[How can the facilitation of a community-facing event inform students' ideas about the possibilities for art practitioners in community organisations?]

Theme 1: Agency

i. Belonging

The first of the prefigured themes that were identified in the data was the role that facilitating the event played in enabling students to recognise and explore their own agency as artists within a public context beyond the university.

Here, I found it helpful to think about Clegg's (2011) exploration of the notion of student agency. By virtue of what the term is trying to describe, Clegg (2011) makes a clear attempt to unsettle any fixed definition of 'agency', but does pose a series of important reflections which frame how I view the term. She writes that 'community… may act as a resource for the articulation of possible future selves' so that 'agency' does not exist 'in contradistinction to the social but emergent from it' (Clegg, 2011, p. 94). It is this tension between the inherently political and apolitical aspects of the term that I use here.
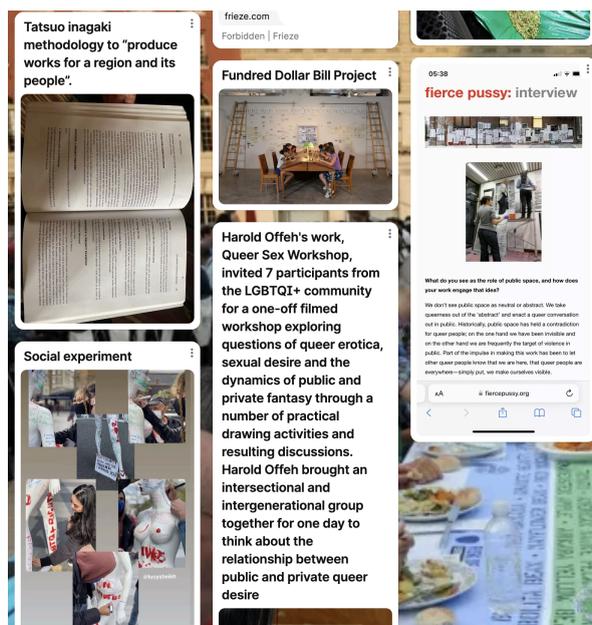
Detail from DS1

Early data (DS1) evidenced that students had existing reference points for projects where artists were working through relational practices. I was interested in understanding how students might identify the possibilities for these kinds of practices - which we might think of adjacent to "strategy" and non-institutional - to be facilitated *within* a defined organisational setting such as a community land trust.

The data revealed a number of ways that the students' perceptions of themselves, and of artists within the context of a land trust, shifted through the facilitation of the event.

First, an important aspect of student's recognition of their own agency was the role that confidence played:

> 'So when I was working in the yeah, it's called like popular university [teaching an art class] I didn't know to really present myself as an artist. I was living with my grandparents last year and that was just their local thing and most of the people that did the adult class like no one had like an art background. It was a lot of like slightly older women. The women didn't know I went to art school until it came up in conversation separately. You know, it was more like we went to speak and talk and hang out and for some reason I think I'd convinced myself a bit that like that is the way to or like I created some kind of fib between actually being like an artist like in an institution that comes into them like something outside of that and kind of felt maybe like some kind of hierarchy was created in that, which I think came up a lot in the early conversations [at RUSS] where it was like at what point do we become an imposition or are we demanding something of those people and like questions of privilege and stuff come in [...] It's like really related to like my own like ideas about myself.' DS6, SI5

> 'I went to this talk on mythological subjects, somewhere in central London. There was this one artist who was just talking about themselves. I guess beforehand I could be sometimes sceptical of when an artist went into a space.' DS6, SI4

This suggested that students' confidence to develop their practice in this unfamiliar setting may have been enabled by micro-affirmative encounters emerging in informal moments (Sabri, 2017, p. 4). As Sabri suggests (2017), this can be attributed to students developing a sense of belonging within a project or space, which in this project was, in part, connected to students being comfortable with their positionality as artists in a space that was considered atypical for artists to be present. Finding ways to conceptualise this position through different language was important for many - exploring and adopting terms such as 'professional' (DS2), 'intermediary' (DS5) and creator of 'propaganda' (DS6, SI3) to engender a sense of belonging.

ii. Agency through challenging the disciplinary parameters of the artist

Another critical aspect to students exploring the possibilities of artists in community organisations was how the facilitation of the event challenged students' perception that the design, facilitation and management of housing was beyond the capacity of the artist:

