the past about what legitimately represents these two activities. The basic criteria promoted to define what is university research are hopelessly inflexible and unaccommodating to the aesthetic, cultural, and intuitive ideas as well as the forms and processes of the contemporary visual arts. In a word, there is a surreal mismatch between what artists and art students describe as creative work and what the non-artist academics believe it to be. Historically, universities have supported the enshrinement of the humanities and the natural and physical sciences, along with their research criteria, as the disciplines by which other, newer disciplines are evaluated. What is glaringly obvious to anyone working in the art academies today is how irrelevant these traditional disciplines are to the multiplying complexities and issues of post-Duchampian art forms.

If we accept the premise that universities cannot be adequately defined under one cohesive umbrella term or idea (in Collini's words, as "an up-to-date

version of John Henry Newman's Victorian classic *The Idea of a University*) simply because of the competing faculty hegemonies and their different functions, concerns, and budget needs, then what chance do art schools have of fair representation in the discussion of what constitutes academic activity and research?²⁶

It is evident that artist-academics and those who value the role of an artist as an oppositional intellectual question the populist cultural politics and the “dumbing-down” ethos that prevails in our universities. We know that the post studio arts are as valuable as the humanities and the sciences, but they need to be understood within their socio-historical contexts. The unquestioned strait-jacketing of the contemporary arts within the traditional academic, research, and pedagogic paradigms is individually and institutionally denying us the opportunity to enhance our creativity and our intellectual life and is, critically, negating the possibilities of producing new publics.

This is not improving our academic research landscape. And as Frank Furedi has eloquently argued in recent times, it is indicative of “patronizing anti-democratic sentiments toward the human subject” and a culture of social engineering that has allowed the cynical flourishing of apathy and social disengagement, so that debate is now all too often a dehumanizing exchange of technical and utilitarian opinions and values.²⁷

Art academies, in their common quest to articulate a cultural politics of art, language, an society (above and beyond the actualizing of the student's individual aesthetic and intellectual capacity) and their quest to foster creativity, experimentation, and democratic emancipation for their own sake, graphically underline the populist pragmatism and vocational training emphasis of the contemporary university.

| The view from the front line

Now let us examine in some detail the various contributors' essays in order to appreciate the compelling aesthetic, cultural, historical, and pedagogic complexities of the recent higher education debates concerning the past and future of art and design schools in the context of the global knowledge economy. What are the viewpoints of artists who teach and research inside and outside the contemporary university? How will art and design schools fare in this century, given the many and contradictory discourses that define today's Anglo-American and European universities and the different publics they serve? How does one value the contemporary visual arts in terms of academic and research activity? By what criteria is this done, by whom is it done, and for what overall educational, cultural, and political purposes?

Are art and design schools better off as stand-alone institutions, or will they do better inside today's corporatized universities? Do they present too many thorny issues for senior academic management in the humanities and sciences? Are art academics and art students harbingers of new critical, research, and

pedagogic vistas that have not been given their proper recognition within the contemporary university?

What will art and design schools look like in the twenty-first century? How will they contribute to the creative, cultural, and intellectual capital of our society? If they are to uphold their fiercely prized autonomy and create a sustainable new ethos of critical debate, radical pluralism, open-source knowledge, experimentation, and innovation, how will they endure the crushing socio-cultural, educational, and political forces that are converting our universities into sites of vocational training, social engineering, and intellectual conformity? Where in this maelstrom of triumphant corporate utilitarianism and pedagogic and research confusion and myopia do studio art production and teaching stand in relation to university life and, more importantly, to society at large?

These are some of the perplexing issues and debates that have been preoccupying artists and designers who teach students and who wish to be valuable contributors to the new cultural economy, producing new, imaginative possible futures and fostering critical thought and creativity in our everyday lives in the belief that resisting bureaucratic and managerial rationalism is worthwhile. What will it be? A belief in creative and intellectual emancipation and a determination to carry on a continuing conversation between the past, the present, and the future, or more of the calculating managerial culture that is becoming endemic in our shared, turning world?

