

**Title: Alternative to What? Exploring Alternative Art
Schools Through Spatiality, Participation and
Performative Tools**

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requirements of Nottingham Trent University for
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This thesis has not been submitted for a comparable academic award.

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and incredible patience
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1932-2020

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1929-2020

Abstract

Title: Alternative to What? Exploring Alternative Art Schools Through Spatiality, Participation and Performative Tools

Situated within the intersections of art pedagogies, art school histories, speculative education, and spatial theories, this practice research PhD investigates the characteristics of alternative art schools to establish the edges of the Alternative Art School and identify what makes the *alternative* in art pedagogy. The research enters, connects and encounters alternative art school spaces through an embodied investigation of spatiality and participation. An overarching interest has framed this study: *What and where are the spaces of alternative art schools? Can the alternative art school be situated outside of the normative pattern that currently determines the present and potential future forms of the art institution?*

Alternative art schools are currently under-researched, with existing studies primarily focused on peer learning, self-organised art education, and socially engaged projects within the context of radical pedagogy and institutional critique. Offered here is a distinctive longitudinal study presented within a Research Catalogue, written exegesis, and analogue archival boxes that allow for the voices within the alternative art schools and their spatialities to be at the fore. This study presents a novel form of extensive multi-layered social, historical, and graphical narrative.

The research employs a bricolage methodology, following Brad Haseman's advocacy for a performative paradigm that initiates transformative change. In this context, the investigation takes as a focus the systems and spaces of the alternative art school, moving beyond representation to mobilise research as practice. Drawing upon theories that include Black studies, performance studies, institutional critique, and non-linguistic approaches, this research approach is

directed by Chantal Mouffe's notion of the *agonistic* and Michel Serres's concept of *the parasite* to introduce an interventionist and embodied form of investigation within an alternative art school. As a practice-research PhD, the work integrates drawing, moving image, sound, field recordings, and text as tools for both creating and presenting knowledge sharing, through processes of mapping.

The written exegesis is defined in two parts. Part 1 contributes a deep mapping and establishes the alternative art school context, histories, timeframes, geographical locations, and manifestations. In doing so, the study applies modes of listing and diagramming, presenting a new reading of the alternative art school. Part 2 introduces a distinctive research methodology and framework designed to intervene, disrupt, and consider the necessary and possible approaches to examine participation and spatiality within alternative art school spaces. This methodology informed a more embodied research mode, bringing together the polyfocal perspectives of three protagonist roles within a primary case study of The Other Master of Art (TOMA), a UK-based alternative art school.

The overall PhD claims three contributions that can be used to define the edges of the alternative art school: firstly, a deep mapping of alternative art schools, secondly a case study of TOMA and participatory voices; and finally, a Diagonal Practices Toolkit for individuals interested in establishing alternative art schools or those conducting research in the field of art education.

Keywords: agonistic, alternative art education, alternative art schools, artistic research, bricolage methodology, conceptual spatialities, disruptive modes of participation, immersive methodologies, informal learning spaces, interventionist investigations, parasite, pedagogical practice, performative tools, polyfocal perspectives, The Other Master of Art (TOMA), transformative change.

Table of Contents

Title Page	i
Declaration	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	vi
Components	x
Abbreviations, Acronyms and Definitions	xii
Glossary	xiv
Introduction	1
Organisation and Navigation	4
Motivation	5
Rationale	6
Upon/Into: Definitions and Lexical Play	10
Research Conditions	12
Introduction to the Thesis Chapters	13
Methodology	18
Context	18
Assembling a Bricolage Methodology	20
Literature	21
Developing the Polyfocal Lens	23
Methods	26
Interviews	27
Introducing the Foundational Tools	28
The Writing Approach	29
Part 1 Defining	31
Chapter 1 Mapping	32
Listing	34
Genograms	40
Features of Art Education	49
Chapter 2 Spatiality	55
Establishing the Five Spatialities	58
Spatial Topologies	58
Parasitism	73

Part 2 Disrupting	84
Chapter 3 Enacting	85
The Three Protagonist Roles	86
The Protagonist's Tools and Props	94
Sites of Investigation	96
Spatial Disruptions	102
Performing Space	119
Diagonal Practices D\P Toolkit	122
 Chapter 4 The Other MA	 126
It's Not Far, and It's a Good Place to Go	128
The TOMA Crits	136
The TOMA Project Space	145
Operating Outside Any Pattern	156
 Chapter 5 Contribution and Conclusions	 165
The Enquiry and Research Journey	165
Outline of Contributions	167
Implementation and Potential of the Toolkit	173
Conclusions: Desire Lines and Boundaries	174
 Image List	 178
 Reference List	 181

Components

The Research Catalogue

The Research Catalogue <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223267> is the visual, audio, and textual documentation of performed and enacted research activities, which operate in tandem with this written exegesis.

Exhibition Component

Box A (lightbox)

Genogram 01

Genogram 02

Genogram 03

Genogram 04

Key to the Genograms

Box T (TOMA archival box)

TOMA Interviews

Alternative art schools and TOMA interviews, 2016 to 2018.

TOMA Archive

A collection of promotional material, objects and ephemera from TOMA.

Interludes

The interludes are coloured A4 pages included within chapters of the exegesis. They provide a moment to pause, draw attention to the corresponding Research Catalogue exposition, and offer supplementary visual or narrative materials relevant to the text.

Chronology of Interviews

TOMA 1 2016-2017

Interview Transcript: MB Michaela Bannon

Interview Transcript: RB Richard Baxter

Interview Transcript: MCK Matthew Curtis-Knight

Interview Transcript: EE Emma Edmondson

Interview Transcript: LH Laurence Harding

Interview Transcript: EM Emma Mills

Interview Transcript: TN Tricia North

Interview Transcript: IT Ian Ryan

Interview Transcript: AS Anna B. Sexton

Interview Transcript: IM Imogen Welch

TOMA 2 2017-2018

Interview Transcript: LA Lolly Adams

Interview Transcript: FB Fiona Bennett

Interview Transcript: KB Kristina Bragg

Interview Transcript: BM Blandine Martin

Interview Transcript: GM Gabrielle Milanese

Interview Transcript: GP Grace Price

Interview Transcript: IS Ian Segrave

Interview Transcript: GS Gemma Shaw

Interview Transcript: GS Gloria Sulli

Interview Transcript: MW Marie Walbey

Other Alternatives

***Interview Transcript: MC Maurice Carlin, Islington Mill Art Academy**

***Interview Transcript: FC Felipe Castelblanco, Para-Site School**

Interview Transcript: AC Alan Clark, Braziers Park

Interview Transcript: SF Simon Faithfull, Braziers Park

Interview Transcript: KMc Kim McAleese, Curatorial Curriculum Grand Union

Interview Transcript: , Chto Delat

Interview Transcript: JR Jon Reardon, Goldsmiths, MA Art and Politics

Interview Transcript: ST Sam Thorne, Open School East

Interview Transcript: HW Henry Ward, Freelands Foundation

Interview Transcript: MW Michael Whitby, Retreat

***Interview Transcript: LW Laura Wilson, Syllabus**

(*Three interviews emphasised are included in Box T)

Interview Consent Forms

Copyright Consent Forms

Abbreviations, Acronyms and Definitions

AAS	Alternative Art School
AASW	Alternative Art School Weekender
AltMFA	Alternative Art School, Masters Fine Art
AD	Articulate Detective (one of the three protagonist roles)
Box A	Alternative art school mapping in a digital and physical box
Box T	TOMA archive and interviews in a digital and physical box
CIC	Community Interest Company
DP	Diagonal Practices
EC	Evaluative Contributor (one of the three protagonist roles)
HE	Higher Education
IMAA	Islington Mill Art Academy
LiR	Lecture in Reverse
NAC	Nida Art Colony
NTU	Nottingham Trent University
OSE	Open School East
RC	Research Catalogue
REF	Research Excellence Framework
SotD	School of the Damned
SQ	Silent Questions
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
TOMA	The Other MA
TOMAssociates	Artists who have been on the TOMA programme and then continue to access parts of the next programme to maintain and build a network.
VO	Vigilant Observer (one of the three protagonist roles)

The Alternative Art School

Within this context, I sought to formulate a definition of the alternative art school as one that operates as an autonomous place of art education and that is outside of government-regulated institutions, a place where participants develop and or engage with a programme of study for an extended period longer than three months; a school with a programme that is positioned as equivalent in level to a Master of Arts / Fine Arts (MA/MFA).¹

¹ The New Contemporaries website 2018 described the alternative art school with the phrase 'alternative learning programme refers to programmes formally recognised by the sector that operate broadly as alternatives to BA or MA study'. Currently, these programmes must have been established before 2016 and offer artists an opportunity to develop their practice in an environment outside of a 'college'. For clarification, New Contemporaries state 'College' "refers to Higher Education institutions offering a recognised degree qualification at undergraduate or postgraduate level". In 2017 New Contemporaries started accepting applications from a list of art schools, including seven alternative art schools: AltMFA, Islington Mill Academy, Open School East, School of the Damned, The Syllabus, TOMA, and Turps Art School.

Art School

The term ‘art school’ may require a brief examination to clarify its specific meaning and reference in my research context. I am referencing here the Victorian Art School up to the post-1970s, the small-scale provincial art school in a UK context. I would define the art school as an educational institution or establishment specifically focused on providing programmes and courses instructing various forms of visual and creative arts. Art schools are small local and regional art colleges, centrally located in towns and cities, housed in purpose-built Victorian buildings, like the one I attended in Bolton in the late 1970s.² In looking for a straightforward definition of *art school*, I found much written in the history of the European art academy from the Renaissance to the twentieth century, the avant-garde, the educational turn, and the politicisation of art education, but failed to locate a succinct definition within an academic text for simply *art school*.³

Institution

I deliberately employ the terms *institution* and *normative institution* to refer to the formal regulated systems, structures, and spaces of art education within a UK higher educational setting such as a university. To use the historical terms *art academy* or *art school* for the PhD did not convey the considerable external factors that now impact contemporary art education. When mentioning the *normative institution*, I refer to the university, particularly the larger-scale institutions that emerged post-1992. These institutions began to absorb the UK regional art schools, emphasising the artists’ experience within their structures. These normative institutions offer programmes and courses encompassing a wide range of artistic disciplines. They typically aim to encourage the development of artistic skills and techniques alongside conceptual expression amongst their students.

² Beck, J., and Cornford, M., 2014. *The art school and the culture shed*. Kingston upon Thames: The Centre for Useless Splendour, Kingston University. Frith and Horne remind us that ‘every small town has its art school’. Beck and Cornford acknowledge that there were around 157 purpose-built art schools in 1957 that were funded by local education authorities. They suggest there are currently less than twelve. John Beck and Matthew Cornford have spent many years undertaking an ‘archaeological’ project, documenting through photography the ‘material legacy’, the external spaces or locations of the dedicated architectural buildings (some reconfigured from the Victorian technical schools) that had once housed the local art school.

³ Such as in the reissue of Pevsner, N., 2014. *Art academies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press and Nicholas Houghton’s 2008 paper, *History of the Fine Art Curriculum*. However, obtaining a succinct definition of art school was surprisingly tricky. Indeed, Nigel Llewellyn (2007 p. 153) suggests there is little serious research on art schools being undertaken in the UK. I have recently come across a text that documents the history of the art school in the nineteenth century and studies its environmental significance. Lawrence, R., 2020. *The Victorian art school*, London: Routledge; 1st edition.

GLOSSARY

\dr\ De

Rethinking and undoing.

\dr'zæ lɪnz\ Desire Line

An indication of movement, a directed journeying across, through, but not around. The urge of those wishing to move with intention. Off-piste.

\dar'ægənəl 'præktɪsɪz\ Diagonal Practices (D\P)

A method of agnostic intention and critique with an underlying premise of care. Implemented as research gestures.

\dægrə'mætɪk 'krɒsɪŋ\ Diagrammatic Crossing

This refers to the use of diagrams or visual representations that are layered or meet in other ways at intersections or interactions to create new readings.

\di: spɛɪs\ D-Space

The space of disruption.

\fæb ə'leɪt / fæb ə'leɪʃən\ Fabulate/Fabulation

Engaging in inventive creation of speculative future narratives, particularly collaborative art pedagogical research with other individuals and beyond one's own immediate field.

\ɛf spɛɪs\ F-Space

The fivefold multidimensional, interconnected space.

\frɪk tɪv\ Frictive

Variation of Friction. The application of interventions, interruptions, rifts, and disruptions (rather than resistance or conflict).

\genogræm\ Genogram

A time-based mapping process that begins a possible genealogy of TOMA and other alternative art schools. The Genogram is significant because it offers both a horizontal and vertical reading.

\ɛl spɛɪs\ L-Space

The borrowed spaces that we could operate 'within'.

'maʊθpi:s\ Mouthpiece

Linguistic composition or definition on an A3 sheet of paper.

\ɛn spɛɪs\ N-Space

The normative, recognisable, institutional space.

\raɪzo 'mætɪk 'mæpɪŋ\ Rhizomatic Mapping

To elaborate, shape, and disrupt connecting routes or discover and engage with the interstitial spaces of these routes.

\'shəʊləʊ pəʊɪm\ Scholé Poem

A free verse poem that serves as a reflective account, elucidating activities and events instigated by the three protagonist roles within one of the five spatialities.

\'saɪlənt 'kwɛstʃənz\ Silent Questions

Written provocations, questions, prompts, and exercises on sun-yellow paper.

\'smʌgʱlɪŋ\ Smuggling

The ability to bring alternative art pedagogies and approaches into the institutional space without the institution knowing. Applied by the three protagonist roles.

See: Harney, S. and Moten, F., 2013. *The undercommons: fugitive planning and black study*. London: MINOR COMPOSITIONS.

\θri: prəʊ'tæɡənɪst rəʊlz\ Three Protagonist Roles

Three protagonist characterisations that offer a triocular lens from which to view, intervene and disrupt art education spaces and pedagogical practices.

\taɪm'bæŋkɪŋ\ Timebanking

A question of the reciprocal, in what ways do we use time and the space of exchange?

\treɪn krɪ't \ Train Crit

A train journey contributes to a distinct, unpredictable and dynamic environment for staging and critiquing work.

\vi: spɛɪs \ V-Space

The virtual, digital and online spaces that some alternative art schools choose to work in and with.

Introduction

Title: Alternative to What? Exploring Alternative Art Schools Through Spatiality, Participation and Performative Tools

This practice research PhD focuses on Alternative Art Schools. It was initiated through the three-fold investigation: to identify and map the landscape of alternative art schools, to better understand the conditions and characteristics of those art schools, and to explore how the ethos, systems or ways of operating that underpin the notion of the alternative art school might inform approaches to pedagogy within the art institution and mainstream higher education. The premise of the thesis centres on sharing; sharing knowledge, tools, and insights, through the application of three protagonist roles developed as part of the practice-research. This is a practice-based enquiry rather than a theoretical PhD. While theoretical ideas are explored, they are activated through a practice of mapping, archiving and performing, with insights emerging from practical applications. Theoretical frameworks are used to generate new forms of knowledge and oral histories, repositioning the archive outside institutional frameworks and situating it in alternative contexts. Archival and mapping processes are developed by combining forms of drawing, listing, words, moving image, sound and print, through field recordings, workshops, frameworks, into layered cartographies. Thus, allowing for the exploration of different kinds of material ephemera to become central areas of interest at different points within the PhD. These elements are fluid emphasising unfixity and adaptability as central to the practice.

An overarching interest has framed this study: What and where are the spaces of alternative art schools? Can the alternative art school be situated outside of the normative pattern that currently determines the present and potential future forms of the art institution? The Cambridge Dictionary defines pattern as “a particular way in which something is done, is organised or happens: a pattern is a regularity in the world, in human-made design, or abstract ideas.”⁴ This enquiry is a response to my encounters with the normative patterns, regularities and frameworks found whilst residing within the art institution for over forty years. I have experienced profound shifts within this educational

⁴ One definition of pattern is given as: *A particular way in which something is done, is organised or happens. A pattern is a regularity in the world, in human-made design, or in abstract ideas. As such, the elements of a pattern repeat in a predictable manner.* Cambridge Dictionary, 2022. *Search for Pattern* [online]. Cambridge University Press. Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/pattern> [Accessed 31 January 2022].

context in relation to the attitudes, expectations, conventions, and pressures of both studying and working within the art institution. These changes are marked by a significant increase in external frameworks of regulation that oversee notions of quality and standardisation, which, together with an increased emphasis on efficiency, economics and professionalisation, risks restricted accessibility to arts education and the homogenisation of arts pedagogy. This PhD research has been guided by my interest in *who* participates in art education, *how* and *when*.

