

Evaluation Report Pedagogies for flourishing in complexity Visual Arts Workshops ERASMUS+/ARTHEWE

In the context of the Erasmus+ funded ARTWHE project **Pedagogies for flourishing in complexity**, Arts Cabinet was commissioned to design, produce and deliver 2 workshops in the visual arts, aimed at students from the Clinical Humanities and Wellbeing programme.

The visual arts workshops were part of a broader project aim: “to equip students with skills to enable them to operate well both professionally and personally as they transitioned into the world of clinical practice”.

In addition to the movement and improvisation workshops offered at The Exchange, the visual arts workshops offered students with opportunities to enquire through art and to practice modes of learning/unlearning, doing/undoing as methods through which to consider different ways of representing, interpreting, reflecting on, and considering.

The workshop **The Artistic Genius: Practices of Making and Unmaking** took place on 6 September 2021 at Tate Modern. The Gallery space functioned as a Laboratory and Art as a form through which to enquire. The workshop was led by an art historian and students were invited to immerse themselves in the multiple interpretations of a work of art as well as engage with others in creative discussions about the possible meanings and understandings of the work. In addition, they were invited to produce visual materials and share their insights with the group – offering new perspectives for understanding visual work.

The workshop **The Continuous Prototype** was held on 13 September at the Design Museum (London). The workshop was led by a curator of the museum and architect. The goal of the workshop was to invite students to design non-stable structures and imaginary structures as process for examining work through time and action. Models produced served as vocabulary to demonstrate ideas and ways of working collaboratively. The aim of this workshop was to engage in a process of thinking and doing, assembling and disassembling as a way to engage with the possibility to work towards something unknown.

The evaluations of the 2 workshops are presented below. The methodology to collect data and produce the report was structured in the following way:

- A pre-workshop questionnaire to assess the students’ experience and expectations
- A post workshop survey to collect feedback and establish the key outcomes
- A qualitative approach

In addition to detailing the key findings of the workshop, both evaluations present recommendations for future visual arts workshops involving students in the Clinical Humanities.

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The Artistic Genius: Practices of Making and Unmaking

6th September 2021

Tate Modern, London

1.30pm-4.30pm



Main droite de Pierre et Jacques de Wissant Auguste Rodin (1885-86)
Musée Rodin, Paris.

Taking place at the Tate Modern, London, this session was an opportunity to consider and critique the processes of artistic creation and to develop novel and innovative ways of collaboratively analysing visual culture.

Often associated with some form of divine inspiration, the touch of the artistic genius has been revered throughout history. Current feminist, queer, and post-colonial debates ask us to challenge the rhetoric around the unique, solitary, master and to instead think about the environment and overlooked histories that underlie processes of making and unmaking. Working together with a group to interrogate these ideas and to reflect upon personal encounters and experiences allows for the illumination of the plural and timely resonances of art within the contemporary moment.

Working at the turn of the 20th century, Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) is typically described as the forefather of modern sculpture. Although best known for his powerful works in bronze and marble, Rodin worked as a modeller, who captured movement, light, touch, and volume in pliable materials such as clay and plaster. Within the exhibition at Tate - 'The Making of Rodin' - plaster casts in all sizes demonstrate how the artist

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worked with a team of people to continually experiment with fragmentation, repetition, and re-joining existing parts in unconventional ways to make new forms and to experiment with multiple compositions.

Beginning with an art historical introduction by Dr Kate Keohane (University of Oxford) in the Tate Turbine Hall, the group visited Anicka Yi's 'In Love with the World', and the temporary exhibition 'The Making of Rodin'. The group then worked together to form an artist studio, sharing experiences and ideas, and sculpting their own works of "genius".

Throughout the session, pedagogic methods were employed which utilised art objects as a nexus for questioning, associations, and critical discussion. While contextual information was supplied, the focus was on developing approaches to close-looking: zooming in on details and then considering broader associations and resonances. Attention was also paid within the tour to the ways in which curatorial structures are employed to convey a certain narrative. Reflecting upon their location and physical responses to the artworks, students were encouraged to think about how they might approach exhibition-viewing differently, and the reasoning and rationale behind personal preferences.