Su Baker, in her incisive, thoughtful, and suggestive chapter, discusses the future directions of the art school in the twenty-first century, posing the cardinal question: does it, in terms of the new global knowledge economy, produce cultural, intellectual, and “creative” capital? Do we learn from the past as art educators? And is an art school a place where students can be encouraged to be actively engaged in aesthetic and cultural experimentation? Baker argues that an art school should enable participants to enact new forms of knowledge and more directly engage with what is basically an unknown but future-oriented cultural economy.

Baker notes that, historically speaking, there is a clear and direct relationship between the social and economic imperative of the times and the formation and management of knowledge in art and the education of artists. Should an art school be a place that offers a basic form of agency, a means for connecting “talent” with opportunity through an intensive studio-based and immersive learning experience? During the last thirty-odd years, there has been an important shift in pedagogical thinking in art schools, away from a more traditional hierarchical learning model and towards a more contextual and interactive learning style that highlights the value of distributed knowledge.

Bruce Barber's highly perceptive, keenly observed, and stimulating critique of contemporary art pedagogy and research as it pertains to certain “blended” PhD programs in the visual arts is informative and illuminating in its discussion of the vicissitudes of contemporary visual arts research. Three such PhD degrees exist in Canada: at the University of Western Ontario, York University, and l'Université du Québec à Montréal. There is one in the US at the University

of New Mexico, and one in Europe at The European Graduate School (of which Barber is a recent graduate), which was inspired by Jean-François Lyotard, and was “amicably supported” by Jean Baudrillard and Jacques Derrida.

Barber’s essay focuses on how PhD visual arts research contributes to the creation of original and valuable artworks in all kinds of media and on whether they themselves represent creative advances and theoretical paradigm shifts salient to our present socio-political life. The various “blended” PhD options Barber discusses all recognize the relationship between creative practice and critical education. They all underline the importance of fundamental innovative research concepts and processes, including a range of different research outcomes; and they all, tacitly, acknowledge the vital role that research may perform in the larger community.

Barber then goes on to ask whether the seldom-addressed, critical question of failure may be in itself a potent central determinant of the creation of ground-breaking art practice, and asks how this may be dealt with in success-oriented postgraduate visual art programs. This is an issue that needs to be urgently considered in our tertiary-level art institutions because it focuses on the significance of questioning the ideological logic of our “market” democracies and their emphasis on assessment and material and professional success. Barber’s neo-Beckettian reminder that failure is inextricably intertwined with success in the art world is, indeed, timely.

Mikkel Bogh provides an engrossing and resourceful view of what is currently happening to European art schools in terms of changes in their future directions and academic pedagogy. He notes that some art schools in Europe are already experiencing total transformation, others are in the process of shifting from one system to another, and others are still ardently opposing the European Union’s standardization of higher education (the Bologna Process). Bogh analyzes what is at stake for these art schools as they move away from the continental academy model to a model of higher education. He examines some of the dilemmas, possibilities, paradoxes, and challenges facing a particular (not so untypical) European art school that is still at the crossroads in deciding which options to pursue.

Bogh’s case-study example is the School of Visual Arts at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, which is seeking to draw upon the best from both models and yet persist with a third model. The latter model is the classical academy, an open, improvisational structure in which like-minded “free spirits” can meet and work in a common place and encounter their creative peers. For Bogh, such an ideal art school would need to be constantly reworking its own artistic, ideological, and pedagogical concepts and strategies in order to accommodate the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Brad Buckley’s insightful, informative, and searching critique probes what has been happening in art schools in terms of their graduate students and academic qualifications in various countries, especially in Canada, the US, Australia, Japan, the UK, and Europe. This, for Buckley, raises numerous fundamental questions about the unresolved situation of art schools in research universities,

including stand-alone institutions such as Emily Carr University of Art + Design and Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD University) (both now elevated to the status of university) and the impact of the Bologna Process on the European academies.