Whilst elements of a pattern can be said to repeat predictably, what happens if we try to move outside the predictability of that pattern? What makes the alternative art school alternative? In what ways do alternative approaches challenge conventional institutional norms? How does the alternative art school navigate or resist the perpetuation of dominant pedagogical forms? Through this PhD, I have attempted to identify forms of art education that are outside of the normative pattern that might lead to more equitable possibilities for art education both now and in the future. In its search for forms of art education that are outside of the normative pattern, one original critical aspect of this PhD is the lens of *spatiality*. In its search for more equitable possibilities for art education that is outside of the normative pattern, this PhD has an original focus on *participation*. Thereby the enquiry examines the spaces in which alternative art schools are located and the forms of participation that are activated within them. It accommodates an investigation of the spatial dynamics of alternative pedagogies, bringing their forms of participation, behaviours, and operational modes to the fore. Through a focus on the spatial and participatory aspects of alternative art schools, this enquiry seeks to discern their unique models and how these diverge from traditional institutional frameworks to establish what makes alternative art schools, alternative.

In practice, the core aims of this thesis are:

- To investigate alternative art schools through a lens of spatiality.
- To investigate alternative art schools and their modes of participation through their organisational, pedagogical systems and structures.
- To originate disruptive tools that could be applied to challenge and unsettle institutional complacency.

These three aims - with their focus on spatiality, participation and disruptive tools - are reflected in the three-fold nature of this PhD enquiry. The PhD has evolved over a sustained period of time across several years (2016–2024), which allowed the three following threads of enquiry to emerge:

- *Phase 1:* The first phase of enquiry involved an attempt to locate alternative art schools geographically and temporally. This phase involved extensive listing, mapping, and diagramming to identify the landscape of the alternative art school: What are the locations, durations, timeframes, relationships, and lineages of the alternative art school? I conceived this research phase as a systematic study to reveal, identify, and document the different spatial topologies of the alternative art school.
- *Phase 2:* This phase of the enquiry investigates alternative art schools through modes of participation. Drawing on different examples of alternative art schools, I set out to explore how participants engage with the spaces and pedagogical structures of alternative art schools. I was interested in what forms of participation contribute to alternative art schools' overall ethos and culture. This phase included my involvement as an observer-participant in a primary case study of *The Other MA (TOMA)* throughout the duration of the PhD.
- *Phase 3:* This has involved developing a toolkit of practices, what I call *Diagonal Practices* (which I will outline later), for investigating and disrupting spaces and modes of participation within the (alternative) art school.

These three phases have required an evolving methodology and methods. I have considered what kinds of methodology can be used to investigate (alternative) art education. In turn, what kind of methodology can be used to unsettle art education? For the PhD, I have employed a research methodology that is singular but not static. The research arc has moved through distinctive phases employing an interventionist deep mapping, initially through a listing and diagramming phase to embodied participation and an ethnographical performative practice. Within this are differing research approaches that are not wholly independent of each other but are interconnected. As the project has evolved so too has its sense of institutional critique, where the theoretical touchstones of Chantal Mouffe's notion of *agonism* and Michel Serres' writing on *the parasite* have informed the direction of my thinking and supported the development of the conceptual framework. In one sense, the entirety of the PhD could be deemed a counter-mapping project facilitated via performed interventions, which employ various plotting techniques to examine spatiality and participation. The contribution of this research project reflects the three-fold nature of this PhD enquiry: it offers an original deep mapping of the spatialities of the alternative art school; it provides an in-depth longitudinal examination of an alternative art school with a

focus on participation; it develops an original toolkit of practices for intervening in and disrupting educational norms and systems. During the time of the PhD (2016-2024), alternative pedagogies and alternative art schools have been increasingly subjects for discussion and deliberation within and outside the institution. The development of my framework and positionality has contributed to these discourses and permitted insights to be taken as starting points for further exploration of transformative art education.

The sections within this introduction will outline my approach to the thesis chapters, motivation, rationale, definitions, research conditions and methodology. However, before I proceed to the introduction to the chapters, it may be useful to give a sense of the organisation and navigation of the overall thesis.

Organisation and Navigation

This research approach has encompassed conducting complex, layered, and multifaceted explorations combined as artistic projects and textual analysis. The research trajectory progressed through distinct stages utilising an interventionist deep mapping approach, beginning with a phase of listing and diagramming, leading to embodied participation and ethnographic performative practices. The overall submission involves three components, which are:

- (i) this written exegesis,
- (ii) <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223267>, a digital Research Catalogue exposition is the visual, audio, and textual documentation of performed and enacted research activities, which operate in tandem with this written exegesis and
- (iii) an exhibition component of archival boxes as an experiential dimension of the study.

Exegesis Chapters	Research Catalogue (RC) Sections	Exhibition Component
1 Defining	Defining and Mapping	BOX A
2 Spatiality	Spatiality	
3 Enacting	Enacting + Diagonal Practices	
4 The Other MA (TOMA)	TOMA	BOX T
5 Conclusion/Contribution		

The written exegesis is comprised of five chapters, each of which has corresponding sections on the Research Catalogue, an online platform (and which are each outlined later in the introduction). Chapter 1 is accompanied by Box A, which contains physical examples of the

diagrammatic, listing and mapping. Chapter 4 is accompanied by Box T as an archive of alternative art school and TOMA interviews and collected promotional material, objects and ephemera from TOMA. The Research Catalogue exposition's landing page works in dialogue with the five chapters of the exegesis. To fully grasp the entirety of the PhD, it is recommended to read each chapter in numerical order and in exchange with the Research Catalogue exposition; this approach provides a holistic understanding of the PhD and its interconnected elements. Alternatively, the RC can be accessed via the landing page directly, go to <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223267>.

Motivation

Journeying Across

What has emerged is an extensive journeying across the terrain of alternative art schools and alternative pedagogies, incorporating a strong sense of embodied spatiality. The PhD is drawn from my own experiences of working and studying in specialist art institutions over four decades. As an older Black woman, my identity politic brings unique perspectives and experiences to an embodied study, shaping how I have approached and interpreted the research. My interest in alternative art education and other forms of pedagogies has evolved from a developing frustration with(in) the institution and recognition that there are different ways of working that we could adapt and adopt. The research carries my passion for artistic education as a democratising space, that is, as a catalyst for social change; acknowledging this is perhaps a strangely romantically idealistic view and a product of my own post-war 20th-century education, yet it remains a constant in my commitment. The PhD is timely and relevant given the wider political and cultural complexities. With an increasing awareness of our global responsibilities and rapidly shifting societal and technological infrastructures, these aspects frame the research. New models of artistic education are required; other ways of thinking, systems of work, and other proficiencies will need to be developed.

(de)

This research has been motivated by my ongoing predisposition to decentre and push at the boundaries of artistic education, to develop the tools for questioning and disrupting the normative institution, for us to start to think otherwise. This work is also part of a broader growing comprehension that decentring as a critical practice functions to displace and

transform the neo-liberal normative institution more generally, allowing for other skills, voices, and modes of thinking to be observed. Scholars Remi Joseph-Salisbury and Laura Connelly discuss centring and decentring as positions we take within the institution and the need to decentre ourselves to undertake what they term the *doing*. Joseph-Salisbury and Connelly (2021) challenge the dominance of institutionalised forms of learning and expertise toward what they propose as a “decentring of the university as the site of knowledge production”, though few concrete examples are given.⁵ The prefix *de*, which indicates the undoing of the word following it, is significant in the recognition that a shift is urgently needed to de-capitalise, de-industrialise, and de-colonise society in a broad sense, and, more specifically, to de-institute normative art education. Applying (*de*) considers the provisions and tools needed to care for and sustain the most precious of our educational abilities: creativity. Before I proceed to the introduction to the Chapters, it may be useful to give a sense of the organisation and navigation of the overall thesis.

Rationale

The extant literature has studied the academy, artist-led spaces, peer learning, self-organised art education, collaborative practices, and support systems within a context of *radical pedagogy*, *institutional critique* and the *educational turn*.⁶ However, my contextual survey uncovered research gaps, particularly in participation and the spaces of contemporary autonomous alternative art schools.⁷ This thesis explores some of these omissions by applying the thematic lens of spatiality; in doing so, the PhD contributes to a broader understanding of the challenges and resilience of alternative art schools not only within the context of the UK but also within the global community of arts and artistic education.⁸

⁵ Joseph-Salisbury, R. and Connelly, L., 2021. *Anti-racist scholar-activism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 207–209.

⁶ Nina Möntmann, Sam Thorne (Nottingham Contemporary) and Emily Pethick (The Showroom, London) have fundamental texts that discuss artist-led institutions; Pethick’s conversation exchanges highlight the work critical and discursive arts-led spaces of Sarai in New Delhi, the innovative 16 Beaver Street Art Space and Copenhagen Free School (2001–2013).

⁷ Within academic texts there has been an emphasis on documenting educational platforms primarily through an historical lens and in relation to the Staatliche Bauhaus model. Examples include Black Mountain College (1933–1957) and Joseph Beuys’ Free International University (1973–1974). The documentary film *Fully Awake: Black Mountain College* is a rare opportunity to hear from individuals about their experiences of being art students at Black Mountain College. It should be noted that this is a retrospective account, looking back 50–60 years before the making of the film.

⁸ There are several significant factors that have transpired during the research. In 2021, the UK Government imposed a 50% funding cut to arts subjects at the higher education (HE) level in England. The research was primarily undertaken before the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it is briefly mentioned, the study does not go into detail on the effects of coronavirus mitigation measures on alternative art schools. Finally, the study sits more generally in the context of global instability and acceleration of uncertainties, which artists, curators, writers, and cultural institutions have termed a ‘time of catastrophe’; I first came across this phrase used in the title for a conference, 21–22 February 2019 at University of Oxford. The conference asked artists and cultural institutions to rethink art production in the context of social, economic, and planetary concerns.

The emergence of austerity and a post-European Union society in the UK, the consequences of over a decade of Conservative government, and the impact of an ongoing neoliberal agenda on education underpin this study. Artists and educators in the UK have been at the forefront of a campaign against introducing the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) by 2025.⁹ The dismay they have expressed at the lack of any compulsory creative subjects within the proposed qualification is at odds with the UK government's perpetual reference to the creative industries' income generation. Additionally, there is an increasing movement of institutions of education being transferred from governmental and state responsibility to that of privatised for-profit suppliers and consultants.¹⁰

The research is situated within broader societal and educational contexts, addressing concerns regarding artistic education and the UK education landscape post-Brexit. Thereby the specificity of the PhD focus is primarily on exploring the existence and impact of alternative art education within a UK context, viewed through a personal lens which includes my experience of working within UK art institutions. Consequently, the study stems from my voice with a working-class background, childhood in a multicultural home, attending a regional art school and a journey through the UK HE art education. This study therefore holds fragments of my history, an imprint of art education, shaped by years of developing and working at the edges, often from the outside, since 1985. As such this study is not focussed on a historical account of UK Higher Education policy, numerous surveys of UK legislation cover this. Rather, it critically explores how alternative art schools operate as autonomous spaces of learning, creativity, and resistance, examining their pedagogical approaches, communal structures, and the ways in which they navigate, challenge, or reimagine the constraints of formal education. **Bullet Point 3.** However, I indirectly acknowledge the influence of domestic policies, including the impact of the Higher Education Council for England (HEFCE), established through the Education Act 1994 under Conservative Prime Minister John Major, and the increased accountability that led to its abolition and replacement in 2016 by the Office for Students (OfS). The introduction of top-up fees (HE Act 2004 under Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair), in shaping the sector is also a significant undercurrent running throughout the research. Additionally, I briefly allude to the broader impact of European frameworks, particularly the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), which has influenced UK higher education through a

⁹ The government's EBacc website states 'by 2025 90% of pupils should be taking the EBacc', a qualification that excludes art subjects. The figures for 2022 show that 38.7% of pupils had taken the qualification.

¹⁰ There has been a blurring of academic and commercial services, with financial services companies such as auditors PricewaterhouseCoopers Ernst and Young, INTU, et al. have repositioned themselves as providers of higher education in addition to established for-profit providers such as fashion, design and art school Istituto Marangoni.

standardisation of qualifications, mobility initiatives, an emphasis on accountability and student parity.¹¹ The UK's history of access to art education is closely tied to funding structures, class dynamics, and cultures around debt. For example, my own experience of free education at Bolton College of Art (1979–1981) and the maintenance allowance at Manchester Polytechnic (1981–1984) highlights a time when regional art schools provided broader access, particularly for working-class students. However, subsequent funding cuts and rising tuition fees have drastically altered this landscape, increasing the burden of debt and limiting opportunities for many.

There are yet further restrictions to academic freedoms, and self-determined academic institutions are being lost as the requirement for monitoring methods derived from accountancy increases through the introduction of performance-based funding systems such as the REF and TEF.¹² This turn has led to art education as competition, visible through league tables and star ratings. As communities of learning, as independent spaces of liberal thought, universities are under threat across the (so-called) global north; for example, the University of Central Europe is considering withdrawing from Budapest as the Hungarian government imposes restrictions on the curriculum.¹³ I conducted this PhD research in the context of the ongoing discussion of funding for those who wish to pursue the arts. Currently, universities in England face cuts of 50% to so-called 'high-cost' subjects.¹⁴

Additionally, the introduction of student fees and the increase in international student numbers needed to support the normative institution cannot be underestimated. Statistics indicate that there has been a decline in home Art and Design Higher Education applications since the peak of 2015.¹⁵ The current context has catalysed potential students

¹¹ This shift towards greater accountability within HE has developed from several factors, including the direct impact of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the Bologna Process of which the United Kingdom was a founder member from 1999. The EHEA ensured parity of student experience by establishing common frameworks such as the *Bologna Process*, standardising degree structures and promoting mobility, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications across member countries. Despite the loss of the ERASMUS mobility exchange programme and access to reduced UK education fees, the UK remains a member of the EHEA, albeit in a revised form since January 2020, post-Brexit. Notably, Scotland currently holds a separate membership from the combined membership of England, Northern Ireland, and Wales.

¹² The Research Exercise Framework (REF) was established in 2014 to 'provide accountability for public investment in research and produce evidence of the benefits of this investment'. It replaced the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE, 1986) introduced by Margaret Thatcher's Government.

¹³ Central Europe University (CEU) in Budapest has been under threat of closure from the Hungarian government since 2016 in a move to control 'illiberal institutions'.

¹⁴ An article by Sam Phillips's editor of R.A. the Royal Academic of Arts London magazine highlights the current UK government's questioning of the economic viability of undertaking an arts course. The article was written before the COVID-19 pandemic but remains relevant to debates on artistic education and this research thesis.

¹⁵ A number of notable factors at a macro level have been eroding the place of Fine Art in education. Firstly, the ever-evolving changes instigated by the UK government to the curriculum. Arts subjects have been withdrawn from the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) curriculum launched in 2010 and the reformed linear A levels introduced in 2018. The new T levels qualification, to be initiated in 2020 and the revised EBacc both place emphasis on the STEM subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. The *Education Policy Institute* (EPI) report of September 2017 into GCSE states that the number of pupils taking arts subjects at GCSE has fallen to the lowest level in a decade. The preliminary UCAS application cycle report 2018, indicates Creative Art and Design courses have seen a year-on-year decline since 2011 (the final year of the £3,375 fees

to reconsider the economic value of study versus its pedagogical value within the institutional/normative art school. In contrast to the regulatory frameworks imposed within Europe, concepts such as intersectionality, social justice, and the more established Black studies from the US have influenced art schools by providing critical frameworks. These frameworks have enabled some UK alternative art schools to focus on Black identity, adapting themes of intersectionality to the UK's domestic context while retaining their critical perspectives. However, while these concepts have been highly significant within academic research in UK art institutions, they have not become core positions in pedagogy or have fully integrated into learning and teaching.

My research, therefore, operates within spaces of uncertainty and amplifies the extent to which alternative art schools address current and future conditions. The thesis contributes to this debate by considering alternative approaches to engaging with art education and amplifying the voices of artists and alternative art schools, providing a platform within the narratives of art education. Educator Carl Gombrich (2016) urges for interdisciplinary approaches that would foster cross-pollination for other kinds of thinking, suggesting, "this revolution is driven partly by the internet and partly by our growing recognition that the most pressing questions for humankind are now of planetary scope."¹⁶ Perhaps this is one solution; new models of artistic education are required; other ways of thinking, systems of working, and proficiencies will need to be developed. There is a need for further study into both institutional and alternative learning spaces. My research into alternative art schools, art pedagogies, and TOMA contributes to filling this knowledge gap.

and 2012 seeing the introduction of the £9,000 fee. As a consequence of the 2012 change, students who graduated in 2017 paid 6.1% interest, despite the 2017 Bank of England base rate being 0.25%.

¹⁶ Gombrich, C., 2016. 5 minutes of thoughts on integrated curricula and liberal thoughts. *Education Interdisciplinary* [online blog]. July 2016. Available at: <http://www.carlgombrich.org/5-minutes-of-thoughts-on-integrated-curricula-and-liberal-arts/> [Accessed 22 June 2018]. Carl Gombrich suggests that "this revolution is driven partly by the internet and partly by our growing recognition that the most pressing questions for humankind are now of planetary scope". Gombrich was on the Academic Advisory Board at IF Projects London: *IF courses are designed to correspond to the level of first-year undergraduate study, but they are not formally accredited. An IF course is an opportunity to think and study at degree level. Students receive a record of their participation in IF courses.* This University Is Free was founded in 2014 by journalist Barbara Gunnell. IF Projects 2018, Team [online]. London: IF. Available at: <http://www.ifproject.co.uk/team/> [Accessed 12 July 2018]. In 2021 Gombrich, together with Ed Fidoe, formerly of School 21 (a specialist school for 4-18-year-olds), will oversee the first intake at the part UK government-funded London Interdisciplinary School. This is the first new university to be granted awarding powers since 1965. It is also significant in that it has no subject specialism but uses creativity as a basis for its pedagogies; Coughlan, S., *New college opening with degrees with no subjects* [online]. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-54725017> [Accessed 11 June 2021]. LIS website, Available at: <https://www.londoninterdisciplinarieschool.org/team/> [Accessed 11 June 2021].