The final sculpting session centred around remembering a section or impression from the Rodin exhibition and making a small model from Fimo air-drying clay. Students then had to combine their mini sculptures with their neighbour, and ultimately bring all the creations together to create their own studio. The students then photographed the collaboratively made object with their mobile phones, using lighting and perspective to give the illusion of greatness and reverence.

The laid back and friendly environment generated within this hands-on concluding section enabled wider conversations about the nature of contemporary art and how the analysis of visual culture can be deployed within the every-day.



Photographing the results of the final session

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Key learning outcomes

- Gain a knowledge of modernist art histories
- Develop strategies for analysing and critiquing artworks
- Analyse curatorial formations and the narratives surrounding the 'genius' artist
- Reflect upon the ethics of studio work and devise new methods for collaboration

Participant requirements

- No prior knowledge of art or art history was required
- All equipment and materials were provided by the project (although participants were encouraged to bring a mobile phone with a camera).

Key Questions:

- Is there such a thing as an artistic genius?
- What can be lost or gained through repetition and collaborative work?
- How can we approach problematic artistic works and legacies?
- What is the value of 'the original'?
- How does the critical analysis of art relate to our own life and work?

Structure of the session:

1.30pm: Meet at the Tate Modern Turbine Hall entrance. Welcome and introductions

2.00pm: Introductory talk by Dr Kate Keohane

2.15pm: Visit the exhibition 'The Making of Rodin' – with discussion around key objects

3.10pm: Coffee break

3.20pm: Collaborative making workshop using clay

4.00-4.30pm: Closing reflections and evaluation

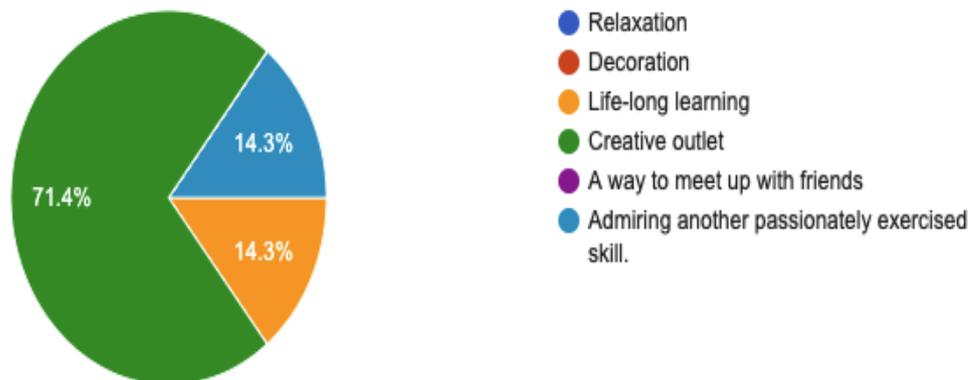
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Pre-session survey: (7 responses)

Pre-Session Questions

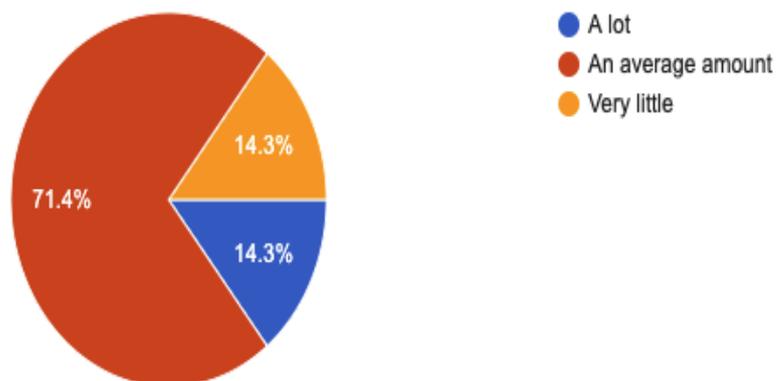
What is the main purpose that art serves in your life?