> 'I would say it's like a super interesting journey like for me [...] especially the final event with the communities. At the beginning of the project like for this project housing and land problem, land issue [...] there's also some like a problem that I really want to like exploring [...] It's like common problem like happening the worldwide stuff and the issue that people and artists definitely have to deal with. So like personally, I don't wanna be that kind of artist that limited yourself to something like space, environment and culture. So it's a really great chance too, for me to join this project.' DS6, SI3

'I'd never specifically thought about - or not that directly thought about - housing, being the place in which I'd like things to... - the like point of social engagement, I guess. [...] In doing this, I've realised how important housing is and how much it's connected to so many other things.' DS6, SI5

The above illustrates some students' reimagining of the disciplinary scope associated with art practice, which pointed towards a potential lack of epistemological diversity within the lecture and seminar material provided through the formalised BA Fine Art curriculum, despite the inclusion of sessions covering the history of social practice. However, it could also highlight the possible epistemological parameters that arise through learning being situated solely within the walls of the college and the occasional gallery visit - sites where the function of space is predetermined, or sites where the production of knowledge is associated with what Azumah Dennis calls the 'disembodied neutrality' of the 'unmarked scholar' - where knowledge is produced from 'that place which is *just there*, that place which is no place' (2018, p. 192). Azumah Dennis writes that 'to talk of decolonising higher education is to bring into the question the foundations upon which the unmarked scholar stands' (2018, p. 193), that these foundations place parameters or assumptions to what we can and ought to know (for example, 'philosophy as… independent from the particularities of culture, society and history' (2018, p. 192)). Only by centering a different site for learning were some students and myself are able to identify those parameters.

Theme 2: Collectivity

i. Together in extracurricular dreams

A second prefigured theme that became apparent was the value the students attributed to collective organisation, especially of a kind that was adjacent to their core curriculum. In both years 1 and 2 of the BA Fine Art programme, students have group components - however in year 3, the year in which their entire degree grade is based, they do not have any mandatory group work. Graduate art practice then can become associated with individual production, and as such, collaboration can become neglected and/or stigmatised as less intellectually rigorous. The data suggested that students valued the facilitation of a project where they were encouraged to collaborate, and where the outcome was not assessed. In response to the question 'What has your experience of the project been so far?', the following students emphasised that the connection felt with their peers, in an extra-curricular setting, suggested a potential antidote to, or even critique of, the year 3 programme and the individualism that it may unintentionally promote:

'It's been nice because I met people on my course with similar interests and values, cause I was like looking for some kind of something that was outside of the course. Literally it was like perfect at coming along because I was like, "I've been looking for something like this."' (DS6, SI2)

'I think so far it's been nice to actually integrate a bit more with different people on the course that I wouldn't usually have talked to or who I've never even met before. I think the thing that's definitely come to mind is the preparation for the RUSS event, where we were making like different prints, out of lino printing, and

we had like our own little workspace and like our own little table and I found that really nice.' (DS6, SI1)

'It's been a really nice addition to have alongside kind of what the rest of Chelsea is for me, which is like a bit, I think especially in this first term… a little bit more isolated.' (DS6, SI5)

Recognising this aspect confirmed part of my rationale for doing this project. However, it also elaborated something I had not considered regarding decolonial interventions within the curriculum. While the above, though a small sample size, suggests changes to the year 3 BA Fine Art core programme could be made to support peer-to-peer collaboration, it also outlines the value of extra-curricular learning to reflect on and buttress the core programme. This echoes a question posed by Walsh, reflecting on Quijano's 'inside-outside-against' framework for Indigenous representation within the Ecuadorian state (Quijano cited in Walsh, 2020, p. 608): how can we find a space to decolonise institutional frameworks while remaining - perhaps necessarily - away from the core? Answering this question requires further discussion with the students, as it was only identified after I had concluded interviews.

ii. Knowledge Co-production

Another unexpected aspect to this theme related to something I realised half way through the ARP project - that, through my research question, I had set up a potentially very individualistic way of understanding the learning journeys of participants in the project. Despite my engagement with Embodied Inquiry and a focus on identifying knowledge production by exploring the emotional and non-verbal responses of participants to different aspects of the project, I was still viewing the process of learning as an individualistic act rather than a collective one. When I began to recognise the collective, as well as the individual, as a vector for learning, important findings emerged.