Buckley also weighs up the complex link between higher degrees (both Masters and PhDs) and the artists' creative work (which is now described as research in university art schools) and asks whether or not this creative work is precisely valued, as it has been, in numerous cases, in various educational sites and countries. Exactly what qualifies art academics' activities as research, and do they wish it to be measured as such by the more problematical critical criteria of the humanities and the sciences in university culture? Buckley advances the thesis that the PhD, rather than the MFA, should now be regarded as the terminal degree so that art can be recognized and appreciated as a valid philosophical and speculative activity. However, he acknowledges that in the US, in the main, academics in other fields do not yet regard studio or creative output by artists teaching in the university or art school context as research.

Nevertheless, Buckley makes a fairly substantial and convincing argument (following the ideas of such seminal French thinkers as Gaston Bachelard, Yve-Alain Bois, and Hubert Damisch) that what art academics do as teachers and as artists should be conceived as valuable research in higher education. This view is gaining ground around the globe, thanks to the efforts of such contemporary art educators as Christopher Frayling and Howard Singerman, among others.

Ironically, despite the shortcomings of certain assessment schemes to quantify art research in the university, such as the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE/UK) and its paler version in Australia, the Research Quality Framework (RQF), which was introduced by the Howard conservative government and then replaced by the Labour government with the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA), these schemes did actually raise awareness of the arts and of art education in the political elites of both countries.

Brad Buckley and John Conomos's polemical contribution discusses the recent cultural, pedagogic, and government policy developments in Australia relating to art schools, and argues that art schools are facing a rather bleak and confused, schizoid future. They note the current emphasis on corporatizing universities and commercializing research, and point out the fact that art schools have been amalgamated with universities. They then present the various benefits and disadvantages of these "arranged marriages" for both parties.

At the best of times—and these are not the best of times, we argue—art academics (themselves practising contemporary artists) lead, regrettably, a shadow life in terms of how they are valued by their colleagues in other disciplines. This has vast implications for their own creative and academic activity, which is frequently misunderstood and ignored as research that has enormous value for our new knowledge economy.

In sum, our view is that art schools are better off as stand-alone educational institutions because of their unique discursive, experimental, and pedagogic attributes, which demonstrably enhance the intellectual, social, and innova-

tion capital of our society as it faces the challenges of the new century.

Juli Carson and Bruce Yonemoto's timely, lucid, and persuasive contribution argues that, contra the 1980s theory of "post-studio" art production in contemporary art schools, it is essential to retrieve the proverbial baby (modernism) that was thrown out with the bathwater. For these two authors, it is crucial to address the amnesia that has afflicted contemporary art learning and teaching, namely the fact that twentieth-century modernism's concerns and languages have been erased through acceptance of Conceptualism's critique of modernism.

So at the Studio Art Department at the University of California, Irvine (UCI), Carson and Yonemoto have, in their MFA course (Concentration in Critical and Cultural Studies), emphasized the critical, aesthetic, and pedagogic task of combining the history of modernist aesthetics with the broader cultural theories that defined post-structuralist discourse. In other words, their pedagogic intervention advances a model of Conceptualism in art and film that is both informed by the legacy of modernist production and critical of modernism's blind spots. Bearing in mind the spirit of the "two Benjamins" (Walter Benjamin and Benjamin Buchloh), whose groundbreaking projects are characterized by the dialogue between avant-garde art and political commitment, Carson and Yonemoto's proposal for curriculum and practice in "the age of studio-art production" is quite welcome and invigorating.

In constructing their MFA course, Carson and Yonemoto have drawn from both the debates centred around the Frankfurt School in Germany, the Tel Quel Group in France, the Screen Group in England in the wake of 1968, and the 1980s "post-studio" school of art (Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, Hans Haacke, Mary Kelly, Yvonne Rainer, and Adrian Piper, to name a few). Carson and Yonemoto hope that students at UCI will be able to create new models of contemporary exhibition and criticism and will set up engaging, innovative, and professional projects for the future.

Edward Colless's riveting essay is a brilliant, poetic, and philosophical meditation on teaching in an art school as a form of ironic Socratic seduction. He sees the (art) teacher as a trickster or a shaman, whose profession is equivalent to Iago's villainy in Shakespeare's *Othello*. Colless's clever and resonating analogy of teaching as being similar to the liar's paradox in Iago's confession—"I always lie, so what I am now saying is false"—merits our critical attention. Colless invokes not only Aristotle and Plato, but also the Marx Brothers and Paul Tillich in his finely wrought and penetrating analysis of (art) teaching as an erotic and seductive activity, and he compares the cartoon character Popeye's famous "I am what I am," which he sees as expressive of Popeye's natural autonomy, with Iago's diabolically ecstatic act of un-naming himself.