7 responses



How much do you know about art?

7 responses



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Tell me more about how you gain knowledge about art?

7 responses

I have studied art at High School and A levels so have gained knowledge through that, however currently I learn from visiting exhibitions, from social media platforms and from books/documentaries.

Through practice and exploration

By watching, reading about other people's art

Going to art galleries, talking to my friends, arts and cultural magazines/websites/social media

I completed a BA in Fine Arts about 15 years ago

Talk to friends (Mostly those studying art history).

Museum visits, doing it, surrounding myself with it

What do you hope to get out of this session?

7 responses

To leave with a greater understanding of the artist Rodin, and in general the creative processes.

To learn things I haven't yet before

Learn something new about art that could be implemented in social research.

To learn more about how art can inform my teaching practices.

A chance to find joy in sketching in a relaxed social environment

To learn more about the history of different art movements and how they differ/have influenced one another. As well as learn a bit more about some of the famous artists whose work is on display at the Tate.

More knowledge about art!

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Post-session responses

All participants either agreed or strongly agreed to Q. 1 **'I feel that I have enhanced my curiosity about art history'**.

In terms of what they found most interesting; participants replied:

'Learning about the context behind making the sculptures, as well as the historical contexts they were made in.'

'Kate was wonderful at contextualising the work and raising new contemporary questions – it really opens up the way we enjoy art.'

'Reflections on curation.'

'Being guided around an exhibition with a critical eye/ from a feminist / critical race perspective.'

'How we were able to analyse the art without restrictions and speak matter of factly about the critiques we had.'

'Sharing different ideas with people from different education and cultural backgrounds.'

All participants agreed or strongly agreed to Q. 2 **'I enjoyed working collaboratively to explore works of art.'**

They described the value of looking at art with a group:

'Seeing different perspectives and being able to collaborate in coming up with new ideas.'

'Diversity of perspectives; exploring plural understandings of aesthetics; realising your own perception is limited!'

'There are many different perspectives you get to explore that your own mind might not even conjure up. Like in our particular group, we had a child's perspective, which helped myself and I think many others to see things in a simpler light.'

'It's nice to have people to share thoughts with.'

'I think that art has much more impact on people's daily life than I thought.'

'We got to meet so many new people with similar interests.'

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In response to Q. 3 **'The approaches to seeing and critiquing art discussed in this session have relevance to my day-to-day life', the responses agreed or strongly agreed with two participants N/A.**

In explaining further, they wrote:

'Reflecting upon gender imbalances in art.'

'Because the rationale is similar to regular problem-solving and work.'

'In taking in/looking for more information in order to draw a conclusion. Developing key skills including analysis and prioritising data.'

'See things from different angles. Try to ask colleagues thoughts on the same thing. I believe I could work out my answer more effectively.'

'Critiquing art helps me to be more critical in everyday life, observing how information is presented to us and always being mindful that things can be framed in certain lights to further agendas of powerful groups in society.'

'I think particularly with the larger sculpture of the prisoners we discussed what implications that has in our lives and our current socio-political climate.'

'Art is in everything.'

All except 2 participants, who were N/A, wrote that they agreed or strongly agreed with Q. 4 **'I would like to develop my own creative responses within museums and within my job in the future.'**

This was possible because:

'Within my studies in terms of coming up with more collaborative/creative solutions.'

'Methods I would use are thinking outside the box, getting as many perspectives as possible, disrupting the regular by experimenting and testing.'

'I'm not sure right now! But I hope with more exposure and experience I will! Or I'll create a new front for medicine and art.'

'I think I am lucky enough to be a person that applies creativity to most of my endeavours already and I think it's a huge reason why I enjoy art and cultural exploration and galleries because I always relate them to my life.'