Upon/Into: Definitions and Lexical Play

The language and words of education specifically pique my curiosity and how they shape the way art education is received, interpreted, and understood. Language holds our thoughts and aspirations and directs us to something beyond ourselves, yet language can also contain us, reducing our ability to imagine and cultivate intellectual curiosities. A transformation of art pedagogies can only be affected if language starts to evolve. I discovered that the existing vocabulary needed to adequately capture the essence of close-looking and the embedded and situated positions I aimed to take. Throughout the study, I wanted to examine the language of art instruction to comprehend how terms and linguistics of art education and their associated instructional gestures, structures and systems can be attended to differently and can be intervened upon and into. In this context, I have advocated for an examination of language inherent in alternative art pedagogies and invented conceptual language that operates with my practice; this is sometimes instructional, playful, political and questioning.

Glossary

In addition to my abbreviations, acronyms and definitions, a Glossary on page xiv further illuminates terminologies within the PhD. Devising the Glossary served two purposes: firstly, to bring clarity to my thoughts and processes, to outline the parameters of my chosen approach, and secondly, to navigate the intricate positions of embodied roles and my involvement in the research. The terminology I developed encompassed conceptual and structural elements; some words denote the instruments of enquiry, while others were formulated as a phraseology to facilitate progress from one stage to the next. Each term and phrase has contributed to shaping the framework and discourse of the PhD, holding its depth and scope.

Alternative MA/MFA

This may be an appropriate moment to position the Alternative Art School in relation to institutional models of art education, assessing its proximity to or distance from the key features of an MA/MFA programme. In the UK, a postgraduate degree is typically referred to as an MA or MFA, with additional postgraduate bridging programmes, such as the Graduate Diploma in Art. Each of these institutional programmes aims to refine artistic practice, providing advanced skills, critical theory, and professional development. Their content often includes intensive studio work and academic rigour confirmed through an extended piece of written critical studies, often in dialogue with contemporary artistic and

curatorial theories. These programmes exist to bridge the gap between emerging artists and professional practice, offering space for experimentation while preparing students to be artists. In critiquing the alternative art school as equivalent to the MA/MFA one observation would be that the MA/MFA reinforce the institutional, the institutional and the individual, what we may also term the neoliberal, rather than challenging traditional structures of art education and even the practice of being an artist. The alternative art schools differ in that their very existence is a critique of the collective potential of art education. They are often outside of the mainstream funding systems with a focus on accessibility whilst supporting diverse voices.¹⁷ The alternative art schools are about a relational practice centred on the whole, on community and collaboration, and peer learning. The focus for UK alternative schools such as *Freedom and Balance* or *TOMA* (discussed in this PhD) is on building inclusive, supportive communities rather than preparing participants for institutional art careers. Whilst critics debate the necessity of formal qualifications in Fine Art, particularly for MA/MFA programmes, due to uncertain financial returns in the art world, access to artistic spaces such as residencies, exhibitions, and galleries is often determined by such qualifications. However, attendance of an alternative art school is increasingly providing access to these spaces, as I discuss in Chapter 4.

Definitions

I have avoided adjectives and prefixes that one might associate with alternative pedagogies, such as *counter-culture*, *radical*, and *utopian* unless referring to specific usages.¹⁸ The vocabulary of *alternative*, *institution*, and *spatiality*, and the senses of these terms in the contexts where I have applied them, are given in this introduction, whilst the development of other key terminology is expanded upon in the following chapters. I use the terms *university*, *institution*, and *normative* interchangeably to designate the neoliberal models of education. I use the phrase *alternative art school* to denote those spaces that operate outside of this frame. Definitions of these terms are provided on page xii.

¹⁷ Alternative art schools are lower-cost than the institutional model with London postgraduate MFA/MA fees at around £13,000 (as an example current home fees at UAL are £14,000 standard rate for a 45 week programme; UAL Postgraduate Tuition Fees, 2024. *Postgraduate Tuition Fees* [online]. University of the Arts London. Available at: <https://www.arts.ac.uk/study-at-ual/fees-and-funding/tuition-fees/postgraduate-tuition-fees> [Accessed 10 October 2024]. Whereas an alternative art school fee is around £3,000. Typically, MASS Sculpture fees are £ 3,500 for 10 months, Conditions 3,490 for 12 months and TOMA for 18 months has a sliding scale payment structure based on financially (in)security, with tiered fee payment Tier 1 £2,7780.30, Tier 2 £2,135.70, Tier 3 £1512 or free, making them more accessible to diverse participants. These are proposed rates for 2024/25.

¹⁸ Utopian pedagogies as a guiding vision to nurture political agency remains a powerful and enduring aspiration. However, having over the years attended conferences and symposia around alternative pedagogies with these words in their titles, I have often been led to expect something progressive, only to encounter something disappointingly familiar and orthodox.

Disrupt (v) Disruption

As a form and mode of resisting the normative: The alternative art school is a disrupter, a spoiler – it spoils or disrupts the institutional offering interstitial spaces and other moments for art education. The alternative art school is a buffer, a fissure for some *beforeness*, a rehearsal space for some before entry to the institutional MA/MFA; a way back into studying art for those who have been out of education for a long time. The alternative art school is a disruptive space is one for building confidence, a space that is both temporary and experimental, yet oriented toward long-term possibilities.

Research Conditions

As I define it for this research, the contemporary alternative art school is a somewhat new phenomenon and, therefore, has a relatively short yet under-researched history. The first wave of UK-based alternative art schools emerged in response to significant events of the Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the influence of Black Mountain College in the 1960s. This initial surge of UK self-organised artistic education included two short-lived but notable experiments, sigma – Spontaneous University (Braziers Park, Ipsden, 1964) and the Antiuniversity (Rivington Street, London, 1968).¹⁹ Current literature suggests a historical narrative of the alternative art school, running from the Staatliches Bauhaus to contemporary models such as Open School East.²⁰ However, I would propose a UK narrative that can be traced to at least *The Kindred of the Kibbo Kift* (1920), which I have placed on the Genogram mapping alongside *The Order of Woodcraft Chivalry* (1916).

I also acknowledge the many artists who have critiqued the institution and art education through their practice. Notable examples include artist Tania Burghera's research project Arte Útil, the exchange lecture approaches that Hannah Hurtzig employs through the Mobile Academy, and socially engaged initiatives such as Theaster Gates's Rebuild Foundation, initiated in 2010 and Thomas Hirschhorn's Gramsci Monument of 2013.²¹

I know of three other UK-based PhD studies concerning alternative art schools and art pedagogies. One RCA researcher, Susannah Haslam, examined four artist-led programmes

¹⁹ I undertook a short interview with the Braziers Park Education Convenor Aggie Forster during my visit in May 2017. I spoke with Shiri Shalmy independent curator and co-founder of Antiuniversity Now, during the conference 'Radical Pedagogies' at Ruskin School of Art, Oxford, in January 2019.

²⁰ There is a wealth of literature on influential and 'radical' educational models, particularly those from the twentieth Century. There is less writing on recent models of the alternative art school or alternative pedagogical methodologies as practised within the institutional space. Thorne's book 'School' published in 2017, provides an entry into this subject. I interviewed Thorne in Nottingham in 2017.

²¹ Thomas Hirschhorn's, Gramsci Monument in the Forest House Estate, Bronx, New York 2013. Constructed by residents, an educational project that acknowledged the educational initiatives of Gramsci Monument 2013.

by applying a dialogical methodology through interviews and within the context of the 'Educational Turn' and referencing Relational Aesthetics that examine peer-led alternative models.²² I met artist Jake Watts in 2016 at the Summer Lodge. He was completing *Shift/Work*, a PhD developing participatory peer learning workshops and open educational resources of a card game but did not engage with alternative art schools. I have been in touch with another PhD candidate, Sarah Scarsbrook, who 2021 completed a thesis examining artists' experiences of art schooling in London between 1986 and 2016, focusing on identities, myths, freedoms, and professionalisation. These existing studies diverge significantly from my research focus; while each examines art pedagogies and alternate forms of learning, they are not actively participating within alternative art school spaces.

Introduction to the Thesis Chapters

Chapter 1: *Mapping*

Chapter 1: *Mapping* sets out to identify and map the landscape of alternative art schools geographically and temporally. It undertakes to introduce the existence of alternative art schools (AAS), to establish that there are other systems of art education outside or beyond the mainstream art institution. The chapter attempts to bring attention to the geographical landscape of alternative art schools within and beyond the UK and Europe: alternative art schools as a global phenomenon. It seeks to identify alternative art schools' durations and time periods of existence, as well as the historical precedents and significance of specific schools (e.g., Black Mountain College and the Bauhaus), alongside noticing how socio-political moments might function as catalysts for their formation. In this chapter, I draw upon, then expand and intervene into Anton Vidokle's 2006 list, 'An Incomplete Chronology of Experimental Art Schools', to map the existing terrain, as well as draw attention to the gaps and omissions in this inventory. In parallel, I seek to define what an alternative art school is - to elucidate the parameters, terminology and nomenclature through which the alternative art school is understood. I identify patterns with normative institutional terms, as well as make new additions and speculate on the potential futures of the alternative art

²² Susannah Haslam submitted her PhD at the Royal College of Art in May 2018. I had been in touch via email with Susannah in February 2018, and it was clear then that we were taking very divergent approaches to studying alternative art school models. In November 2018, free peer-led art school Islington Mill Art Academy called for submission for a funded joint PhD with Manchester Metropolitan University to explore the development of peer-led alternative art education. At Summer Lodge 2017, I briefly met with Jake Watts, who was undertaking a practice-led PhD investigation into workshops and participatory environments at Edinburgh College of Art. The thesis included *Shift/Work* atelier, a project with Neil Mulholland at the University of Edinburgh. The atelier was proposed as a space of ludic participation and play. I mention this study as it is a practice-based workshop for artistic learning, which is one of the aspects of my research. A colleague directed me towards Katrina Palmer's publication as a thesis. Palmer's conceptual framework helped me to see possibilities beyond standardised thesis submission.

school. From this I develop a more comprehensive mapping using the method of the Genograms, a diagrammatic invention for positioning and delineating experimental educational models. The Genograms enable the relationality between the contemporary AAS and its historical precedents to be observed and the proliferation of AAS to become witnessed. Drawing on Michael Eraut's 'Five Features of Education', I set out to understand what features make an educational programme and to identify if there are AAS models that are equivalent in an extended educational period to an institutional programme of study. This chapter results in a comprehensive mapping (through extensive listing and diagramming) of AAS as an original contribution. Through its diagrammatic focus, the chapter enables the notions of spatiality and the relational to become more foregrounded in relation to AAS (which is an original critical focus for this PhD), which becomes further explored in the next chapter on *Spatiality*.

Chapter 2: *Spatiality*

In Chapter 2, the original focus of this PhD on *spatiality* becomes foregrounded. Spatiality is approached as a lens through which to consider the AAS, deliberating not only on their physical spaces but also their conceptual spaces, systems, mechanisms of operation, pedagogical characteristics, and philosophical orientations. The chapter centres on what makes an AAS space and how that space might be different from the institutional space. It attempts to identify spatial characteristics and patterns of an AAS in relation to the normative space. It introduces models that have the potential to sit outside of the institutional framework or perhaps in a space beside or between the normative. I turn to discourses that explore how we inhabit, understand, and experience space, most significantly, Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1991).

This chapter is divided into three parts – firstly, I extend the diagrammatic mapping practices presented in Chapter 1, reframing these within the context of the space of education to present an original conceptual spatial frame for my enquiry. I devise and develop a map of *The Five Spatialities* for defining a spatial topology through which the spaces of AAS might be located and understood. I introduce five spatial models, which are N-Space (Normative space); L-Space (Liminal space); D-Space (Disruptive space); F-Space (Five-Fold space), and V-Space (Virtual space), in order to develop a deeper understanding of AAS's distinct (spatial) positions. Secondly, I then present five specific case examples of AAS (Conditions, SotD, Chto Delat, BBZ and Black Blossoms) that occupy each spatiality in this diagrammatic framework. Through this process, I was able to recognise that there are

models that traverse more than one spatiality. I introduce how different educational spatialities might co-exist or support each other, taking a particular example of *La Escuela ParaSitio/The Para-Site School*. I then explore the concept of Parasitism within the context of Chantal Mouffe's theories of agonisms and Michel Serres's notion of *The Parasite*. Through elaborating on the concept of the parasite, I recognised a need for a shift in my methodology and my relationship with different spaces of art education, from which I began to develop the potential for a more embodied and performative, perhaps even more disruptive and polyfocal, mode of investigation. This is taken up as the focus of the next chapter, *Enacting*.

Chapter 3: *Enacting*

In the previous chapter, *Spatiality*, I was able to apply my original framework of *The Five Spatialities* to different AAS, based on interviews and conversations with the founders and participants within those AAS, as well as through my observations from visiting those spaces and studios. However, I wanted to better understand how the different AAS were distinctive from both the normative and from each other. Increasingly, I was recognising limitations in my mapping approach. By adopting the *external perspective* of an interviewer, I was not able to get access to how AAS spaces functioned in practice and how different spaces were occupied and inhabited through the pedagogies and processes of education. I identified a clear gap in my enquiry. At the same time, I was becoming frustrated by the qualitative approaches I had been using. They did not feel an adequate way of engaging with the AAS – I wanted to develop another way, a more embodied mode of operation. I had an *idea* of the AAS from the outside, but I needed to be *inside* to really understand. In this chapter, I reveal how I attempted to devise a more *active* methodology for investigating the AAS: I share how I have been able to actively test, push and even disrupt the spaces of the AAS by becoming more present myself in those spaces, and through the development of embodied, performative tools.

Building on Mouffe's notion of *agonism* and disruption and extending Serres' conceptual position of *the parasite*, in this chapter, I apply these dispositions to my own methodology to develop three different research perspectives - or what I call "protagonist roles" - that I could then embody and activate in order to further explore spatiality within the AAS. In this chapter, I introduce the three "protagonists" as distinct roles or even "tools" (the *Vigilant Observer*, the *Articulate Detective*, and the *Evaluative Contributor*), which have enabled me to develop a polyfocal lens through which to view the AAS from

three distinctive vantage points. In this chapter, I show how the different protagonist roles and tools have been tested in different “Sites of Investigation”, art education and learning environments that reflect the different *Five Spatialities* (described in Chapter 2: *Spatiality*). I also introduce some of the protagonists’ tools, which are the various apparatus or implements distinctive to each protagonist role (see also *Toolkit* in Chapter 5), through which I/they have been able to investigate further, participate in and even disrupt AAS. In turn, these ‘tools’ become developed into what I call *Diagonal Practices* – an original toolkit of practices for intervening in and disrupting educational norms and systems.

Through this shift towards a more interventionalist and participatory research approach, I have been able to further specify the characteristics of *The Five Spatialities* from *within* the AAS and alternative pedagogies, recognising their proximities and divergencies from the normative, as well as their capacity or resistance to change. The focus on engagement within this chapter then leads to a deeper focus and longitudinal case study on *participation* in Chapter 3: TOMA (The Other MA).

Chapter 4: *The Other MA (TOMA)*

Chapter 4 presents a unique primary case study focusing on an alternative art school based in Southend-on-Sea, Essex, called *The Other MA (TOMA)*. My PhD research is the first longitudinal study of this specific AAS. I have engaged with TOMA since its inaugural meeting in September 2016 and became increasingly embedded as a researcher between 2016 – 2019, during which time TOMA inhabited various shared and ‘meanwhile’ spaces. This opportunity created unique insights from spending time with an AAS from its inception and tracing its development. The focus of this longitudinal study is on TOMA’s education programme (and the spaces that it inhabits), explored through the lens of spatiality and how participation and art pedagogies are impacted by these spaces. I investigate TOMA through the model of *The Five Spatialities* (developed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3), specifically in relation to the L-Space (Liminal Space), D-Space (Disruptive Space), and F-Space (Five-Fold Space), in order to reveal, disclose and better understand the precarious, potentially destabilising, implications of TOMA’s lack of a settled, permanent space. In parallel, I explore the proximities to and differences of TOMA from normative models of art education with the intention of identifying what makes an AAS, what are its critical ingredients, and what can be said to be outside of any pattern.