An indication that student's viewed their learning as relational and collaborative was during the event itself (DS5). One student had created "conversation starter" cards for attendees to use with one another. Decorated with a pattern of stag beetles, heavily associated with the site of the Land Trust as they live along the neighbouring River Ravensbourne, each card had a separate question on it, such as 'What sound reminds you of love?' or 'What smell reminds you of home?' Tucking some of these emerald green cards into their front pockets, or clutching them onto them throughout, as their hands creased the edges with nervous sweat, many of the group found comfort in having these cards as a fall-back if conversation with strangers became stilted. The intangible, and yet rewarding, discourse produced through using the cards, is articulated by one student who viewed the cards as a participatory and non-intrusive (ephemeral) form of 'recording' (DS6, SI3). When asked how they would like to take their ideas forward for the remainder of the project, the student replied:

'Like we could recording videos or maybe using like moving image ways like [...] just like recording, like how [-]'s conversation card have been using in that event.' (DS6, SI3)

However, the most revealing evidence of collective learning has been highlighted through my observations of how the students generated their ideas for artworks that could support the event. In my observation of our first meeting with RUSS members (DS2), I noted students' reluctance to present fully formed ideas, as they instead presented the bones of ideas that needed to be both completed and given meaning. At first, I recognised this as the group tentatively exploring the scope of their possibilities within an unfamiliar context for their artwork. I suggested at various moments that students could perhaps arrive to meetings with fully formed ideas so that RUSS members did not feel as if they were "granting permission" or worse, having to come up with ideas themselves. However, it was noticing the persistence of this practice, that I realised the students relied on each other, and members of RUSS, to complete and find meaning in one another's ideas.

This practice of collective learning is more slippery than, for example, Corazzo and Gharib's (2021, p. 152) unpacking of the different ways in which studio-based learning facilitates 'informal pedagogy' between students. Their notions of 'the performative studio' or of 'the processual studio' come closest to this form of knowledge co-production (2021, pp. 152-153), but neither describes what could be called an epistemology of interdependence.

An epistemology of interdependence provides a new lens with which to critique, from a decolonial perspective, other aspects of the literature on collective meaning-making as informal pedagogy. It made me realise that I needed to disrupt my own understanding of the potential value of the project - that students could 'benchmark themselves against their peers and observe each other's workings' (Corazzo and Gharib, 2021, p. 154) in order to co-construct what I considered, after years of being involved in land trusts, to be the 'right thing' to do when participating in community action as an artist (Ashton and Durling, 2000, p. 3).

When reviewing this literature on peer-to-peer learning, it struck me as potentially problematic that even authors were identifying relational knowledge production - either through student dialogue or observing one another (Ashton and Durling, 2000, p. 10) - these tend to centre the individual as the primary benefactor of knowledge. I felt I needed to reach for language that explored the collective imagination of the group. I could recognise the positives of the 'comparative studio' (Corazzo and Gharib, 2021, p. 154), and understood when Ashton and Durling note that the 'right thing' is not necessarily 'value-loaded' (2000, p. 12), however it struck me that to continue to gently facilitate an environment of this kind would be to emulate architect Oscar Newman's notion of 'defensible space' (1972) in a learning context. Newman viewed ambient forms of surveillance - people being able to see one another across public spaces - as integral for creating safe neighbourhoods (1972). Yet it is the passivity of this intervention, the way it potentially alienates members of the group, and its ultimately non-collaborative emphasis, that I realised is replicated when trying to facilitate a comparative studio ethic as a central strategy for student learning.

The notion of the individual as the primary benefactor of knowledge also suggested a problematic conception of the relationship between the individual and act of learning that mirrored what scholars writing in the field of legal pluralism refer to as the 'misconception' of ownership, as both 'private' and 'individual' (von Benda-Beckmann et al., 2006, p. 11) [note Corazzo and Gharib's unquestioned emphasis on student 'ownership of the space' (2021, p. 153). von Benda-Beckmann et al. (2006) argue that ownership is in fact performed by a

continually shifting network of actors and relations. In addition, Blomley (2004) posits that it is the projection of the concept of ownership as a singular relationship between person and object that historically enabled land to be captured and assigned to individuals in colonial settler contexts.

Viewing the comparative studio ethic in this way, I recognised that an emphasis on collective learning was an important experiment in decolonising. When solidarity networks declared "no ban on stolen land" in response to Trump's anti-Muslim travel ban in 2017, referring to the US as a settler colony, Daigle and Ramírez note that it was critical for such solidarity networks, as heterogenous modes of decolonial activism, to understand themselves as 'constellations of co-resistance and liberation' (2019, p. 79). As such, concepts of knowledge production within these constellations emphasised collective, relational learning, mirroring decolonial perspectives on property rights. Furthermore, this emphasis on collective learning generates 'pedagogical pathways into relationalities with the human and non-human world' (Daigle and Ramírez, 2019, p. 79), another important theme that emerged from the data, which I refer to in the next section.