'Just by bringing my focus on smaller details and then combining them into a bigger picture.'

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'As an educator I am always looking for different creative ways to engage students in topics and communicate information through lots of media.'

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The clay modelling session at Tate Modern.

Concluding Reflections

Overall, this session was a success. All objectives, key questions, and participant expectations were met and considered, and it is clear from participant responses that the students found the approaches and content of the tour exciting, interesting, and relevant.

While several students commented that they found the art historical and contextual information fascinating and important, the majority cited the open and interactive approach to objects as the most valuable and applicable part. They appreciated having a space to question and share ideas and experiences, without any assumed knowledge. By centring discussion around details and art-objects the answers could be found through close-looking and interdisciplinary problem-solving approaches. In line with inquiry-based teaching approaches, the open questions I posed during the session included: 'How does this sculpture make you feel?'; 'What techniques has Rodin employed to create this effect?'; 'Does this remind you of anything in your contemporary context?'; 'How might this have been displayed differently?' Three students stated after the session – without prompting – that they would employ this mode of looking and analysing next time they visited a gallery with a friend. Student feedback also included the comment: 'I really appreciate Kate for how she approached the exhibition and took fear out of art and understanding and interpreting it and I would like to implement that thinking in future exhibitions that I visit.'

The safe-space developed within this session allowed for complex conversations around race and gender, and it is evident from feedback that this was well received. Art objects offer a series of provocations, and it is up to us as viewers to activate relevant discussions and to devise new ways of seeing and problem solving. The works included within the Rodin exhibition evidence how these ideas can be made manifest in art: as a collaborative process of working through and finding new solutions.

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Beyond the open questioning approach, the practical hands-on session therefore created an unusual and fun experience within the museum space, which allowed students to “cement” their memories and to share these with other members of the group. Undermining conceptions that museums have to be quiet reverent spaces, the group laughed and played together while discussing formal assemblage effects and techniques for creating the illusion of grandeur.

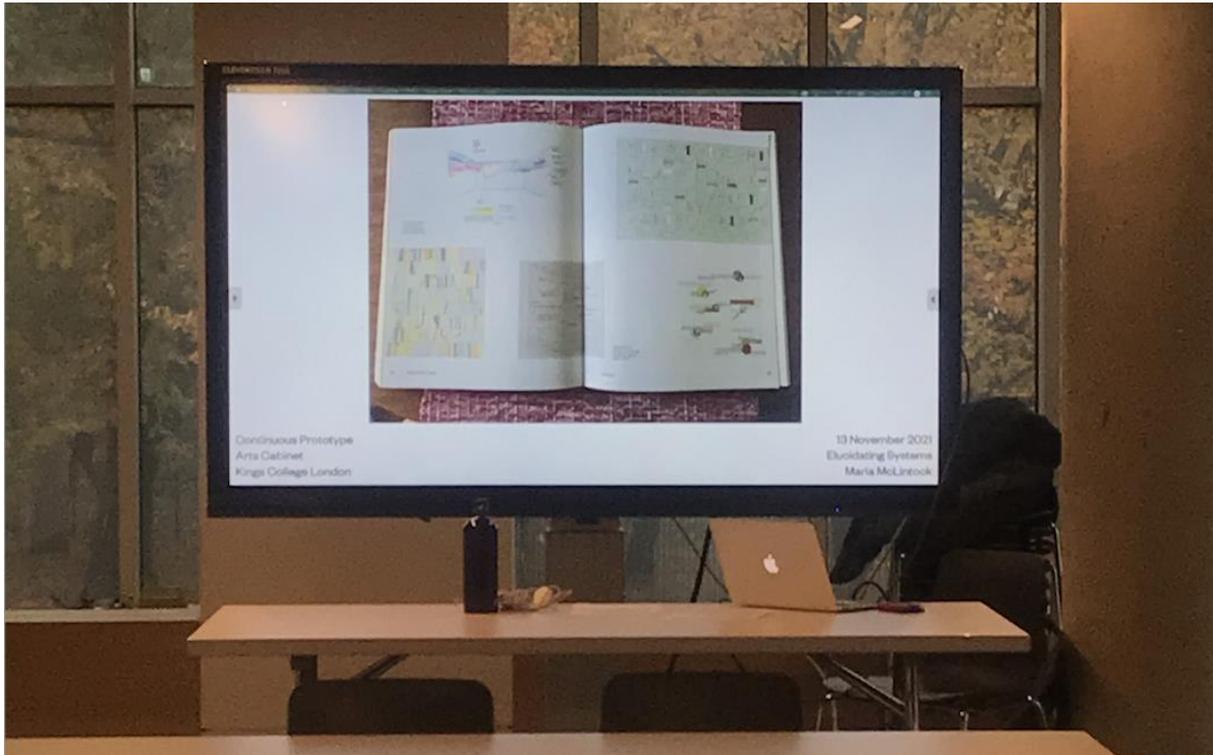
One student suggested that it would be helpful to have more time to explore themes and discuss experiences before and after the session, and another stated that in future they would like a longer, expanded practical creative component. It was also discussed that it would be good to have time to eat or have coffee together as another, more informal, space in which to talk about art. More than the pre-session questionnaire suggested, participants were keen to use the session as a way to meet new people, and to create an alternative creative network.