For Colless, (art) teaching contains the performative paradox that the eighteenth-century philosopher, Denis Diderot, brilliantly defined as the "paradox of the actor": being constantly engaged in a double illusory act of doing and not doing at the same time. Colless goes on to say that (art) teachers, when they teach, resemble actors performing a screen kiss. Actors, as fictional characters,

do not do a “real” kiss: they depict a kiss. Yet actors must actually kiss in order to depict a kiss. In other words, it is a kiss and not a kiss. In the same way, Colless reasons, to teach art is to “teach a non-subject, a subject that is and is not teachable.” Art can therefore be taught as if it has a clear moral identity (Popeye) or as if it is a kind of pornographic ecstasy—false, indulgent, voluptuous and injurious—an amoral activity that is treacherous in its nature (Iago).

To teach requires apprenticeship: one must be fluent in one’s subject before daring to speak on its behalf. There is also a disciplinary imperative to be competent, to have authority and credentials. Otherwise, as Colless cautions us, what you will utter as a teacher will be (in the Socratic sense) “prattle”: surface noise lacking depth of meaning, a mere entertainment, an outpouring of enthusiasm. Mastery of subject, Colless argues, is a basic overcoming of enthusiasm, a “capacity for disinterested speculation and blissful contemplation.”

And yet, deploying the apt example set by Aristotle’s story of dialectic rendered as a dialogue between Tisias, a student of rhetoric, and his teacher Korax, a Sophist, who insists that Tisias pay him despite Tisias’s dissatisfaction with his teaching, Colless also accepts the professional wisdom that to teach effectively, one needs to have “the devil’s taste for enchantment.”

John Conomos, in his essay, discusses the possibilities of teaching new media studies in a contemporary art school inside and outside the university. It focuses on teaching new media studies as a self-reflexive pedagogy. It critiques the lingering presence of cyber-utopian and cyber-dystopian discourse in new media studies in a fine arts educational setting.

Furthermore, Conomos argues that art and design schools pose many aesthetic, critical, ethical, and pedagogical questions that problematize the corporate managerialism of the contemporary university, and he maintains that art academics must cultivate their role as dissenters in the new knowledge economy. It behooves art academics to ask themselves: how will art schools keep their professed academic and socio-cultural autonomy in the new century? And how will they, in the future, sustain a Socratic dialogue between the past and the present, between different (post) modernist art forms, and between culture, history, time, and space?

Finally, for Conomos, (art) academics, as artists, intellectuals, and citizens of our emerging democratic ethos, need to teach within the students’ own existential horizons and must always strive to maintain an open-ended, self-questioning approach to creativity, dissent, speculation, and risk-taking. It is hoped that by doing this, both teachers and students will learn how to live with otherness.

Jay Coogan, in his concisely written, highly informative, and perceptive contribution, presents the argument that today’s art and design schools have an expanding and important role in our present “worldwide creative network”: to ensure that they continuously offer new creative ideas and practices so as to convey new knowledge. This means they need to question and break with the past and, through the creative process, keep evolving. This will affect both the schools themselves and the broader culture.

Creative individuals, Coogan argues, seek centres of innovative activity. Art schools are important in this context because they allow creative individuals to seek out and discover what other creative people are doing and thinking. Therefore, they are places where beliefs, values, knowledge, and practice connect, places that encourage individuals to formulate new and dynamic combinations of ideas. In this sense, art schools are indispensable to projecting culture into the future by producing new concepts and works of art and design.

One of the more pressing issues facing art and design programs is how they will cope in a world where knowledge is not held so exclusively by the art academic because it is accessible from many different sources. How do art academics foster—given the prevailing development of art schools—the ability of students to work together collaboratively when the basic lines of authorship blur? For Coogan, holistic thinking is paramount for the evolution of education in art and design.