Overall, I aim to build on these discoveries by reflecting with the students on their perspectives on the collective learning that emerged through their facilitation of the event. I'd like to explore mapping, or simulating, the co-production of works in order to recognise what they view as the value of this co-production.

Theme 3: Relationships between land and learning

In the above section on "Agency", I noted how situating our learning elsewhere enabled students to review the disciplinary parameters that may be placed upon student artists within the context of university. When planning the project, I had considered that the space we were entering, as much as the space we were leaving, would have an impact on the students' learning - but I was unsure how. Engaging with the data, I began to understand that it came back to my engagement with the work of Arturo Escobar and his notion of 'relational ontology' (2016, p. 18). Decolonial interventions in space and pedagogy must depart from ontologies of coloniality, which view the world in ways that reduce and neglect the notion that 'things and beings are their relations' (2016, p. 18). Through relational ontology therefore, different possibilities for learning, community-building and *being* arise.

Aspects of a relational ontology could be identified through students' attentiveness to how the land at the RUSS site - land that has been taken out of the market and thus de-commodified - appears to ensure a lack of prescribed social function when meeting for site visits, which reframed students' perception of their purpose as learners:

> 'I think stuff only fell into place as soon as we went into the [RUSS] space [...] I think when we were there we were all really excited by yeah, it actually happening in front of us and I like had really sweet conversations with people in the group that I hadn't really had before [...] The meetings we have at Chelsea [within the land trust project] are a lot more about us constructing what we want from that from that space and those ideas - which I think the meetings are effective, but because we're doing that primary thing and everyone's kind of like

thinking about what they wanna bring forward and there's not that much space for things to be really like, I don't know, intuitive or intimate.' (DS6, SI5)

The notion that learning could be thought of differently whilst on the RUSS site was also outlined by the following student's description of site visits:

'You can kind of be in a different presence and different kind of environment where it doesn't feel like anything's being taken away from you.' (DS6, SI1)

The emphasis here on learning becoming non-extractive poses questions around the potential impact of fee-paying on the student's perception of themselves within the university context. It also, however, suggests the impact of the land trust site itself, and the feeling of belonging and possibility that may emerge as an outcome of the site being in community ownership - thus free to access and unmediated, to a degree, by either public or private institutions.

With Escobar's decolonial framework of 'relational ontology' as a lens (2016, p. 18), the first site visit (DS2) also indicates students' exploration of the ontological possibilities that emerge on a site in community possession. Their time spent on the top storey balcony of the RUSS development embodied the students' enquiry into how the relationship between the following components brought unfamiliar notions of themselves and their surroundings into being.

the height of the balcony
their perspectives as they silently looked out over the neighbouring sites
their exposure to open air
this land that is no longer a commodity
their own bodies standing side by side

(DS2)

How can I, through the land trust project but also when teaching at Chelsea, invite moments for such embodied enquiry? This is not a practice that must be reserved for spaces beyond the campus, as it can signal a range of ways to relate to material, space and one another that can support students in their studio practice.

Theme 4: Temporalities of learning

Engaging with the data presented an unexpected theme regarding the way that the project shifted the students' and my own perceptions of the temporalities of learning within the university. On the one hand, this was an important finding regarding my research question, in that it emphasised that artists could contribute to a collective attentiveness to the role of time in volunteer-led community organisations. It also, however, turned students' attention, including my own, towards prescriptive temporalities within the BA Fine Art programme.

My first identification of this temporal aspect occurred when reviewing my research question.

'How can the facilitation of a community-facing event inform students' ideas about the possibilities for art practitioners in community organisations?'

The question supposed a "before" and "after" regarding students' perceptions of themselves that potentially misaligns with how students view their own agency and the idea of the "possibilities of art practitioners". Such notions, as I've highlighted above, are informed by feelings of belonging, and of a relationality with space, which are constantly fluctuating and context-specific. These are not ideas that simply develop in a linear fashion proposed by a "before" and "after" logic.

This reflection led me to consider whether my research question might have been partially informed by my participation within the academy. It's assumption that the students' ideas may have changed to such an extent that I may have data to glean from what was a very short space of time, suggested perhaps my ideas about learning had been shaped by 'the neoliberal temporality' of the university, with its rigidity of deadlines and the exceptional status granted to extensions and adjusted assessments (Jain, 2022, p. 33).