The chapter reveals how I moved from a systematic, qualitative mode of interview towards a more active and embodied mode of practice research investigation so as to

explore the AAS space and its art pedagogies from *within*. Specifically, I activate or *enact* the three “protagonist roles” (the *Vigilant Observer*, the *Articulate Detective*, and the *Evaluative Contributor* described in Chapter 3) as tools of performative participation that enabled me to operate directly in the spaces of AAS education as an ‘additional’ member of TOMA. I continue to draw on Serres’ model of the ‘parasite’ to further develop the ‘protagonist roles’ as ways of engaging with TOMA’s spatialities, systems and pedagogies. In turn, I consider these discoveries through the rhizomatic map within the Diagonal Practices conceptual framework in order to further establish the characteristics of TOMA’s art pedagogies. Through working directly with TOMA, I garner an understanding of participation with an AAS. Here, I establish and comprehend TOMA’s social principles and its characteristic philosophies and modes of sharing economy and care that underpin TOMA as the potential for a transformative educational structure.

Chapter 5: Contribution and Conclusions

In this final chapter, I reflect on how my PhD enquiry on AAS and the particular systems and spaces that they occupy has evolved through an original focus on *spatiality* and *modes of participation*. I reflect on different aspects of spatiality and participation and how these are held within and folded back into the PhD. Simultaneously I reflect on the journey travelled and how this has involved a shifting methodological approach from mapping to a more embodied practice. It has involved the evolution of novel conceptual frameworks, including The Five Spatialities, methodological approaches for embodied investigation, including the development of the Three Protagonist Roles and their distinctive tools, which in turn form part of the *Diagonal Practices* toolkit, an original overarching methodological position. The chapter outlines the three core contributions that this PhD makes: (1) An extensive deep mapping of the AAS, which provides an overarching topology of AAS through practices of listing and diagramming; (2) A longitudinal study of TOMA comprising an archive and interviews, with an original focus on spatiality and participation; (3) The *Diagonal Practice* toolkit, a unique contribution which helps translate theory and thinking into practice, encouraging performative research paradigms beyond quantitative and qualitative approaches.

I consider the interplay of each chapter as an individual component and how it has developed and emerged from the last by applying a range of montage or assemblage techniques to a spatial project. I deliberate how the research has been one of plurality, a state or condition of being multiple, diverse, or varied, and how this way of working has

enabled me to think and operate within the space of the project, to consider spatially and through participatory modes of engaging directly with the subject of alternative art education. This chapter serves as a culmination of the study and, in doing so, provides insights into the practical applications of the tools that have been presented as a toolkit and their potential impact on the field of alternative art education. Finally, in summarising my key findings and presenting my contributions, I outline the implications of my outcomes for the broader discourses surrounding art education and its transformative potential. In synthesising my insights, I invite others to consider the conscious and collective imperatives required to navigate the problematics of contemporary artistic pedagogy and to conceive alternative futures for learning communities. Indeed, I have built resources for others to apply.

Methodology

Context

This section sets out the expanded research methodology, approach, design, and methods used within this PhD and my rationale for applying these. A range of conceptual and critical research tools initially brought the alternative art schools into a critical form of representation, which I have used to investigate these autonomous pedagogical models by identifying their intentionality, experiences of participation, spaces, practices, networks, and wider communities. Below, Figure 1 lists the different research tools; these include deep mapping and diagramming techniques, a polyfocal lens of participatory observation methods, questionnaires and interviews, and embodied spatial interventions in dialogue with theoretical frameworks. Each of these tools was applied to address my research questions and allow for a comprehensive understanding of the alternative art school. I then undertook to draw together these heterogeneous methods into a conceptual framework in order to test, analyse, and present them holistically. This holistic representation is available as the Diagonal Practices toolkit.

BRICOLAGE METHODOLOGY	Tools of Investigation	
	Qualitative	Quantitative
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phenomenography • Grounded Theory • Deep Mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey Research • Data Collection • Contextual Enquiries
	Fieldwork procedure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Polyfocal Participation • Case Studies • Spatial Interventions • Contextual Enquiries • Collaborations • Extended Conversations 	Fieldwork procedure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires • Interviews • Case Studies • Feedback Tools
	Toolkit	

Figure 1. Assembling a bricolage methodology.
The table shows the research methods employed throughout the investigation.

This methodology is purposefully designed not to guide the reader toward fixed conclusions but to be disruptive. I position myself as participant, provocateur and observer, applying mapping, archiving, and speculative tools for investigation. The research actively moves between a theoretical critique and a material practice. The intention was to position the research in an ongoing and generative engagement with knowledge, to create spaces that have the possibility for knowledge creation between the theoretical and material. As such it involves moving between actions (constructing and entering, conducting spatial investigations, mapping) underpinned by what I term theoretical entanglements, allowing for a somewhat fluid, responsive methodology.

Central to this approach is the concept of *The Parasite*, a term borrowed from Michel Serres. By engaging with the parasite, the introduction of interruptions, and unexpected deviations that unsettle and shift conventional processes is accentuated. The research both critiques and inhabits the space between established structures, using the parasite as a metaphor for a practice that neither fully conforms nor seeks to escape, but rather manipulates and redefines the relationship between the individual parts. This non-linear approach to research reflects the artistic practice of thinking through process, the idea that understanding emerges through doing, questioning, and redoing, rather than through static observation or preconceived hypotheses. The development of the participatory and performative modes involve not detached observers, but active participants whose decisions

and engagements are informed by, and in turn, reshape the ongoing research. Here agency is allowed to shift between the practice, the research objects, and the spatial contexts in which they interact. Disorientation occurs both in the readers engagement with the material and intentionally creating conditions of confusion or ambiguity in the layering of ideas and expected outcomes.

Assembling a Bricolage Methodology

Such an approach necessitates a flexible methodology. I employ the interdisciplinary research practice of bricolage as a spatial framework to situate, address, and structure my research tools. Dr Christopher Wibberley (2017) references Levi-Strauss's theories to debate research bricolage, suggesting "it involves utilising multiple data sources, often diverse in nature".²³ Bricolage elicits using diverse methods and materials to create a coherent whole, frequently drawing from existing frameworks and adapting them to fit the research context. Wibberley (2017) supports the notion that bricolage allows for assembling individual research findings into a cohesive body, where the arrangement of data can influence the reader's interpretation and allows for various forms such as "fiction, poetry, drama or visual imagery".²⁴ Utilising bricolage has allowed me to respond to the reach over an extended period and apply a conceptual space that lies at the intersection of the artistic context of assemblage and collage, the political dimensions of improvisation and anti-institutionalism, and the amalgamation of qualitative research methods.²⁵ This notion of attending to different elements to bring into a form reflects my own inherent art practice of applying physical and material properties to craft and refine work. In building the bricolage methodology, the PhD structure comprised three critical phases of development: *mapping* to *intervention* to *embodied protagonists*, with spatiality and participation consistent elements throughout. In the context of the PhD, *intervention* refers to deliberate actions and activities undertaken within the alternative art schools to explore, disrupt, challenge, or reshape the spaces, structures, or practices. These interventions are aimed at assisting critical reflection and facilitating the protagonist's participation. Within these phases, methods of deep mapping, interviews and enacting were significant tools.

By establishing the bricolage space in this study, I facilitated the emergence of nodes, internodes, and non-linear paths, allowing for the traversal of knowledge systems and the

²³ Wibberley, C., 2017. Bricolage Research Methods. In E. A. Glasper & C. Rees (Eds.), *Health Care Research: at a glance*, 52, pp. 106–107.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ I acknowledge the qualitative research context of bricolage introduced by Wendy Gordon in 1999.

development of new relationships alongside my central themes. In this context, the bricolage integrates qualitative and quantitative methods with practice-based performative research. As such, my PhD research has evolved a methodology, building and collating the data through multiple methods. This bricolage approach has been intrinsic to my investigation of the alternative art school, enabling me to be strategic, take different perspectives, explore the field, and allow for my participation in TOMA specifically.²⁶

Literature

Integral to the PhD are two key theoretical frameworks that have shaped my research: Chantal Mouffe's Agonism and Michel Serres' *The Parasite*. Having introduced *The Parasite* earlier, I foreground its role not only as a means of inhabiting and critiquing established spatial and theoretical frameworks but also as a tool for examining how disruptions unsettle institutional systems and processes. Serres' notions of (parasitical) hosts and guests generate multiple vantage points, activated within specific spatial contexts. Throughout the PhD, these shifting positions are mediated within my own spatial and theoretical frameworks, allowing for the manipulation and redefinition of relationships. By adopting *The Parasite* as a lens, the research situates itself in a space that neither wholly conforms to nor entirely escapes existing structures, generating tensions that shape the overarching study.

These moments or tensions are further framed as places of disorientation and disruption, as generative forces in the research process that draw on Mouffe's framework of *agonism*, which implicates conflict as a constructive and necessary force within pluralistic societies. Rather than resolving these conflicts, I attempt to use them as tools to unfold other possibilities for enquiry and practice. Located here are spaces where I actively engage with oppositional or contradictory elements. Mouffe's emphasis on agency within the agonistic model is where I have attempted to position the research practice, placing myself as an active participant in navigating the tensions and disruptions of the research. My engagement with Serres and Mouffe is intertwined, woven through the PhD. As an example, my interventions and mapping of Anton Vidokle's list form part of the literature review but also emphasise the tension, agency and overarching methodology. This emphasises an operative approach that prioritises disruption, conflict, and reconfiguration, to explore alternative forms of engagement and representation while creating space for a range of other voices.

²⁶ Denzin, and Lincoln, 1994, p. 4. In the introduction, Denzin and Lincoln provide a description of the interpretative bricoleur as someone who creates their own mixed methodology. They state, 'if new tools have to be invented or pieced together then the research will do this...working within competing perspectives and paradigms'.

Guiding and Shaping

Throughout the PhD I have been guided by texts supporting expansive and practice research, notably Brad Haseman (2006) and Robin Nelson (2013). In *A Manifesto for Performative Research* (2006), Haseman advocates for a performative research paradigm as a “multi-method led by practice” and one that he suggests “repurposes established methods from the qualitative research tradition”.²⁷ I extended this concept of ‘repurposing’ to the field of art education, investigating how conventional forms of artistic pedagogy, such as lectures, group critiques, and seminars, might be remodelled. This allowed for an internal critique of institutional norms, with the possibility of identifying opportunities for modifying and challenging existing practices within the established art education frameworks. Robin Nelson (2013) suggests that a research strategy of a “disjointed, fragmented and multi-perspectival multimodal approach” is possible.²⁸ It is in these speculative research spaces that I seek to reside.

Theory substantiates the creation of a philosophical space for my performative practice. In developing the conceptual and critical tools for my enquiry, I was initially drawn towards several scholars and philosophical texts which not only position the thesis within a historical context but also frame emerging contemporary themes that intersect around art and activism, collaborative learning and community, and social justice and equity in artistic education. My methodology is not grounded in queer, black, or feminist theory, but it does draw on these theories as ways of thinking that should be central to any creative research. Additionally, forms of art writing and texts on situatedness and spatial practices were also of relevance. Site-writing (2010), by transdisciplinary practitioner and architectural historian Jane Rendell, considerably influenced my consideration of using multiple voices to challenge the monolithic and unchanging form of knowledge creation driven solely by the expert narrative. I was also intrigued by the spatial possibilities of writing and a position of situated criticism, and I adopted Rendell’s (2010) notion of writing *as* rather than writing *about*. Spatiality has played a central role in shaping the narrative framework of my research. To support this, I have drawn upon literature concerning physical space and power, particularly texts from Mario Gooden (2016), *Dark Space: Architecture Representation Black Identity and For Space* (2005) by the social scientist, theorist and geographer Doreen Massey, in addition to Henri Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space* (1991).

²⁷ Haseman, B., 2006. A manifesto for performative research. *Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy*, “Practice-led Research”, (118), pp. 103–104.

²⁸ Nelson, R., 2013. *Practice as research in the arts: principles, protocols, pedagogies, resistances*. London: Palgrave MacMillan, p. 85.

I have applied quantitative methods to analyse the TOMA interviews and qualitative approaches in the descriptive textual analysis of activities. However, the research has also included other material outcomes: expressive forms of writing, the diagrammatic, drawing, performances, sound, and still and moving image work. This research, therefore, sits within the multi-method, practice-led approach that Haseman defines.²⁹ I acknowledge that this approach has brought additional complexity and density to the PhD, with areas of overlap and layering of themes that required careful examination. However, the complexities of employing this broad methodology have been offset by the deeper-level findings and experimental frameworks that have emerged throughout. It was essential to set out how I defined the elements of this bricolage methodology, how I see my position within this research, and to articulate how the performative practice enabled an understanding of the alternative art schools.

Developing the Polyfocal Lens

At the onset of my PhD from 2016 to 2018, I interviewed alternative art schools and TOMA participants. This was a way to formally introduce myself and the research topic to the TOMA artists and to learn about their previous educational experiences, expectations, and motivations for participating in TOMA. I observed the formation of TOMA's education programme from inception in 2016 with the first cohort of participants, TOMA 1, and its development throughout 2018 and 2019 with TOMA 2 and 3. These unique moments allowed me to encounter TOMA co-created through exhibitions, workshops, the visiting artist programme, and events with other alternative art schools. I transitioned from a mere spectator to an active participant through additional informal conversations and attendance, initially at crits and then workshops. As I embraced this participatory role, I realised the significance of maintaining a critical distance and the possibility of moving beyond a singular perspective, it became increasingly evident that direct engagement with educational spaces was essential to activate my research. I needed to physically immerse myself in the research space, moving through and with it rather than merely observing at a distance. This required reflecting on my participation and monitoring it from an analytical standpoint. I aimed to

²⁹ Haseman, B., 2006. A manifesto for performative research. *Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy*, "Practice-led Research", (118), pp. 100–104. Haseman suggests research should be led through practice, activated by what is best described as "an enthusiasm of practice" or "something which is exciting, something that may be unruly" for the researcher. Haseman presents a performative research paradigm structure alongside definitions for quantitative and qualitative researcher paradigms. The arc of my research sits within this paradigm Haseman describes. Insofar as it moves beyond current qualitative research practices, "in order to do its work, new strategies and methods have to be ...invented".

observe the participants and my position within the space and consider a third perspective on the learning space being created. A spatial position within the research would be necessary, one that would permit a mode of enquiry that analyses and critiques the sites, encounters, conditions, experiences, and relationships within the alternative art school spaces. Thus, I chose to embody the roles of three protagonists and use these as investigative tools, enacting the Articulate Detective (AD), Evaluative Contributor (EC), and Vigilant Observer (VO). I have been admitted into the spaces of alternative art schools through workshops, group tutorials, critiques, talks, *art weekenders*, and in an advisory capacity.³⁰ This provided me with opportunities to closely examine these environments, devise specific research methods, and even extend the research contexts of a qualitative investigation. The three protagonist roles were activated to provide multiple perspectives from which I experience and observe the alternative art schools; fundamentally, this is a form of spatial deep mapping. I have simultaneously located myself as a participant and informed researcher, positions of *being with rather than looking at*.

As both Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1996) contend, space is related to power structures and the production and reproduction of those structures, proposing space as real (material), imagined (conceptual) and social space (lived). Lefebvre (1991) refers to this model as “the triad of perceived space, conceptual space and lived space”.³¹ I attempt to insert myself into each spatiality within the alternative art schools, but I am mindful that the third space is the critical space. The one that allows for a questioning approach to unsettling the prevalent spatial hegemony. As art historian Rosalyn Deutsche (1996) states, “Social space is produced and structured by conflicts. With this recognition, democratic social politics begins.”³² As my research developed and became more performative, I placed my conceptual provocations within a theoretical framework that referenced Chantal Mouffe’s position of agonistic pluralism and Rancière’s notion of dissensus. Mouffe’s notion of agonism emphasises the inherent conflicts within social spaces and argues that democratic politics emerge through the acknowledgement and constructive engagement with these conflicts.

Threads

The emergence of a rhizomatic structure to draw together potential areas of enquiry evolved from my process of analysing the TOMA and alternative art school interviews. In applying a

³⁰ Two alternative art schools invited me to comment on their strategic development.

³¹ Lefebvre, H., 1991. *The production of space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson Smith. London: Wiley-Blackwell, p. 39.