Luc Courchesne deftly and cogently outlines the many aesthetic, cultural, and historical factors that shaped the origins and development of the industrial design program at the University of Montréal in 1969. After Expo '67, and in the context of Quebec's "quiet revolution" and the numerous reforms it generated in education, the government of Quebec appointed the Commission Rioux to construct a new course in art education that would usher Quebec society into modernity and, at the same time, be at the cutting edge globally of contemporary issues. One of the critical recommendations of the commission was to create design programs in Quebec's universities that were structured along the lines of the Hochschule für Gestaltung, Ulm, under the leadership of Tomas Maldonado and his colleagues, which cultivated design as a research activity.

From the beginning, attempts were made to integrate theory and practice in a studio-defined design education and to anchor projects in workable partnerships outside the university. By 2000 a master's program in Design and Complexity was established to augment the developing research activities at the school. The program was designed to explore new approaches and methodologies so that they could help the design professional grasp and tame the inherent complexity of any given design project. For Courchesne, the same strategies that apply to design thinking also apply to contemporary art practice.

It is Courchesne's key belief that the concept of the polymath (Renaissance man), the individual who has a broad and deep understanding of and skills in everything, has virtually disappeared with the multiplication and specialization of the fields of knowledge during the last century. Courchesne believes that we now urgently need to reintroduce a twenty-first century polymath, someone who is versatile, mobile and collaborative in his/her approach to and understanding of art, design, science, and technology; someone who is at home in our world of the new artificial and virtual realities.

Sara Diamond's comprehensive, illuminating, and thought-provoking chapter offers compelling insights into the creative, educational, and political implications of expanding the field of contemporary art education by discuss-

ing the growing engagement between the sciences and the social sciences. She asks, quite correctly: will this new phenomenon in art, culture, and knowledge signify a totally new mission for the art school? Although, before the last century, art and artists from many different cultures and contexts were directly inspired by disciplines far beyond the humanities (literature, philosophy and history) we need to appreciate that those engagements mostly involved mathematics, the sciences, and the social sciences. Historically speaking, Diamond posits, the postwar era of rigid demarcation has built many unnecessary barriers between disciplines, and in doing so, has forged a basic separation between the arts and the sciences.

Present-day professor-practitioners, including Sean Cubit, Martha Fleming, Eduardo Kac, Steve Kurtz, and Victoria Vesna, among many others, combine artistic and scientific knowledge with discourse in their respective oeuvres, though their concepts and strategies may vary considerably in character, from the more identifiable fields of “appropriation, inspiration, or critique” to the thorny territory of “collaborative discovery, research, or explication.” If we are to value the unfolding complexity of our digital, networked world appropriately, it is essential to accept that science has something to say to artist-educators and their students.

But it is also equally important to apprehend that the visual arts and the sciences both contain rich but frequently contradictory conceptual threads. This leads Diamond to ask whether placing the collaborative efforts of artists, designers, scientists, and engineers away from the centre of our art schools and universities will not reduce art education to instrumentalism and erase intrinsic cultural values.

Lauren Ewing’s sharply observed, forceful, and astute discussion of the long-term importance of teaching a kind of spherical, multidimensional thinking that is holistic, flexible, and multi-sensorial in orientation raises many issues that are salient to the future curricula and trajectories of art and design schools. According to Ewing, as today’s contemporary art students are browsers, co-authors, inter-actors and nomads—like anyone else who is actively participating in our information economy—they fully appreciate the value of having access (or not having it); theirs is a performative culture of acquiring skills in order to create, learn, and survive.

Access to university-wide or school-wide curricula for artists and students is imperative, Ewing contends, since staying inside the traditional confines of an art curriculum “only makes them dumb.” As art schools and universities constitute knowledge economies in themselves, art students, because of their basic familiarity and navigational skills with gamer culture, lifestyle culture, the media, information browsing, filmic immersion, and the like, are better served, educationally, by being able to browse and take their own course pathways in the curriculum. For art teachers and researchers, it is beneficial to conceive of educational institutions and their objectives, not in terms of historical ideologies or progress, but rather as stratifications, energy flows, abstract machines, social networks, attractors, chosen communities, and self-organization, etc;

this approach is evident in art school dynamics and educational communities throughout the world already.