Although the participants came from different disciplines, backgrounds, and age-groups, the session generated a space in which to problem solve, share ideas, and engage in collective, creative, responses. There was a widely shared conversation about the desire for the session to take place again: which is also evidenced in participant feedback.

Recommendations for future sessions:

- Students should be advised that if they do not arrive at a certain time, they will not be able to attend the tour. Many students arrived late, and this meant that I had to leave the gallery to let them in. Another option would be for students to receive their own ticket in advance.
- It would be good to meet inside the gallery space so that everyone can go to the toilet and check their bags before the start time.
- In terms of student feedback, it would be helpful for all data to be stored online to assist evaluation processes.
- For health and safety reasons, the maximum number of students with one guide should be 12.

**The Continuous Prototype
Pedagogies for flourishing in complexity
Sat 13 November – 2-5pm
The Design Museum, London**



The workshop took place in the Creative Workshop at the Design Museum, London.

This workshop equipped students across schools at Kings College London with ways to implement designed thinking in approaching areas of complexity and uncertainty within their disciplines. Contemporary society is marked by entangled and overlapping crises – from climate catastrophe to the displacement crisis, poverty to access to education – thus elucidating the ways in which such issues arise is increasingly urgent. Design can be used as a powerful tool to not only make sense of this opaque context, but also to intervene with alternative systems and prototypes for change.

The workshop began with an introductory lecture that comprised of examples of design projects where designers have connected across practice, issue, or method, encouraging collaboration and allyship across urgent socio-political issues. Neoliberalism has created a social, political and economic context where the natural environment is rendered as extractable, human life disposable and bureaucratic structures have accelerated, thus instantiating a context where systems are increasingly impenetrable to navigate. Furthermore, I equipped attendees with ways to approach work with an ethical and situated awareness, ensuring that their role as researcher is considered laterally.

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This process is not about solving, but mapping, predicting, building and unbuilding, connecting and unearthing.

They put together the above systems map, drawing on their expertise in studying politics, international relations and education.

Together, they noted overlapping issues between education crises in the Global South, and climate change knowledges.

Brief 2: Designing Prototypes for social innovation

Students then worked together to design three prototypes/tools for social innovation that could be used to design a preferable future in relation to these overlapping problems.

They picked up on terminologies expanded on in the introductory lecture (situated awareness, positionality, vantage point) to determine how these prototypes/tools should be thought through within the specific context in which they are operating.