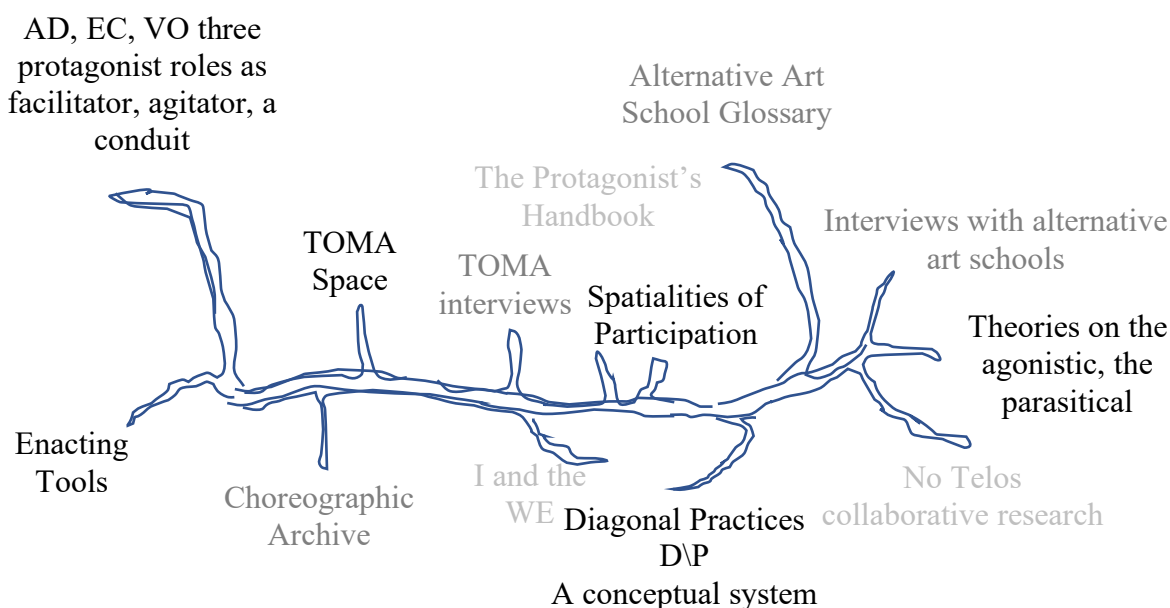
³² Deutsche, R., 1996. *Evictions: art and spatial politics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, p. xxiv.

phenomenographic process to the TOMA interviews, topics or interconnected topics were identified and clustered into thematic nodes or pools of meaning. This analytical approach is derived from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's (1987) conceptualisation of the rhizome, which delineates non-hierarchical and open-ended structures.³³ While there might be some divergence between my interpretation and Deleuze and Guattari's concepts, I have adapted rhizomatic thinking to conceptualise the research as a central, coherent thread, embracing both continuity and the emergence of new ideas. In essence, this research takes a rhizomatic approach in that it consists of thematic threads or nodes that emerged during the initial stages of the study working in conjunction with each other. I would position the rhizome as an anchor, a stabiliser and a support; it is a storage system yet also a source of nutrition when needed. Rhizomatic mapping elaborates, shapes, and disrupts so readers can derive their connecting routes or discover and engage with the interstitial spaces. My constructed interpretations serve as bridges or adventitious roots, connecting my personal experiences and researcher positions. The rhizomatic draws together a complex of issues and contexts; in this way, rhizomatic mapping can give voice to diverse perspectives. Furthermore, the democracy of the rhizomatic as an open and inclusive form of organisation allowed for an agonistic space to exist, one where conflicting or contesting forces could cohabit and interact. When reflecting on my positioning and navigation upon entering this rhizomatic context, I characterised it as an *agonistic dwelling*.

This rhizomatic diagram Figure 2 assisted me in refining and focusing the PhD; it permitted an entangled imaginary whilst synchronically sustaining the horizontal (non-hierarchical) and the transgressive within a holistic and coherent framework. Thereby, the PhD comprises several nodes or stages, each allowing me to progress to the next. The rhizomatic map (Figure 2) illustrates the numerous nodes that act as support systems, which I equate to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987 p. 32) notion of "deterritorialised flows". Indeed, in the introduction, Deleuze and Guattari (1987 p. 21) provide a lyrical depiction of the rhizomatic condition, suggesting that

the rhizome operates by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, offshoots. Unlike the graphic arts, drawing, or photography, unlike tracings, the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced and constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flight.

³³ Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F., 1987. *A thousand plateaus*. Translated by Brian Massumi. London: Bloomsbury, pp. 3–26.



Alternative Art School Space

Figure 2. The Rhizomatic Map, first version.

The main themes examined within the PhD are black, and the supplementary themes are dark grey. The nodes in light grey have contributed to certain facets of this study; these necessitate separate exploration.³⁴

I committed to developing one or two of these nodes in depth within the PhD, principally creating tools, enacting the three protagonist roles and then testing this toolkit. Additionally, there are other thematic threads that I have temporarily paused and plan to explore in future research proposals.

Methods

In totality, the research methods employed in the bricolage methodology converge towards a conceptual project, embodying diverse approaches. I have used creative writing and artistic practices accompanied by research paradigms found within social sciences, humanities, social philosophy and phenomenography. Iterative and structured frameworks characterised interviews, surveys, and case studies. In contrast, experiential methods involved encounters

³⁴ I observed that there were too many nodes to examine in depth. The 'I and the WE' chapter on participation in alternative art schools was relinquished to make space for a fuller account of time with the alternative art school TOMA. I provide a final version of the map illustrating the nodes as practised within the PhD in the Part 2 chapters that reference 'Diagonal Practices D\P', introduced in Chapter 3.

with alternative art schools and their participants, marked by fortuitous and improvised moments where I integrated artistic practice and theoretical reflection.

The research process has involved an iterative folding, in and back. In one sense, the PhD serves as an experiment in research methods, where artistic practices constitute an integral component whilst adhering to theorist Henk Borgdorff's (2012) three recommendations for systematic research: "artistic processes, research results as artistic productions and critical reflection on research".³⁵

Interviews

A range of interviews informs a directed approach to my ongoing conversation over an extended period, allowing my method to be one where (Sayrs 1998) "people told their own stories in their own language".³⁶ The TOMA interviews (2016–2018) complement my ongoing conversations in and around TOMA. Throughout 2017, I undertook ten additional interviews with those who had established alternative pedagogical models inside and outside the institution or those who had participated in alternative education other than TOMA. These additional interviews furthered my understanding of the heterogeneity of pedagogical models, motivations for establishing and engaging with alternative art schools, and the forms of participation within them. Additionally, findings from these interviews assisted my understanding of the legacy of alternative art school and their modes of operation within local, regional, and international settings.

Applying Phenomenography

To maintain a discursive framing yet provide some means to foreground the experience of being in an alternative art school, I used phenomenography as a mode of qualitative research applied to the data set of TOMA interviews. I am conscious that this is a normative methodology devised and applied to research 'thinking and learning' in higher education.³⁷ Yet phenomenography allows flexibility, and other analytical methods and interpretative practices can be used alongside it. The use of phenomenography allows the researcher to

³⁵ Borgdorff, H., 2012. *The conflict of the faculties. perspectives on artistic research and academia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 24–25. Borgdorff outlines three recommendations which I found helpful as touch points for incorporation into my research trajectory:

1. Artistic processes or products are essential to artistic research. The choice of research methods is free and will vary with the research questions.
2. Research results consist partly of one or more artistic productions or presentations. The results communicate the artistic outcomes both cognitively and artistically.
3. Critical reflection on the research process and documentation of it in discursive form is also part of the research results.

³⁶ Sayrs, L., 1998. InterViews. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 19 (2), p. 269.

³⁷ Marton, F., 1981. Phenomenography - describing conceptions of the world around us. *Instructional Science*, 10, p. 177. Seeking an etymology assisted my understanding of phenomenography, *phenomenon* to make manifest, bring to light and *graphy* describing the different ways a group of people understand a phenomenon.

capture the variety of ways people experience, interpret, understand, and perceive learning. Educational Psychologist Ference Marton (1981) states that the phenomenographic “aims at description, analysis and understanding of experiences”, that is, research directed towards experiential description.³⁸ Using this qualitative research method within my own framework for maintaining consistency of data within the analysis of the TOMA interviews guided me with my interpretations and inferences. I could cluster responses within themes at the analytical stage, from which I identified patterns and developed relational coding, observable at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223292> on the Research Catalogue or in Box T. Significantly, applying a phenomenographic approach to the interviews allowed me to identify and extract TOMA participants’ experiential and spatial concerns; I used these participant observations to support my engagement with spatiality. Through additional informal conversations and observations, I moved beyond the position of witness to one of participant. I found this shift enabled other insights and gave me the opportunity to navigate the alternative art school space, where I could participate, observe, and perhaps even instigate. This reconsideration of my singular vantage point led to the development of two fundamental tools.

Introducing the Fundamental Tools

Listing/Diagramming/Deep Mapping

Mapping and the diagrammatic can be applied as forms of visual sociology. Consideration within this visual field encourages us to look at relations that include spatiality, location, time, and topologies. I incorporated mapping and diagramming throughout my research to elicit different forms of knowledge generation and provide a sense of space. In one way, the mapping supports the chapter texts. The maps offer a space to gather thoughts, document my interventions, and locate the ecologies of the alternative art schools. Mapping acts as an organisational research tool employed to record the imaginaries of participants and interviewees, a form to diarise tacit knowledge. Theoretically, deep mapping is a counter form of cartography, a disruptive approach to outlining a space. It is a chance to render alternative art school spaces using multiple forms of participation, co-creation, the discursive, and the imaginative, to permit expansive layers of understanding through embodied perception.

I drew upon the pedagogical device of ‘deep mapping’ to start the exploration of alternative art schools and to locate them within the landscape of education. Architectural

³⁸ Marton, F., 1981. Phenomenography - describing conceptions of the world around us. *Instructional Science*, 10, p. 177.

theorist Lidia Gasperoni (2022) states that the diagram presents “a field of interweaving between image and language...a critical thinking tool”.³⁹ Deep mapping allows for a rigorous experience and interpretation of an area, a subject, or a space. Writers and artists Brett Bloom and Nuno Sacramento (2017) suggest that “to get an understanding of an actual place; one must inhabit its multiple overlapping contradictory stories simultaneously”.⁴⁰

The Three Protagonist Roles

The three protagonist roles of Articulate Detective (AD), Evaluative Contributor (EC), and Vigilant Observer (VO) were developed organically after reflecting on the interviews and testing out the ‘uninvited conversations’.⁴¹ I considered what it would be like to experience, inhabit, or even make performative interventions within the spaces of the alternative art school. I was proposing to enter the alternative art school spaces as a guest, spaces that were predominantly white and, except for TOMA 1, generally much younger than me.⁴² There is something here once again about fitting in. I had contemplated writer Sara Ahmed’s account of the institution; Ahmed (2018) debates the “usefulness of the university” through the theme of “institutional passing” and how we must smooth our way through the institution, suggesting that “an institution like an old garment, it has acquired the shape of those who wear it, such that it is easier to wear if you have that shape”.⁴³ I wondered what it was then to fully occupy the space of not fitting in, to unsettle this space through an agonistic position. I considered the three protagonist roles to create an enacting research space, an ‘interspace’. The ‘interspace’ would be decentralised, intrusive, probing, problematic, and thus uncomfortable. It would allow the three protagonist roles to displace the central and singular viewpoint and encourage multiple vantage points.

The Writing Approach

This thesis is an associative constellation of interconnected writing, performative lectures, assembled archives and activations; these introduce, interact with, and reflect on the

³⁹ Gasperoni, L., 2022. *Experimental diagrams in architecture: construction and design manual*. Berlin: DOM Publishers, p. 202.

⁴⁰ Bloom, B. and Sacramento, N., 2017. *Deep mapping*. Auburn, Indiana: Breakdown Break Down Press, p. 6.

⁴¹ See the Research Catalogue exposition <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223287>. A first test of a disruptive form of exchange. ‘uninvited conversations’ was a dialogue I undertook with an art teacher at Civic University, Tate Exchange, London, 2017.

⁴² As the research developed, I found ways to extend my enacting position and embed myself within various contexts.

⁴³ Ahmed, S. 2018. *Uses of use – diversity, utility and the university* [online]. [Lecture to CRASSH, University of Cambridge, Impact Lecture Series]. Lent Term 5 March, CRASSH Cambridge. Available via: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=avKJ2w1mhng&t=6s> [Accessed 11 August 2023].

different facets of an alternative art school. I had proposed that the structure of the thesis would reflect the distinctive modalities, revealing the embodied and performative, the fabricated and speculative and critical reflections. A range of these writing forms are compiled throughout the Research Catalogue exposition at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223267>.

In 2008, I undertook a research methods course at the Royal College of Art in London. I was introduced to an ethnographical form of writing termed 'messy text'.⁴⁴ In producing messy text, the author combines two or more genres, for example, poetic texts and academic writing. I apply the messy text in the form of performed ethnographies, Scholé Poems, lecture scripts, and diagrams; available in the Research Catalogue at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853>. Also included is reflective polyphonic writing presented within A6 folded publications, offering a diversity of simultaneous points of view and voices performed through the characterisations of the three protagonist roles.⁴⁵ Returning to Rendell (2010), who states that writing is both "spatial and material", and that writing has architectural qualities, "the site of building, design and thinking", I again contemplated Rendell's positioning of situated criticism, engaging with the premise of "writing as" rather than "writing about".⁴⁶ Drawing upon the protagonist's perspectives, the interviews and my own experiences, my writing assumes multiple positions of situated critique to start a discourse on spaces of alternative art education.

⁴⁴ This form of writing is derived from the 12th c. palimpsest pages. Theologians, re-writing on the vellum, inadvertently developed a conversation with the original manuscripts in Greek.

⁴⁵ A selection of publications produced during my time with TOMA can be viewed in Box T.

⁴⁶ Rendell, J., 2010. *Site-writing: the architecture of art criticism*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, p. 7.

Part 1 Defining

Research Catalogue
Listing as a procedure, explored through Anton Vidokle's (2006) 'Incomplete Chronology' and emergent terminologies are demonstrated in <i>Defining</i> on the Research Catalogue exposition https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223281 to see Vidokle's 'An Incomplete Chronology of Experimental Art Schools' and examples of my listing interventions;
The development of the diagrammatic method and the Genograms, to map alternative art schools, including historical precedents, pedagogical origins, and influences; manifest in <i>Mapping</i> at https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223289 on the Research Catalogue exposition;
The identification of the alternative art school's distinguishing features of art education into different spatial typologies through a process of word listing and a revisioning of Michael Eraut's five features of education; go to <i>Spatiality</i> on the Research Catalogue exposition https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223287 .

Chapter 1

Mapping

Part 1 Defining demonstrates my awareness of the field and acts as an introduction to models of experimental art schools. Chapter 1 establishes processes of deep mapping through techniques of listing, diagramming, and layering to seek out patterns and identify the comprehensible form of the alternative art school, in effect, defining it. Initially, I introduce the tools, concepts, processes, and rationale for the systems I developed to map the terrain of alternative art education. I then present an etymological survey, firstly through a nuanced exploration involving wordplay; this acrostic process involves navigation through historical contexts, ultimately reclaiming and then reflecting upon what I mean by the term 'alternative'.⁴⁷ Following this, I operate an interventionist procedure of *listing* to reconsider systems of categorisation, omissions, and emergent terminologies before devising a genealogy of experimental educational models. The chapter concludes with reflections on the significance of these methods for locating the alternative art school and on spatiality as an emergent lens of investigation.

To establish the locations and understand the spatial and contextual nuances that shape alternative models, the following questions serve as guiding points:

- Where are the alternative art schools located?
- What are the alternative art schools' central, peripheral, and ideological concerns?
- How does the location of an alternative art school impact its philosophy and approach to education?

⁴⁷ Reclaiming the word from the confines of ideological movements, specifically the self-styled alt-right.

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been unable to obtain third party copyright
permission.

Figure 3. The Listing Space. A facsimile of Anton Vidokle's list.
The '6' is included on the original page.

Listing

Listing: Anton Vidokle's List, 'An Incomplete Chronology'

An initial investigation of the alternative art schools led me to artist-curator Anton Vidokle's list of sixty-three educational prototypes, titled 'An Incomplete Chronology of Experimental Art Schools' (see Figure 3 and go to the Research Catalogue exposition *Defining* at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223281>). This chronology appeared in the introduction to 'Notes from an Art School', a summary presenting the parameters, intentions, and difficulties of Manifesta 6, the planned art biennial of 2006.⁴⁸

I was interested in who made it into the Vidokle alternative art school archive and in which ways the alternative art schools are presented within documents for posterity. What lies beyond the confines of the capitalist logic governing historical and archival processes, and how can we actively draw attention to, intervene in, or potentially disrupt this systemic paradigm? In most instances, Vidokle's list identifies the dates the experimental art schools were founded, in some cases, the names of the founder(s), and in most but not all instances, a geographical location. Vidokle's list appeared to be the most comprehensive overview of alternative art schools, although I was acutely aware that this catalogue highlighted predominately North American and Western European educational experiments.⁴⁹ Through undertaking a close reading of Vidokle's list, I identified salient terminologies and their frequency of use; the frequencies are given in brackets as follows. Firstly, when I examined the language used to name the alternative art school, by far the most frequent term was *school* (20), followed by *university* (12), *academy* (8), *college* (5), *centre* (3), *group* (2), *campus* (1), *studio* (1), *program* (1), and *caucus* (1). Each of these terms (except perhaps for *program*) implies conditions that convey durational importance, continuity, stability, and permanence. I would argue these are established terms inherited from and reflecting the setting of the institution. Furthermore, there is something nostalgic in the continued inclusion of the terms 'art' and 'school'. The concept of *program*, as it appears on Vidokle's list, suggests a prescribed model of education, whilst terms such as

⁴⁸ The nomadic European contemporary biennial, Manifesta, had proposed a temporary bi-communal art school for 2006, an intervention that would bridge the divided city of Nicosia, Cyprus. The project was cancelled in 2006, three months before opening. The Manifesta 6 documentation, *Notes for an Art School*, includes Anton Vidokle's text, 'Exhibition as School in a Divided City'. Page six presents 'An Incomplete Chronology of Experimental Art Schools'. Vidokle's chronology begins in 1671 and ends in 2005, naming first the 350-year-old Parisian classical school, École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts. Eight places below Ealing Art College (1913); interestingly, another UK school, Hornsey College of Art, which was influential in other ways, is not listed. I refer here to the occupation of the Hornsey College of Art and Guildford School of Art in 1968 and the subsequent residue of occupation as a legitimate form of collective action as protest within the arts institution. The list concludes with Göteborgs Autonoma Skolas.