For Ewing, it is the critical issue of “remixing the hive,” of adhering to spherical thinking, which represents interdisciplinary thinking in action, in the concrete realities of everyday life. In art education, Ewing avers, we already have discipline-specific and medium-specific teaching. It is time that students seek out their own paths of creativity and learning, that they be alert to art as “the continuous positive enactment of radical openness.”

Gary Pearson, an artist and art educator in regional Canada for twenty-odd years, probes, in a highly nimble, far-ranging and sophisticated, self-reflective manner, the relationship between regional art departments and schools, their resources (in the university and the community), and their geographical location. Pearson then suggests how these resources could be used to produce niche programming that promotes enhanced learning, research opportunities, and reputation.

According to Pearson, globalization has not spawned a complete paradigmatic shift in the logic and location of the “centre,” but it has nevertheless necessitated an accommodation of cultural and economic decentralization. In sum, it has broadened the distribution, and even the actual identity, of bases of power. Within their respective spheres of influence, metropolitan cities such as London, New York, and Berlin now maintain a centrality relative to the global expansion of cultural and economic power. This denotes a basic dynamic that is reflected in the degree to which the word “centre” is accumulating new meanings in response to the shifting demographics of art, the diversification of arts infrastructure, and the appearance of alternative forms and meanings of arts-cultural practice.

This should be good news, Pearson asserts, for art academics, artists, and students who work in what is still known as “the periphery.” Pearson considers the many challenges and opportunities facing university art departments in regional cities and addresses the compelling task of re-conceptualizing positions of currency in pedagogy, purpose, and sense of place within the shifting ideological and geographical frameworks of art and agency. Regionalism does not imply being antagonistic to experimentation and to the professional development of students as exhibiting artists.

Pearson then raises a very telling point: though he is supportive of art being studied in cultural contexts, he feels that art historians tend to be removed from the realities of art production and the arts industry. Art history and production-skills training, which have been marginalized in today’s curricula, still remain important pedagogical enterprises for him; but they are in need of constant revision and upgrading in terms of content and mode of delivery. He goes on to suggest that the move of art history towards cultural studies (during the last two decades) has only exacerbated the art historian’s detachment from the artist’s everyday cultural realities.

Bill Seaman, a pioneering artist-educator concerned with the development of combinatory microstrategies for emergent, transdisciplinary education, has

written a highly engaging, instructive, and important essay on the subject. Seaman maps out his own artistic, pedagogic, and research experience as he built a curriculum at the Rhode Island School of Design's (RISD's) Digital and Media Department, which promoted digital media as a tool and as a central medium for multiple artistic domains. For Seaman, transdisciplinary research entails a series of bridged disciplines, each of which is, in itself, a field of certain kinds of aesthetic and conceptual enquiry, characterized by specific histories, critical theories, and modes of practice. New classes were formed to explore cutting-edge digital processes relating to different disciplinary domains and thereby examine the unique potentials of digital authorship, locative media, creative programming approaches, digitally enhanced installation work, and embodied physical computing. At Brown University, a series of classes were offered that allowed graduate students to study experimental music, digital literature/media production, and high-level programming.

At RISD and at Brown, new theory classes in scrutinizing art/science relations were also offered. Thus students were offered new “node” class offerings in which they could pursue their own artistic, conceptual, and technological needs and interests. Consequently, students could form their own particular trajectory through these different educational contexts, experiencing a rich menu of emergent learning with the mentorship of full-time faculty and, later, a thesis chair and thesis committee. A PhD is being considered now: it will bridge RISD and Brown, permitting new knowledge to emerge from advanced study linked to the above approaches. Students, therefore, can develop new languages to speak across different domains and research agendas.

Over the last few years, Seaman has been collaborating with the prominent German biochemist and philosopher Otto Rössler in articulating how focused conversation can form a viable and innovative approach to transdisciplinary creativity and knowledge. Rössler talks of two distinct approaches to knowledge production: (a) the qualitative, to which conversation and textual language are central and (b) the quantitative, often pursued via mathematics and specific data collection.