My assumption regarding the linearity of student learning may also have been informed by the established pace and rhythms that are projected onto students' learning within the BA Fine Art programme, made even more ironic by the fact that it is a creative course where students' understanding of themselves as practitioners is a central aspect. Writing on 'settler ableist time' and the university, Medak-Saltzman, Misri and Weber (2022, p. 5) argue that 'implicit' within 'the image of "frontier research"' promoted by educational institutions 'are familiar colonial tropes of spatial discovery' - perhaps such an emphasis on speed and knowledge accumulation has been transferred to how students must learn at an undergraduate level?

Therefore, in contrast to how I had designed my research, the data revealed that the emergent temporalities of event-planning in the context of the land trust supported students in their engagement with their learning.

> 'It was really interesting to have [the residency project] unfold - I mean, this sounds kind of silly, I don't know how else to word it – it was really unfolding in real time. It was so clearly like being built at the time that it was happening, as people were moving in, as things got pushed back with RUSS, like it was really cool to see kind of the inner workings of how something like that actually comes about.' (DS6, SI5)

For this student, 'real time' came to represent a departure from the temporality of the BA Fine Art programme, and contained a more collaborative and responsive approach to art practice.

Responding to the question 'How has facilitating the event informed ideas about your own work and about how artists can contribute to community organisation?', one student emphasised that thinking about the temporal aspect of their desired relationship with the attendees to the event also presented ways to think about generative temporal patterns within their own work:

> '…how it - it's not just like a fleeting thing, but it's also something that [event attendees] feel like there's some kind of purpose there. [...] Almost like we're leaving some kind of mark on them, like RUSS is leaving some kind of mark. [...]

Or I feel like repetition is important and it's not just, I don't know, like a one off thing. I think things will only stick if there's repetition basically.' (DS6, SI1)

Highlighting repeated engagement with neighbours as an important temporal quality that artists can bring to the land trust, this student echoes Samuels' (2017) articulation of crip time as an optimistic appropriation of Luciano's description of 19th century grieving practices in the United States. As 'grief time emerged with modernity as a temporal and affective state juxtaposed to progressive, mechanical time' (Samuels, 2017), 'grief aligned with a sensibility that sought to provide time with a 'human' dimension, one that would be collective rather than productive, repetitive rather than linear' (Luciano, 2007 cited in Samuels, 2017). Epitomising Samuels' (2017) notion of crip time, this student posits that repetition, as a temporal mode for learning, can allow different forms of engagement to emerge. This finding both addresses my research question and points towards exercises that I could incorporate within curricular and extracurricular sessions; re-enacting past discussions, catchphrases as learning resource, re-visiting the same site and recording our changing relationship with it?

Reflecting on how attending a meeting with future RUSS residents prior to the event shaped how they wanted to facilitate the event, one student described:

'I think uh, in that meeting that we talked to the future residents. They're talking about like some like, they're long problem, long issue with lawyers stuff. It's quite like a serious, serious stuff like dealing with, like, money. I think that meeting is showing like a part of this project [(RUSS's housing development)]. Like this project is been so hard to set up, the landing stuff, that reflect the whole building is like every volunteers, every residents, put their effort on it, so it's really like struggling like process that I think that meeting showing a part of it. And so yeah, so actually in the events, we build this, we did provide like really relaxing space, also like time a really relaxing period of time, for RUSS to like stop in that space.' (DS6, SI3)

This student's identification of "stopping" as another important temporal mechanism provides an additional understanding of how this emergent theme demonstrates students' learning in the context of community organisations. It also supports my aforementioned engagement with temporality in challenging my own biases regarding student's pace of learning. "Stopping" provides a pedagogic iteration of Medak-Saltzman, Misri and Weber's (2022, p. 5) notion of 'rest as resistance', navigating the neoliberal university's 'spatiotemporal logics' - 'both settler colonial and ableist in nature' and challenging what I've realised is my own privileging of 'hyperproductivity', an emergent factor within this temporality of coloniality (Medak-Saltzman, Misri and Weber, 2022, p. 5).

While transforming the temporal patterns of the course structure is beyond my remit as an associate lecturer (and might ultimately rely on the BA Fine Art course performing the impossible act of extricating itself from the neoliberal university altogether), these findings suggest a number of pedagogic interventions and emphasise that enabling students to learn in extracurricular contexts presented different temporalities for learning to be centred.