⁴⁹ In the opening notes to Manifesta 6, 'Exhibition as School in a Divided City', Vidokle acknowledges the issue of what he terms 'distribution'. In the chronology of alternative models, Vidokle suggests, 'The real crisis in art education appears to be one of distribution: radical, experimental and advanced institutions are clustered in Europe and North America, acting as magnets for those in other regions who wish to participate in advanced art practice and discourse'.

caucus and group are perhaps indicators of a collaborative intention. The term *art* (18) is frequently cited in alternative art school titles, and along with *research* (2), *study* (1), *experimental* (1), and *creativity* (1) indicates a particular educational approach. Other terms imply a position outside the institution, such as *free* (5), *independent* (2), *future* (1), and *social* (1). Vidokle's list gives, in most instances, the founding locations. I observed *London* (5) is the most frequently mentioned place, followed by *New York* (3), *Paris* (2+), *Belgrade* (2), *Berlin* (2), *Copenhagen* (2), and *Toronto* (2).⁵⁰

It can be noted in Vidokle's listing that a geographical focus emerged, concentrating on North American and European urban spaces and around particular moments on a linear timescale. In the *Incomplete Chronology* (Figure 3), this can be observed in the 1960s and in a second period between 1998 and 2004. Undertaking such a systematic reading and breaking down Vidokle's list further into subcategories within the underlying framework allowed me to identify distinguishing features of the alternative art schools. Questions emerged within the chronology around understanding the internalities of the educational experiments, their alternative art pedagogies, and their geographical locations, and around examining the application of language to critique the institution and thereby resist the institutional terms and forms. For example, General Idea (Toronto) and The Real Presence (Belgrade) adopted monikers that conveyed particular intentions and ways of working.⁵¹

Vidokle's list provides an opportunity to extend a practice of categorisation; for instance, the final five schools of the 'Incomplete Chronology' are shown as titles only, and no supplementary information is given about them.⁵² The limited development of Vidokle's and other alternative art school chronologies was the motivation to make interventions into Vidokle's list through the creation of an alternate Listing Space (see Figure 4).⁵³ I initiated these interventions by adding overlooked historical models. I then proposed through techniques of redacting a speculative and conceptual movement of geographies and non-linear time mapping, to assemble other narratives. In the example shown in Figure 4, I take Highlander Folk School and emphasise some of its innovative pedagogies, along with two of the prominent individuals who attended the school.

⁵⁰ It was interesting to observe that Paris emerged as a significant location at the outset of the list whilst Los Angeles is shown towards the end of the list, indicating perhaps the shifting centres for contemporary art. There are experiments on the list located in Paris that it does not explicitly identify as being there.

⁵¹ General Idea was derived initially through a misrepresentation; however, this was developed as a philosophy of three queer artists. Curator Sarah E.K. Smith stated, 'the name also helped to obscure discrete identities within the group, challenging the myth of the individual artist as genius'. 'The Real Presence' was a phrase taken from avant-garde curator Alexander Dörner.

⁵² A deeper dive into Vidokle's list could be undertaken to examine those artists who established the experimental models, those alternative art schools in rural locations, those models which have relocated or are nomadic, dates of founding, who and what is missing, etcetera. This would allow for a fuller investigation of listing as a categorising practice.

⁵³ I was aware of Chto Delat's chronology, Sam Thorne's and more recently, a broader alternative network listing compiled by artist Sophia Kosmaoglou.

— Polytechnic Institution of

[REDACTED]

— Dialect to bring

— Àsikò Art School, (founded by Bisi Silva: Lagos 2010, Accra 2013, Dakar, 2014, Maputo 2015, Addis Ababa 2016...) Praia, Cape Verde 2022, Kigali, 2023, Abuja 2024, Kinshasa 2025, Bajul, 2026, Brazzaville, 2027...

The 'FD' serial code will take the reader to online songs from the Highlander Folk School archive. The brackets after Àsikò Art School indicate Bisi Silva's development of the school until her death in 2019. The locations after the brackets and Cape Verde 2022 came later; they are my speculative additions. An elaborated iteration of the Vidokle and redacting lists is accessible for review within the Research Catalogue exposition located at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223281>.

At the end of the listing given in Figure 4, I replace the five examples with Àsikò Art School, again to test a more expansive form of listing. In this form of mapping, I propose a spatial representation that encompasses the dimensions of time, relationality, and the form of nomadic experience that is a feature of Àsikò Art School. This is achieved by emphasising geographical location as a central element in this specific intervention.

Philosopher Fredric Jameson (1991) argues that literature, art, and narrative can serve as tools for cognitive mapping. Through storytelling and cultural artefacts, individuals can explore and make sense of the complexities of contemporary life. He believes that literature and art can provide a framework for individuals to locate themselves within the larger social and historical context. My redacted and extended listing was conceived in this context as an initial mapping, as a way of finding a form of representation for the alternative art schools.

Mapping and the diagrammatic can be applied as forms of visual sociology. Consideration within this visual field encourages us to look at relations that include spatiality, location, time, and topologies. Investigations can be layered one on top of another, tending toward what Bloom and Sacramento (2017) term a “thick description”.⁵⁴ Deep mapping allows for a rigorous experience and interpretation of an area, a subject, or a space. The redacting and listing process draws upon the speculative and the imagined as a form of cognitive mapping. I was committed to expanding an understanding of alternative art schools by presenting a survey that reveals their languages, geographical positions, frequency, connectivity, duration, and form. It was in the process of creating a visual representation that showed not just spatial relationships but also characteristics and systems within the space I was particularly interested in. I moved between surveying and mapping the spatial to diagramming to convey relationality and structures. Within this context, I further developed the diagrammatic with consideration of artist Simon O’Sullivan’s world-building theories. Through a process of overlapping and layering, my reader is prompted to add other materials and imaginaries and intervene with/in each form of mapping. O’Sullivan (2016) suggests that in this intervening form, the diagrammatic is a tool with a representational function, one that “announces a kind of nesting of fictions within fictions, to produce a certain density, even an opacity”.⁵⁵ Thereby, other conceptual diagrams are produced.

⁵⁴ Bloom, B. and Sacramento, N., 2017. *Deep mapping*. Auburn, Indiana: Breakdown Break Down Press, p. 20.

⁵⁵ O’Sullivan, S., 2016. *On the diagram (and a practice of diagrammatics)* [online]. Available at: https://www.simonosullivan.net/articles/on_the_diagram.pdf [Accessed 30 January 2020], p. 23.

An insufficient overview existed of the alternative art schools, so I started to build one of my own. I was interested in the process of not only cataloguing the alternative art schools but also revealing histories, interactions, and relationalities between and across the schools. Indeed, Vidokle acknowledges his list is *incomplete*. I took this as an invitation to reconsider the list as a form that could generate new relationalities and address the omissions of models outside Europe and North America. To achieve a dynamic visual encounter, I looked to activate the data through an embodied and expansive form of listing, one that would allow for clearer identification of alternative art schools. I searched for other lists, inventories, and accounts of the alternative art schools initially locating several variations to Vidokle's chronology, again finding these were often focused on North American and European experimental models. The Russian art collective Chto Delat presented a selective list adapted from the Vidokle chronology, with a focus on twenty-three educational experiments. Chto Delat (2008) then added a further two Russian alternative art schools: Bespartshkola Anarchist School, Moscow (c.2010–) and the Free University in Leningrad (1988–1992).⁵⁶ I identified references to alternative art schools in publications, through online searches, and through word of mouth and started to collate these.⁵⁷ I expanded Vidokle's list by drawing on conversations with artists, individual and collective interviews, attendance at open days of alternative art schools, embedded site visits, textual exchanges, and workshop discussions with those who organised, participated in, or had written on the alternative art schools. The predominant focus remained entrenched within a Western paradigm; thus, I purposefully sought out research beyond the confines of Europe.

Initiated by a moving image vignette, 'Something', I explored the etymology of the term alternative in a playful and speculative way. Go to the Research Catalogue at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223281>. The narration of the work was provided by a Black British archivist residing in the United States. The script I composed was a direct response to my archival investigation into the pedagogical methodologies employed in *labour plays* at the Highlander Folk School, exploring the underlying potential for optimism

⁵⁶ Interestingly, Chto Delat did not add themselves to their own reworking of Vidokle's Incomplete Chronology. I cross-referenced my own listing, compiled throughout May–June 2016, of thirty-plus contemporary alternative art schools with the forty experimental art programmes that participated in the Alternative Art School Fair (AASF) at Pioneer Works, New York, in November 2016. Pioneer Works, 2016. *Alternative Art School Fair Program* [online]. Available at: <https://pioneerworks.org/programs/alternative-art-school-fair/> [Accessed 17 November 2016]. I interviewed writer and Director of Nottingham Contemporary, Sam Thorne, before the publication of *School: A Recent History of Self-Organized Art Education, a chronicle of self-organised art schools* and artist-run education platforms. Given the extent of alternative art education, Thorne had elected to focus on a small selection of new schools, such as artist-run academies and education programmes. Schools covered include The Silent University, The School of Global Art, The External Program, MASS Alexandria, SOMA, and Islington Mill Art Academy.

Reynolds, E., 2017. Researcher: Interview with Sam Thorne, Nottingham, 24 July.

⁵⁷ Dr Alice Maude-Roxby's publication *Anti-Academy* (2014) brings together three educational experiments that referenced the student demonstrations of 1968.

inherent within the institution; this was my attempt at *searching* to articulate the aspirational and political within an educational environment. By placing Highlander and Àsikò relationally, I applied an imaginary of *searching* to conceive the Redacting List, which allowed for space to consider their individual legacies and make associations that may not have been previously considered.

Listing presents a critique of Vidokle's enumeration, drawing attention to the established constructions of an archive, bringing an invitation to undertake a re-reading of his 'Chronology'. The listing and redacting technique critiqued and presented terminology for understanding alternative art education as part of an emerging linguistic and performative practice. Formalist languages and non-linear processes were explored by amending and collaboratively intervening with Vidokle's list. Listing disclosed the procedure of collecting and building historical materials through an archival system. By considering these historical materials and their contexts, I presented a system for reassembling historical narratives and, through the *spatial/ time /imaginary*, made space for what was missing.

Reflecting on Vidokle's textual form of listing, I recognised it has the advantages of a visual shorthand, an immediacy. The list follows a linear chronology and, in construction, relates to a familiar academic form. However, listing as a method has its limitations. It can feel dormant, existing meaning can be hard to decipher, and imaginaries can be difficult to activate. With Vidokle's list, it was a challenge to distinguish between the various educational models that could be considered as alternative to the art institution to conceive without much prior knowledge, which were artist-led projects, short-term educational experiments, utopian visions, or collaborative and research-based art practices. My next step was to develop a new form of listing that would provide a comprehensive overview of the alternative art schools: to indicate their physical locations, to identify potential connections between them, and to establish the historical precedents and significant pedagogies that had informed them.

Genograms

Genogram Mapping

My move towards a redacted and diagrammatic representation as a way of contextualising my survey was a notable progression from Vidokle's list. While the Redacting List had provided a system to examine alternative art schools, uncovering their distinctive pedagogies through supplementary research, I had not yet conceived a comprehensive listing nor extended Vidokle's list in any significant way. I tested digital printing on acetate sheets during the listing and redacting work, devising an analogue system of layering my interventions into Vidokle's chronology as additions and redactions; see <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223281> for examples of the overlays on the Research Catalogue, also in Box A. Through this process, I drew attention to omitted schools, fabricated multiple readings, and created other categories of time marking. I looked to extend this analogue system through the development of a diagrammatic I conceived as a Genogram, a mapping that would condense information, reveal something of the context, and foreground surrounding and related alternative schools.

Drawing upon deep mapping as a form of intensive exploration, the relationality of words, and a consideration of political and philosophical writer Fredric Jameson's theories of cognitive mapping, I constructed a methodological thinking tool and shifting dynamic procedure. Jameson (1991) encourages us to construct a new approach, "an aesthetics of cognitive mapping" one that uncovers underlying connections, a sense of global social structures and collective histories.⁵⁸ The procedure of developing a visual representation aimed at interpreting not only spatial relationships with other alternative art schools but also decoding the characteristics and systems inherent within the spatial context of particular interest. I moved between surveying and mapping the spatial to diagramming to convey relationality and structures.

Applying specific investigative methods of listing would allow me to consider the construction of canons, how certain alternative art schools are noteworthy, and why these alternative pedagogies are deemed meaningful.⁵⁹ Listing was just one of the taxonomies that I applied to introduce my subject and maintain a level of coherence for the reader. Nevertheless, I remained acutely aware of the utilisation of written record-keeping as a distinct patterning system of data collecting: sorting, itemising, saving, documenting,

⁵⁸ Jameson, F., 1991. *Postmodernism: or, the cultural logic of late capitalism*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, p. 54.

⁵⁹ Ester Pantaleo's Etytree online resource suggests an etymology of the word 'list' and states it derives from terms of limitation meaning, 'border' or 'to put an edge around'. Pantaleo, E., 2017. *Etytree* [online]. Available at: <https://etytree.toolforge.org/label=agon&lang=eng&ety=1> [Accessed 28 July 2021].

classifying, and the historical legacies of colonial and institutionalised systems of knowledge production inherent within such listing practices. However, starting from these systems permitted me to disrupt the very conditions of an organisation that the listing establishes. O’Sullivan (2016) references Guattari, who proposes connections and compatibilities as a form of “meta-modelization”, that is, working out of conditions of possible experience. There is a tension in my application of the diagrammatic; it was initially considered as formal, a tool to hold authority, work out relationalities and then used to develop new connections informally through detours, a tool to encourage interventions and manipulate concepts that open up models of thought that can be considered democratic.⁶⁰ O’Sullivan (2016) terms the diagram “automatic writing”. In this practice of diagramming, O’Sullivan (2016) states, “the diagram can also move at a different speed from, for example, writing, and as such can achieve an escape velocity from the purely textual”.⁶¹ It was this consideration of the dynamic, together with a representation of the spatialisation of time and region, that I was looking to capture within my diagrammatic sensibility.

I initially sketched out the types of educational models I was looking to map. These included non-accredited programmes, artist-led initiatives, and peer-to-peer models. I then started to expand the diagramming to consider the social contexts of the programmes, their funding models, and any related hosting institutions. A draft diagrammatic structure is shown at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223289> on the Research Catalogue exposition. This initial sketch, what O’Sullivan (2016) refers to as the “probe”, was one of several that tested a conceptual schema before I committed to a final form for the diagram.⁶² This situates the alternative in relation to the three educational touchstones of the Staatliches Bauhaus, Black Mountain College, and Braziers Park and charts a journey through the educational landscape. I then started to develop this diagram to identify experiments and extended educational programmes. This form of mapping as a genealogical overview I have termed Genograms. This naming was originally taken as a shortcut to understanding the mapping and ongoing relationship between art educational spaces, a portmanteau of genealogy and diagram. *Genograms 01, 02, 03 and 04* each reveal a particular development of the alternative art schools.⁶³ Go to the Research Catalogue at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223289> or the physical repository of Box A. An aide-mémoire accompanies the Genograms, providing an explanation and key to

⁶⁰ O’Sullivan, S., 2016. *On the diagram (and a practice of diagrammatics)* [online]. Available at: https://www.simonosullivan.net/articles/on_the_diagram.pdf [Accessed 30 January 2020], p.20.

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 21.

⁶² Ibid. p. 21.

⁶³ An aide-mémoire accompanies the Genograms within Box A and the Research Catalogue exposition.

the colour scheme as the tool to distinguish the diverse educational models. If available, information websites or social media pages are also included within the relevant colour circles.⁶⁴ The Genograms are, therefore a Mapping of a genealogy of the alternative art schools and educational experiments in a diagrammatic form and include: *Genogram 01* focuses on art schools and their educational legacies; *Genogram 02* indicates pedagogical testing sites, experimental models and social transformation; *Genogram 03* highlights parasitical models, the educational alternative models supported by an institution (knowingly or not); and *Genogram 04* which considers experimental educational models that historically prefigure the alternative (late 19C and early 20C art school experiments).