At Duke University this year, Seaman, in his new professorial position in the Art, Art History, and Visual Studies Department, is further exploring the creative, technological, and pedagogical possibilities of this approach to transdisciplinary education. For Seaman, deploying differing “association”-generating mechanisms across research fields means seeking to construct and use an embodied exploration of meaning production in all its variety as it connects the arts, the humanities, and the sciences as a continuing cardinal focus in art education.

Finally, Jeremy Welsh cogently dissects the institutional and policy changes in higher art education during his sixteen years as an artist-educator in Norway. The art, cultural, educational, and technological landscape there has undergone various significant transitions, leaps, interruptions, and transformations. These have included institutional changes initiated at government level and numerous cultural transformations caused by the infiltration of new technolo-

gies, internationalization, multiculturalism, and a (rather belated) focus, according to Welsh, on postmodern and post-Conceptual art theory within the academies.

Higher art education in Norway and, indeed, in other Nordic countries, differs from other European contexts because the teacher-student ratio is much smaller, which means the teaching approach is much more individual. Since 2000, two distinct factors have dramatically changed the profile of Norwegian art education: the implementation of a BA/MA with a three- and two-year course structure, and the introduction of a national program for research fellowships in the arts for higher-level studies in art and design. During the 1990s, the demand for theory and the production of written work came to perform an increasingly important role in both the fine arts and applied arts academies.

Welsh maintains that dialogue has contributed tellingly to the general transformation of art education in recent times. The breaking down and the demarcation (at the same time) of the conventional aesthetic, institutional, and ideological boundaries between traditionally separated practices within the visual arts have developed along the lines of the differences between Conceptual art and craft. Although interdisciplinarity has been introduced into the higher education sphere, Welsh asks what this signifies: will it work, and by what means can it be taught?

With the increasing interrelationship of art and technology playing such a key role in art education, and with the flourishing of open-source software and creative commons licensing, art will contribute to how we perceive intellectual property. It is time, Welsh argues, to abandon the time-worn modernist distinction between “old” and “new” media and to recognize that art will develop using any possible means, from pencils to pixels. Art education and research demand that we embrace “thought and action, reflection and agitation, innovation and preservation, intuition and logic.” As art academics and as students engaged in the risk-taking process of articulating and testing new cultural forms, we need, as Welsh wittily argues, to be like Yves Klein, and make daring, periodic leaps of faith.

| What might an art school be if we can move beyond the present?

There is an illuminating thread running through many of the chapters in *Re-thinking the Contemporary Art School*, offering ways of thinking about what is possible for the art school in the twenty-first century. Some draw on the long history of the European academy, which developed outside but parallel to the universities as sites of freedom and “free spirits.” There is also speculation on the impact that the Bologna Process will have, or is having, on curriculum, funding, the master-student model of teaching, and, ultimately, the continuation of the independent academy. Should the academies merge with, or perhaps become, universities?

Outside Europe there is a confluence in the English-speaking world, perhaps because we all share a common language, and our art schools have all developed from a version of the nineteenth-century industrial arts school, the European academy, and a Protestant world view that saw value in the utilitarian and the sensible. Perhaps this is where some of the problems start for art schools in countries where the majority of art schools are now located in or have been merged with universities (or in some cases were packaged or bundled together with other orphaned colleges to create new universities), such as Australia, New Zealand, and the UK. Once placed in the university, a distortion of the art school ecosystem starts, as university bureaucrats and senior managers demand that the art school mirror the organizational structures, curricula, and prudent use of space that are the conventions in other disciplines. Many of these problems have also been experienced by artists working in art schools in universities in the United States.

There are also other major distortions at play, which are fundamentally altering the art school in Australia and the UK. The governments have introduced schemes that attempt to measure and evaluate “research” produced across all university disciplines. This includes the work made by artists. While, for readers across North America, this may seem fanciful, it has had a profound impact, as the results of such “research” are tied to public funding. This has created a culture where artists teaching in university art schools are constantly placed under pressure, scrambling to find “research” projects that will be acceptable to the bureaucrats and their tape measure. Of course, art is not an acceptable outcome. This situation has led, in Australia, to a spate of senior appointments to art schools of people who are not artists but who bring with them a “dowry” of research funding, usually from the social sciences, and are given fictitious titles such as Professor of Art. These appointments undermine the ethos of the art school and the artists who work and teach in them.