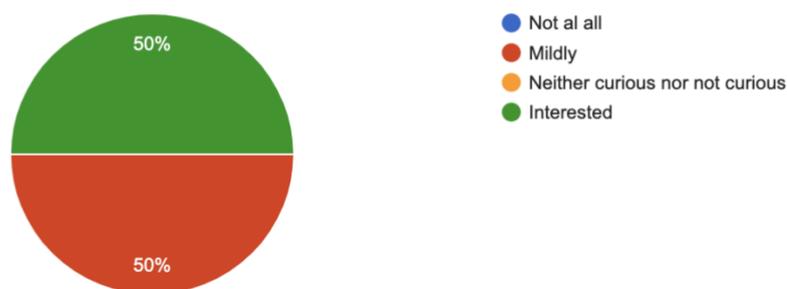
They co-designed a VR-intervention that could be used to educate pupils in the Global North around climate catastrophe.

Evaluation

Pre-Workshop Questionnaire:

How curious are you about design?

4 responses



The group was split across those curious about design, and those not.

Although 15 attendees had initially signed up to attend the workshop, only three participants joined.

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This could have been due to the fact that the workshop took place on a Saturday and that it was free to attend, thus making commitment difficult to ascertain.

However, those who did attend commented that the lack of attendance was an unplanned advantage, as I was able to spend more focused time with each participant. I also ensure to design the workshop in such a way that the ability to complete it was not contingent on the number of attendees present.

Before joining the workshop, the attendees demonstrated a 50/50 split across those interested in design and design-led thinking and those not. T

The three attendees who joined came from International Politics, Education and International Relations courses, thus quite a diverse set of students who would not obviously have a connection to design. Those who attended worked together productively and were highly engaged in the briefs set.

Post Workshop questionnaires:

In the follow up evaluation questionnaire, I found it fascinating that I received a 100% response rate to the question, 'How relevant was the introductory lecture to your own practice?'

Furthermore, I also received 100% response rates to the question, 'do you feel better equipped to apply social consciousness and critical reflection in your future projects?'

Finally, one attendee remarked that I explained issues that they knew nothing about prior to joining the workshop very well.

Arts Cabinet x Kings College London Pedagogies for flourishing in complexity and uncertainty

Workshop / Continuous Prototype
2 – 5pm, Sat 13 November
Maria McLintock, the Design Museum

Please circle your response as appropriate

1. How relevant was the introductory lecture to your own practice?
Not at all Sort of Neutral Quite Very

2. Do you feel better equipped to think through complexity and uncertainty?
Not at all Sort of Neutral Quite Very

3. Has your understanding of a situated approach to working with communities expanded?
Not at all Sort of Neutral Quite Very

4. Do you feel better equipped to apply social consciousness and critical reflection in your future projects?
Not at all Sort of Neutral Quite Very

5. Do you feel better equipped to unearth complex and entangled systems and crisis that may impact your work?
Not at all Sort of Neutral Quite Very

6. Do you have any broader feedback or comments, such as ways the workshop could have been improved, or things you liked about it.

The size of the workshop was an unplanned advantage for discussion. It proved useful to provide personal experiences in context.

Workshop / Continuous Prototype
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Not at all Sort of Neutral Quite Very

6. Do you have any broader feedback or comments, such as ways the workshop could have been improved, or things you liked about it.

I am very satisfied with this workshop
which I found is very engaging.

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Pedagogies for flourishing in complexity and uncertainty

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2 – 5pm, Sat 13 November
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5. Do you feel better equipped to unearth complex and entangled systems and crisis that may impact your work?

Not at all Sort of Neutral Quite **Very**

6. Do you have any broader feedback or comments, such as ways the workshop could have been improved, or things you liked about it.

I really liked the workshop. Maria exclaimed things I knew nothing about very well and clearly. She was helpful in helping us think and find solutions. It was really great meeting her and talking with her.

In summary, the feedback to the workshop was highly positive, however due to the low numbers, it is difficult to ascertain a true reflection.

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London 6 December 2021

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