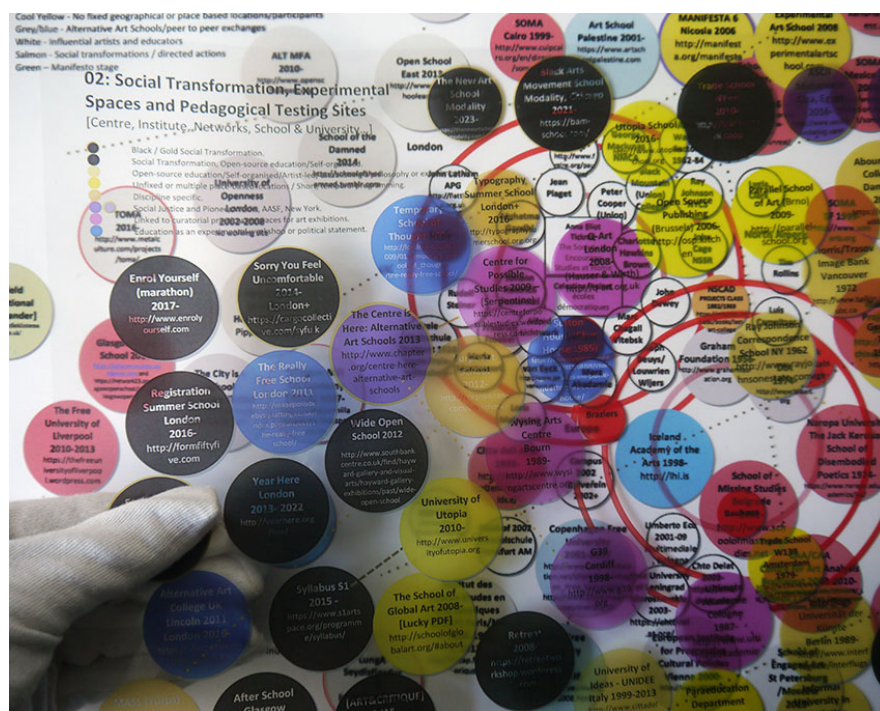


Figure 5. Detail from Genograms 01 and 02.

Genogram 01 shows those alternative art schools that I have spent time with and/or interviewed (circled in red) and those I have had some correspondence with (circled in blue). At the centre are historical, educational models that were mentioned or deemed significant in conversation, and notably Paulo Freire was consistently referenced. *Genogram 02* indicates the proliferation of experimental prototypes, and as on Vidokle's list, one can once again observe the frequency of 'school' and 'university' in the terminology designating the alternative models.⁶⁵ *Genogram 03* shows experiments supported within normative

⁶⁴ This will allow for any future digital presentation to include these linked resources.

⁶⁵ In an analysis of frequency of terminology, the legacy of art school remains prevalent, with *school* appearing in the titles on 57 occasions, *University* 16, *centre/center* 8, and *Institution* 8. School appears as a slightly nostalgic reference to the historical

institutions and, for some examples, their international reach. Finally, *Genogram 04* reveals some of the historical, and educational experiments that influenced the development of the Staatliches Bauhaus, Black Mountain College and Braziers Park.⁶⁶ Also included are a small number of recent schools that I reference in Chapter 2, specifically in relation to social, spatial, and nomadic models. In the four Genograms, the scale of the circles holds significance. Generally, contemporary educational experiments are depicted on a larger scale compared to historical initiatives; this highlights their recent significance and emphasis of the PhD within the visual representation. The four A3-sized Genograms, printed on acetate sheets, are housed within Box A; these Genograms serve to integrate my field mapping of art educational experiments, providing a contextualising survey. Their transparency allows for a stacking system to be implemented, encouraging multiple ways of reading. I have attempted to replicate this on the Research Catalogue at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223289>. The flat landscape acetates can be viewed individually or layered together and read in-depth, allowing for performative *fictions* to emerge. This stacking presents a visual and physical representation of the proliferation of alternative art educational models alongside notable historical precedents. In compiling the four Genograms, I present the alternative art schools geographically. As with Vidokle's list, a time marking system is used, the dates of founding or commencement are stated, and where applicable, an end date is also given. Through this linear time marking, I have found many of the alternative art schools to have been conceived in response to social or political moments of crisis. These junctures can be observed as clusters of alternative pedagogical experiments emerged at distinct times. For instance, within the UK mapping, alternative art schools were established in direct response to increases in the cap on tuition fees, first in 2006 and then again in 2010. Other notable groupings of alternative art schools emerged around the economic crisis and recession of 2008 and following the UK's EU referendum vote of 2016.⁶⁷

The Genogram overlays position current alternative models furthest from the centre and, through a system of colour coding and textual description, show duration, geographies, and relationality. For instance, identification of subject specialist models such as Turps Painting School and the related (Turps) MASS Sculpture School, both currently in London,

conceptualisation of art education, one that could arguably be traced back to the academic curriculum of the European atelier system during the Renaissance and much later the formalist curriculum developed at the Bauhaus, which the post-war UK regional art schools took up. Educational historian Nicholas Houghton's (2016 pp. 107–120) text, *Six into one: the contradictory art school curriculum and how it came about*, presents an account of these curriculum developments.

⁶⁶ The original invitation for research was in relation to the Staatliches Bauhaus, and Black Mountain College.

⁶⁷ More recently, there has been an increasing acknowledgement of climate breakdown with the emergence of alternative art schools such as Nomad/9 in West Hartford, Connecticut, United States and Black Mountains College in the Bannau Brycheiniog, Wales.

can be made. The legacy of the Staatliches Bauhaus and the impact of secular community experiments, such as those at Braziers Park School of Integrative Social Research and Black Mountain College, are presented within a central fulcrum of three red bands (Figures 5 and 6) and are an acknowledgement of the original starting point for this research.⁶⁸ The inclusion of Braziers Park is important in the context of my research. Braziers Park School embodied a post-war vision of collective learning and an increased interest in social and political questions. Originally conceived as a space for social change, the 'school' emphasised learning through group processes and the concept of communities of combined knowledge production. These principles remain fundamental to Brazier's ethos, and comparable attitudes can be observed in other current alternative art schools. The openness of Braziers led to a visit in July 1964 from sigma - Spontaneous University (included in Genogram 3).⁶⁹ Braziers has not received the same depth of research as the Bauhaus and Black Mountain College. Yet, it has been a catalyst for some of the collective models and behaviours activated

⁶⁸ **The Staatliches Bauhaus (1919–1933)** is significant within the alternative art schools and artistic education more generally in that it introduced many avant-garde concepts, or perhaps more importantly, in regard to this study, showed that other concepts *could* be possible. The Bauhaus teaching and educational system merged the boundaries between visual arts and movement, later developing visual disciplines with music, the theatre stage, costume, and dance. Additionally, there were specialist workshops, nature conservation, and breathing and yogic exercises related to the religion of Mazdaznan. In the essay 'Bauhaus Fundamentals,' Leah Dickerman (2009, p. 17) discusses Itten's premise of "getting rid of the dead wood of convention", from which a concept of 'unlearning' emerges.

Black Mountain College (1933–1957) redefined the configuration of art education through cooperative living. It was located in the mountains of North Carolina, and from 1941 next to Lake Eden. Black Mountain College encouraged self-initiated learning, that is, as Dickerman (2009, pp. 15–17) suggests, "education as preparation for life". Influenced by the Bauhaus, there is much written on the impact of former Bauhaus tutors Anni Albers, Josef Albers, and Walter Gropius' interventions at Black Mountain College. The philosophy of the College was not a passive absorption of knowledge but a focus on tenacity and the ability to act. This resulted in a self-initiated form of education, that encouraged thoughts to be manifest through actions and methods to be tested with what Dickerman (2009, p. 15) termed "an experimental spirit". An informal approach to teaching prevailed. Students and teachers cooked for each other and worked together. This emphasis on sharing through communal living is not unfamiliar to current alternative art schools, which generate new knowledge through social activities, participation, and collaboration. Participating in community and group activities in the surrounding landscape was encouraged; dance, music, performance, architecture, and sculpture were conceived as one mixed-media event. Learning was encouraged through an exploration of art and life. The two were not separated out; for example, lectures were undertaken through walking events, and art was for each other, audience and maker in action simultaneously. At Black Mountain College, art became a social practice. Absent was a rigid hierarchy and separation of teacher and student.

Black Mountain College, Bulletin 2, A foreword, 1934. *Concerning Art Instruction 1933-1934* [online]. Black Mountain College, 1934. Available at: https://monoskop.org/images/9/9c/Black_Mountain_College_1933-1934.pdf [Accessed 21 December 2021]. A comprehensive account of the 'experimental spirit as thoughts=actions' can be found in Black Mountain College, Bulletin 2, A foreword, 1934. *Concerning Art Instruction 1933-1934* [online]. Black Mountain College, 1934. Available at: https://monoskop.org/images/9/9c/Black_Mountain_College_1933-1934.pdf [Accessed 21 December 2021].

Braziers Park School of Integrative Social Research (1950–present) remains an adult residential education model. In the first iteration, Braziers brought together artists and psychiatrists. The former curriculum convenor David Allen (1998, p. 3) acknowledged that "the idea of a non-religious community of unlike people living together was itself a major departure from the norms".

⁶⁹ Seeking a rural space outside of London, poets Alexander Trocchi and Jeff Nuttall, and artist John Latham brought together a group of writers and artists for the long weekend of 3rd, 4th, and 5th July 1964, to activate sigma (deliberately spelt with a small 's' according to Trocchi (1963?), 'as an adjective not a noun'). The weekend was (in)famous for Latham's 'Black Spot' intervention, Latham's first 'skoob tower' book burning sculptures, and an intense meeting with R.D. Laing's psychiatry group, who had also booked Braziers for the same weekend. Artist Simon Faithfull, whom I interviewed in March 2017, has written a childhood recollection of the subsequent impact of the sigma visit and 'Black Spot' incident. Faithfull, S., 2019. *The Black Spot...* [online]. Available at: <https://www.simonfaithfull.org/works/miscellaneous-texts/the-black-spot/> [Accessed 20 December 2021]. In May 2017 I interviewed Braziers' treasurer from the 1960s, Alan Clark, one of the few still alive who had seen the Black Spot. Reynolds, E., 2017. Researcher: Interview with Alan Clark, Ipsden, 14 May.

Braziers maintains its artistic focus through Braziers International Artists Workshop, instigated by Simon Faithfull in 1995, along with fellow artists Andy Cohen, Bernadette Moloney and Gill Ord as well as through the Summer Art School 1995 and Supernormal experimental arts festival, established in 2010. Reynolds, E., 2017. Researcher: Interview with Simon Faithfull, London, 22 March.

by alternative art schools prominent in the present study. These three touchstones are a constant presence in all four of the Genograms; although they take the central space, they become obscured by the inclusion of other significant models and historical figures.⁷⁰ These other noteworthy educators, writers, philosophers, and schools have contributed to contemporary alternative art schools. They are included once again within or around the central fulcrum of red banding; see Figures 5 and 6 and on the Research Catalogue exposition <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223289>.



Figure 6. Detail from Genogram 03, the parasitical models, University of the Underground, can be viewed to the right.

I applied this diagrammatic process to try and clarify attributes within the alternative art schools that were different from the institution. To take one illustrative example, a colleague recommended I investigate the University of the Underground, located in Amsterdam, Netherlands. It had been presented as “the world’s first postgraduate University based in

⁷⁰ That is not to say that all alternative art schools have emerged from these three touchstones; however, within the ambitions, networks and systems, there were emerging legacies of the three within the art school and artistic institutions I had started to research. The descriptive illustration incorporates simplified circular formations; these reference conceptual diagrams developed by Walter Gropius in 1922, showing the Bauhaus teaching structure. The colour palettes for the circular mapping of each of the Genograms are selected from Bauhaus weaver (and later photographer) Gertrud Arndt’s principal order colour studies notebook page, exploring the relationship between hue (saturation), colourfulness (chroma) and tone (value), that is in turn based on Goethe’s six-section colour circle published 1810. As a visualisation, the colours simultaneously acknowledge and convey the continued dominance of this Western art educational tradition. Bauhaus, 2020. *Teaching at the Bauhaus* [online]. Available at: https://www.bauhaus.de/en/das_bauhaus/45_unterricht/ [Accessed 12 December 2020].

the underground”.⁷¹ Having visited the University of the Underground in 2018 and looking at the website more recently, there are spatial, visual, and linguistic cues that convey an energy, an alterity. Yet it was funded by a global commercial organisation and awards design degrees from the Sandberg Institute.⁷² On mapping the University of the Underground within my framework of alternative art school characteristics, I found it did not correspond to the paradigmatic structure of an alternative art school that I was beginning to formulate. The University of the Underground was better classified as a normative institution as it had an identifiable learning framework, organised learning events, a designated teacher, the award of paper qualifications with credits, and the external specification of outcomes. The University of the Underground is thereby positioned on *Genogram 03*, sited within the parasitical framework as an experimental, nomadic, transnational, and social education platform in academic partnership with the institution.⁷³ There are other educational experiments that are run in collaboration with or are supported by the art institution, whether knowingly or otherwise. In placing *Genograms 01* and *03* together, one can see the location of one such example Para-Site School (discussed in Chapter 2). Para-Site School started in 2012, and is located on *Genogram 01*, and again within the hosting institution of the Royal Academy, London, in 2014, observed on *Genogram 03*.

On *Genogram 02* I located an experimental summer school, Maybe a School, Maybe a Park, next to the socially engaged art group A Blade of Grass, which in turn sits adjacent to The Black School. This positioning on the sheet invites a reading in which the nomenclatures are accentuated, the titles push against the educational protocols, and the models are not predicated on the past for language or fixed in institutional form but suggestive of an active mode of experimental school. The three examples each offer a situated education, located in the city and responding to the city. Also shown by the Genograms is the intent of many alternative art schools to operate outside of instrumentalised knowledge systems. Conversely, some are physically located within institutional structures, operating within

⁷¹ Ben Hayoun, N., 2009. *The University of the Underground* [online]. Nelly Ben Hayoun Studios. Available at: <https://nellyben.com/projects/experiences/the-university-of-the-underground/> [Accessed 20 July 2017].

⁷² Through a distinctive social media platform, the University of the Underground promoted an alternative art school imaginary; the name, the physical location (operating out of a former fruit-market canteen), the programming, and social media content appeared anti-institutional and proposed informal models of learning. The University of the Underground, originating in Amsterdam, was established and is funded by the Netherlands-based digital file-sharing service WeTransfer. 52 Insights, 2017. *We Transfer Help Launch Education Revolution with Underground University* [online]. The Sandberg Institute’s Master’s courses are largely funded by the Dutch government.

⁷³ On *Genogram 03*, the University of the Underground is placed relevant to its regulatory body, the Sandberg Institute, Gerrit Rietveld Academie Amsterdam. As a model that presents itself as ‘alternative’ and ‘radical’ and located within the dark space of the nightclub (in 2018) as opposed to the white cube space of the institution, it could warrant further research outside the scope of this PhD.

peer-to-peer exchanges, collaborative partnerships, or as temporary pedagogical experiments; these are included as significant points of reference in *Genogram 02*.⁷⁴

Layering the Genograms allows for different relationships to emerge. This method of mapping allows for connections to be made across geographies, disciplines, and linear time, bringing a spatial consideration. Layering made possible multiple ways to operate and view the Genograms, permitting speculative readings, and the production of notional systems. In this way, other forms of typology can be constructed, an ensemble of structural models emerges, a specific alternative at schools can be viewed in relation to others, and connections can be established not just horizontally but in-depth vertically. As a multi-layered document, the Genograms convey the complexities of the alternative art schools, their geographical locations, and the layering of the transparencies, producing a form of topological atlas when they are superimposed. This visual method also reveals the critical mass of the alternative; a certain density becomes apparent when all transparencies are stacked, resulting in an opacity of meaning. The superimposing of the Genograms creates fictions, giving rise to new and unexpected relationalities.⁷⁵ Collectively, they comprise a spatial mapping to reveal geographical groupings which can be read individually or through or in proximity to each other, generating alternative forms of meaning-making.

The Genogram mapping as a synthesis of existing experimental models started to uncover some of the characteristics and specificities of alternative pedagogies beyond the fact they are 'equivalent to' or 'operate broadly as alternatives to' BA or MA study.⁷⁶ There are alternative art schools that are self-organised and self-determined models co-created by participants.⁷⁷ The related terms *self-organisation*, *DIY*, *artist-run*, and *free school* that are used to characterise these models initially set up a binary opposition to the perceived stasis

⁷⁴ There is also further research required on models of artistic education that could claim to organise outside the spatial institutional pattern yet are positioned adjacent to normative space: a study of the institutional experiments of Unit X at MMU. Or a study of A Particular Reality, conceived at Goldsmiths and Kingston and now running in conjunction with Manchester Art School and Middlesex; or a further research study on the Summer and Winter Lodges within the School of Art at Nottingham Trent University, from which my PhD question originated.

⁷⁵ My rationale for using a bounded geographical positioning of alternative artistic education was to indicate the proliferation of alternative models that had been documented and thereby are located within the construction of a canon, a making up of rules, whether this is through a game of recognition and collection. It becomes a game of recognition of knowing, of knowledge commodification. As one professor exclaimed, "you haven't got, oh yes now I see it". What does it mean to collect, list, locate, and position (map) alternative art schools in this way? What is presented is the commodification of information revealed within the literature review. It is an institutional form of exposition and an invitation for the reader to experience, navigate, interpret, and extract in whatever way they wish.

⁷⁶ As mentioned in the introduction, the artist showcase New Contemporaries provides an annual and ever-expanding list of alternative art schools within its submission guidance. As the New Contemporaries 2021 guidelines suggest this permits artists on "programmes, that operate broadly as alternatives to BA or MA study", to submit applications.