Across Canada and the US there is a healthy mix of art schools: some are independent, others are part of private or public universities. With a few notable exceptions, such as the graduate program at the School of Art at Yale, the most inventive schools, such as the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, the California Institute of the Arts, and RISD, are independent stand-alone institutions. In Canada the situation is similar, although a number of the independent art schools have recently moved to university status: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD University), Emily Carr University of Art + Design, and the Ontario College of Art & Design (OCAD) are all good examples of this strategy. Why is this the case? Why are these independent schools sites of invention and agility, and therefore ahead of the pack?

To speculate on the future art school, we might draw on the idea of the small, specialized independent institution that uses “our” own history of the education of artists. Such an institution might undo the influence of the Bauhaus and the nineteenth-century categorization of disciplines, rethink what skills are needed in a global world, but consciously embrace the changing technologi-

cal needs of the students, offering them an immersive experience, for they are, after all, the artists of the future.

James Elkins, in his book *Why Art Cannot Be Taught*, has reminded us that “[l]ike some instructors in the French Academy, teachers at the Bauhaus made statements and wrote pamphlets, lecture notes, and books.”²⁸ It is our deepest felt belief that we, as contemporary artists, should take a lead from our precursors and write and publish on what the art school in the twenty-first century should be. Anything else is second best.

Endnotes

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- 4 The Bologna Declaration is available in PDF format at the official Web site of the Bologna Process (2007–2009). See *Bologna Declaration*, 1999, “About the Bologna Process,” n.d., *Bologna Process*, Benelux Bologna Secretariat, n.d., 18 Jan. 2009, <<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/about/index.htm>>.
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- 6 Deleuze 320.
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- 8 Julie Aut and Martin Beck, “Drawing Out & Leading Forth,” *Notes For An Art School*, eds. Mai Abu Ejdahab, Anton Vidokle and Florian Waldvogel (Amsterdam/Nicosia: The International Foundation Manifesta and the Manifesta 6, 2006) 37–45.
- 9 Brian Eno, “And Now the Good News,” *What Are You Optimistic About?* ed. John Brockman (London: Pocket Books, 2008) 114.
- 10 The term “cultural cringe” was coined after World War II by the Australian critic and social commentator A.A. Phillips in a 1950 essay to describe Australians’ self-perceived intellectual inferiority complex towards their own culture in the context of British culture. See A.A. Phillips, *The Australian Tradition: Studies in Colonial Culture* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1958).
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- 12 Stefan Collini, “HiEdBiz: Universities and their Publics,” *Common Reading* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008) 317–38.
- 13 Collini 320.
- 14 Collini 321.
- 15 Collini 327.
- 16 Collini 338.
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- 19 Evans 145.

- 20 Jacques Rancière, "Democracy Means Equality," interview with F. Deotte-Begdali et al., trans. David Macey, *Radical Philosophy*, 82 (1997): 32 and 33.
- 21 For further information on OCAD, see "About OCAD," *Ontario College of Art & Design*, OCAD, 10 Nov. 2008, 21 Jan. 2009, <http://www.ocad.ca/about_ocad/administration/presidents_office/presidents_message.htm>.
- 22 David Throsby, *The Economics of Cultural Policy* (forthcoming). The quotations are from his article. "Keynesian Vision: The Model for Tough Times," *Sydney Morning Herald* 12 December 2008, 12.
- 23 For a breakdown of cost to attend the Rhode Island School of Design, go to "Admissions: Facts + Figures," *RISD: Rhode Island School of Design*, RISD, n.d., Jan. 21, 2009, <<http://www.risd.edu/factsfigures.cfm>>.
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- 25 See "The Bologna Process: Towards the European Higher Education Area," *Europa*, European Commission, 13 Aug. 2007, 22 Jan. 2009, <http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna_en.html>.
- 26 Collini, 318.
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