⁷⁷ In a UK context these include Alt MFA and School of the Damned. Collective actions allow specific tasks to be divided across the group.

of the normative institution. Yet, I found that the alternative art schools were not all co-produced, DIY, or free.⁷⁸

The mapping also revealed the form and frequency of the vocabulary used in institutional nomenclatures. The term *school* was common, as I highlighted in the case of the Vidokle listing. Other naming systems incorporated *academy*, *foundation*, *institute*, *university*, *college*, *faculty*, and *syllabus*, again similar to the vocabulary I found in my analysis of the Vidokle list.⁷⁹ An increasing number of alternative art schools since the turn of the millennium have deliberately avoided these nomenclatures, working against perceived formality and institutionalisation. The London-based collective BBZ (pronounced Babes) and St Petersburg/Moscow-based workgroup Chto Delat (What is to be done?) are two examples of alternative art schools that are named with consideration to their political and social positions.⁸⁰

Alternative art schools do not exist in a vacuum. Identified within the Genogram topologies are moments of crisis that have acted as catalysts for their emergence. Also of note is their tendency to emerge in relative proximity to their historical models and proliferate in urban locations. As relational drawings, the Genograms also reveal connections between the temporary, the experimental, and each other. Additionally, the mapping shows a commitment to the local and, in some instances, nomadic models. The Genograms, functioning as visual maps, possess a rhythmic quality characterised by my graphic diagrammatic approach. As I analysed and refined this process, I applied mapping as a way of divulging sequential patterns, diverse chronologies, and trajectories of alternative art schools. This then led me to consider further the term ‘alternative’, it became imperative to establish the form and parameters of what can be considered ‘alternative’ early in the research. How far was the alternative art school from the normative systems? Was it peer-to-peer networks, discrete informal education programmes, or an intention to be democratic that determined the alternative art school to be alternative? Whilst undertaking a contextualising survey as the groundwork for identifying the alternative art school, I was simultaneously working on how I could distinguish, define, and articulate the concerns of an alternative art school. Although I had identified many different models through the process of constructing the four Genograms, I needed to establish some criteria that would allow me to clarify and navigate the features of the alternative art school, to differentiate the

⁷⁸ Of the alternative art schools I investigated at the early stage of the research (2016–2017), each charged fees to cover space and visiting tutor costs. These varied from £50 per month to £6,500 per year.

⁷⁹ Interestingly, I did not come across the term *polytechnic*, perhaps due to its multiple meanings in different parts of the world and its association with technical or vocational subjects.

⁸⁰ BBZ is social media shorthand for Babes and an initialism for Bold Brazen Zamis. Chto Delat or What is to be done? takes its title from a nineteenth century utopian novel by Nikolay G. Chernyshevsky and is the title of a text by Lenin.

alternative art school model from spontaneous experiments, art community spaces, temporary artist-run educational platforms, student protest and occupation groups, artistic interventions within the Educational Turn, or contemporary art practice conceived as a critique of the institution.⁸¹ To implement some containment and some boundedness, I returned to listing as a tool to identify the distinguishing features between the normative and the alternative art school to map a typology of learning spaces. As Bishop (2012) suggests, “artists and curators have become increasingly engaged in projects that appropriate tropes of education as both method and form”.⁸² Cognisant of this conflation of language between art education and artistic practice, I looked to find tools that would delineate some of the common conditions and territories within which the alternative art schools operated. Aware of discourses on the Educational Turn, as evident in Vidokle’s conceptual formulation for Manifesta 6 and critical pedagogies attributable to the alternative art school I was starting to investigate, I undertook an initial survey (Figure 7) of language within pedagogical experiments; I noted the synthesis between art and education.

Features of Art Education

Defining

As with Vidokle’s chronology, using listing to find a definition for the alternative art school initially provided a quick way for me to document the subject area and gain a meaningful understanding of it. I extended the listing process, grouping related words and phrases into pools of meaning (Figure 7), yet these were too indistinct to define what makes an alternative education model alternative. To provide a greater sense of focus within my mapping of the terrain, I adopted educationalist Professor Michael Eraut’s explicit system of ‘five features of education’ as a starting point.⁸³ Within this, Eraut suggests a learning framework that includes events, teachers, awards, and outcomes as essential prerequisites.

⁸¹ These distinctive forms of art pedagogies have been mapped within the four *Genograms*. Radical pedagogies and communal learning environments namely Al Maeishah, Bologna, or experimental laboratories including painters, poets and architects that formed at the Institute of Architecture of Valparaíso, Chile (1952–1972), or artist-initiated spaces that centre the voices of black performance, such as New York based, Dancing While Black, all worthy of art school study yet fell outside of the framing of, equivalent to Higher Education and an extended programme of study, that I was starting to establish.

⁸² Bishop, C., 2012. *Artificial hells: participatory art and the politics of spectatorship*. London: Verso, p. 241.

⁸³ Eraut, M., 2000. Non-formal learning, implicit learning and tacit knowledge in professional work. In: Coffield, F., ed. *The necessity of informal learning*. Bristol: The Policy Press, 2000. Eraut (2000, pp. 12–31) presents the following characterisations of formal learning, proposing five key features:

- A prescribed learning framework
- An organised learning event or package
- Presence of a designated teacher or trainer

Listing of distinguishing features between art and education: 2016

The emergence and development of a conflated language: selected, borrowed, sampled: to be analysed and defined by frequency, origin, context, history, or other classification.

Learning and Connectivity	Learning for Future Possibilities Learning for Critical Thought	The Reductive and Expanded field of Art Ecotopia (Callenbach)	Knowing and Not Knowing	Conditions / Environment	Social Development / Social Change Social Action	Gifting Economies	General Audience	Artist
Participation in Educational Situations			Unknowning	Location/Site		Open Sourced	Formal	Studio Academic
Socially Engaged	Learning for Self-Development	Geographies of Encounter	Conceptual Debate	Space/Time Resources	A Series of Propositions	Radical Intentions	Official	Teacher/ Tutor
Participatory Art Education	Collective Producers of Knowledge	Participatory Projects	Discursive Practice	Architecture	Debate / Conversation	Sharing Knowledge	Informal	Collaborator
Pedagogic Projects	Communities of Practice	Network of Art relations	Density of Language	Labour	Active Listening	Participatory Actions	Conscious Co-Existence	Activist
Collaborative Encounters	Mutual Exchange for Learning	Informal Networks	The Art Pedant	Context	Common Thoughts Common Actions			Educator
Objects and Things	Social and Cultural Exchanges	Secondary Groupings	Classification and De-Classification	Host Organisations	Interventions	Transforming experiences	Democracy	Participant
Modes of Production	Alternative Pedagogical Routes	Common Advocacy	Exploitative Manoeuvres	Materiality	Interrelationships	Recognisable / Instructive	Structure	Associate
Modes of Recording	Peer Network	Common Practice/ Common Ground	The Project	Structure/Ethos Entry/Barriers	Gatherings	Risk taking [process not product]	Lifelong Learning	Student
Modes of Archiving	Pedagogical Models	Peer Interactions and Exchanges	Agency	Agency Action/intervention	Conscious co-existence	Critical Path	Outcome	Fellows/Actors /Makers

Figure 7. Table showing distinguishing features of art education pooled into typologies.

I applied the five features as headings to define the alternative model through a system of comparative analysis, initially between the normative and the alternative. Firstly, using Eraut's five features to create a typology of *Characteristics of a Normative model of art education*, as an initial starting point from which to consider the content of a normative art educational model. Secondly, I engaged Eraut's five features to clarify (on a fundamental level) the attributes that comprise an alternative model of artistic education, to explore the *Characteristics of the Alternative model of art education* and thirdly to locate possible *Characteristics of the Alternative to an Alternative*. Please go to the Research Catalogue Spatiality exposition at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223287> to view my typology. Applying Eraut's five characteristics of education to the organisation of my material led me to establish a clearer definition of the alternative art school. Constructing this typology proved invaluable in locating the key features that comprise an educational organisation and, in turn, the alternative art school. Particular characteristics that emerged were the one-year length of alternative courses, equivalent to many postgraduate courses, their limited number of participants, and their defined programmes of learning. Through my mapping of characteristics, other models of the alternative art school became clearer.

In adapting Eraut's classification, I developed a tool for conceptualisation that

- The award of qualification or credit
- The external specification of outcomes

Coffield (2000) makes a distinction between non-formal, informal, and formal learning, defining non formal learning as an intermediary between formal and informal learning. Suggesting that neither has an empirical or conceptual foundation. I have avoided these terms as they are largely used in relation to EU/UK governmental policy frameworks.

opened up the possibility of determining alternative models that sat outside a binary normative/alternative framing. Those alternative pedagogies that sat within other spatialities, ones that worked with independent arts organisations, artist led charities or even with other alternatives. Those that were open source or with participants that coproduced pedagogies, models specifically linked to the curatorial and other models that were parasitical, residing within spaces unaware of their existence. These alluded to other spatial configurations and would guide me to distinguish between different forms of the alternative art school and identify key features that would become a research focus within this PhD.

Spatial Configurations emerging from Listing, Redacting, Genograms, Defining

Through the process of devising the contextualising survey, spatiality emerged as a significant theme. A consideration of spatiality allowed me to devise disruptive systems within the three typology frameworks I had invented. In each of my disruptions, I incorporated spatiality as a pivotal tool. Space became evident through my expansion of Vidokle's list in my physical layering method of mapping and viewing the educational landscape through the Genograms. In establishing the ecology of the alternative art schools by applying Eraut's five features of education to my categorisation, I introduced the concepts of the normative or institutional models of education and of the alternative model as something disruptive. I generated terminology through my categorisation practices that reflected the shifting conditions of space. A spatial contextualisation enabled a clearer focus from which to articulate the social concerns and positions that were manifest, particularly in the *Characteristics of the Alternative to an Alternative* model. Spatial considerations were integral to the nomadic, student-led, and informal network, all constituent elements I had identified within the overall mapping.

The risk to the alternative art schools is that of reproducing the dominant hegemony and, thus, the normative institution, notwithstanding a commitment to an active mode of programming space. Figure 8 encapsulates the findings of my initial mapping. The model in Figure 8 transforms the monolith of the arts university to the model of degrowth in the alternative art school. The Institution is depicted as a system that perpetuates a singular identity, fosters institutional competition through REF and TEF ranking systems, and occupies an expansive physical site. Within an ecology of alternative art schools, there is the potential for alternative art schools to come together and produce a space for cross-pollination. In the final illustration, I propose the nebulous shape as one that can accommodate the alternative

art schools with their own identities and philosophical positions towards a shared support structure and infrastructure as mitigation against the reproduction of institutional systems.

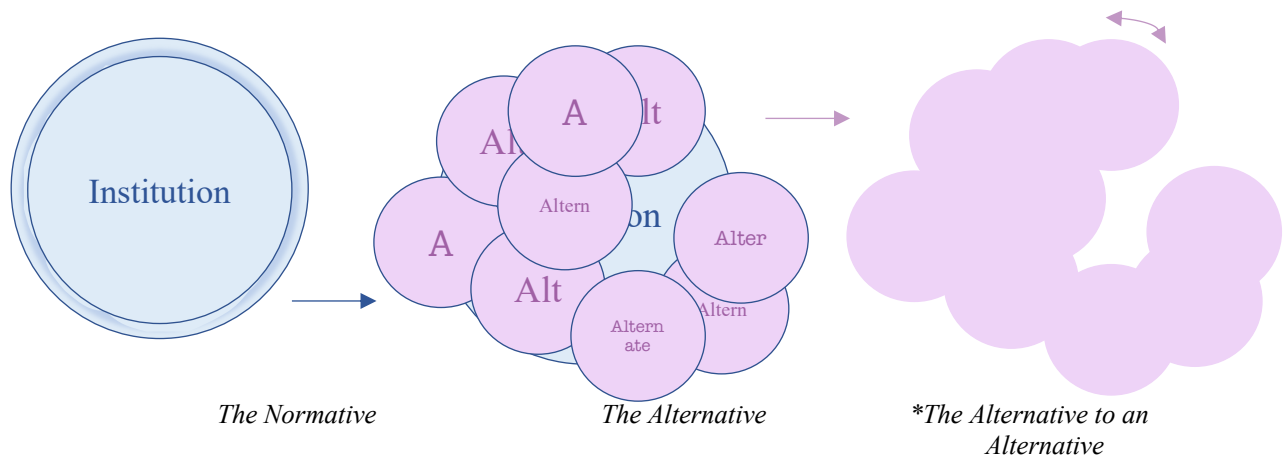


Figure 8. The diagram illustrates the positioning of the alternative and the development of a form that is outside any pattern. The middle illustration of *the Alternative* attempts to communicate the different individual models that alternative art schools take, some that are closer to the normative and others that attempt something far more imaginary. * The third illustration represents the possibility of viewing the alternative art schools not just as autonomous entities but as one homogenous nebulous networked entity; this offers a formidable conceptual proposition. Furthermore, the spatial configuration surrounding the nebulous networked entity presents an additional form of alternative art school spatial structure, “oxygen in a deep sea of education”.⁸⁴

I have shown spatial patterns to be predictable; I have also revealed the formation of other patterns that operate outside the institutional. It is the systems outside the spatial pattern and these alternatives that reclaim alterity that actively challenge the institutional forms that I identified as being of relevance within the research. My present chapter acts both as an introduction to the proliferation of the alternative art school and the wider landscape of experimental art education. The listing, redacting and Genograms located in Box A and the Research Catalogue at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223289> are intended as a resource for others to activate further dialogues that contribute to developing and evolving new models for enquiry. In this context, the mapping is always unfinished, a concept-making tool that is itself an ongoing research project.

⁸⁴ I revisit the prospect of the networked alternative art school in Chapter 4, TOMA. In discussion, Felipe Castelblanco (2017) suggested that the alternative art schools were “oxygen in a deep sea of education”. After this discussion, I contemplated the alternative art school as a contained spherical entity or bubble, possessing the capacity to intersect with other alternative art schools. With a surface tension dynamic, there exists the potential for compromise and shared space, akin to bubbles minimising surface area as they amalgamate to occupy a communal space. Each alternative is thus presented beyond the circular shape to a spherical system, an oxygen bubble capable of surviving in isolation or merging temporarily or permanently with others.

Inferences on the Diagrammatic

The diagrammatic works of listing, redacting, Genograms, and defining reveal the way the alternative art school is assembled through shared intentions of working outside the institutional and normative systems. The listing and Genogram mapping lay bare moments of social imagination and even optimism, attitudes that usurp the dominant institution, tending towards a system of dispersing the central dominant hegemony.⁸⁵ I have devised systems that trouble the archive and propose other generative ways to construct and define a story of the alternative art school. Locating Vidokle's list within a diagrammatic situated and grounded what was already present and exposed gaps and possible connections that were missing. By intervening in Vidokle's list, I have attempted to provoke and disrupt the linear and historical narrative of alternative art schools. One that I started to observe being reproduced by others. In developing the four Genograms and applying the rhizomatic as a tool to assemble, I have centred, framed, and held the alternative art schools.

Throughout my research, I have used mapping during interviews and conversations and encouraged others to map and diagram as tools for the imaginary. I use the terms mapping and diagramming to encompass listing, drawing, charting, and patterning. I applied the diagrammatic as a tool to understand the field, establish the vocabulary and build a framework for the PhD. Engaging with artist Simon O'Sullivan's writing on the diagrammatic is useful in elucidating the conceptual thinking that underpinned this defining stage. O'Sullivan (2016) introduces the potential of the diagram as an expansive interactive tool by suggesting that "the diagram can short circuit the discursive (and as such, demand even more interpretations)".⁸⁶ This description from O'Sullivan posits the diagram as a conceptual work, claiming the diagrammatic as an expansive tool that can activate other forms of engagement, allowing what O'Sullivan (2016) refers to as "encounters and conjunctions" to emerge out of superimposition.⁸⁷ Through the layering systems I activated within the listing and Genogram diagrammatic, I have introduced the concept of abstraction, applying a spatial-temporal pattern. My deliberate framing and application of pattern in relation to the diagrammatic calls to mind the concept of what cartographer Jeremy W. Crampton (2009) terms "performative cartography", a deliberate move away from the notion of stable and secure knowledge that the diagrammatic usually implies.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ There is perhaps a temptation to apply the term *radical* at some point here. However, as outlined in the introduction to this thesis I have deliberately refrained from terms such as *utopia* or *radical* as these would locate this PhD project within pedagogical discourses that I do not have the scope to cover fully in this research.

⁸⁶ O'Sullivan, S., 2016. *On the diagram (and a practice of diagrammatics)* [online]. Available at: https://www.simonosullivan.net/articles/on_the_diagram.pdf [Accessed 30 January 2020], p.14.

⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 17.

⁸⁸ Crampton, J. W., 2009. Cartography: performative, participatory, political. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33(6), p. 840.

My presentation of the legacies and contemporary iterations of alternative art school models within a visualised and relational mapping has allowed for dynamic associations and distinctive thematic to emerge. The totality of the work has been presented as a deep mapping, contributing to the discourse on artistic education, specifically experimental and alternative models. Each mapping phase has charted the development of the alternative art school and its position within an educational canon. The mapping has revealed the historical, durational, geographical and, in some instances, networks and interconnected relationships. Yet mapping as a tool of investigation has limitations in that it is impossible to obtain a sense of the individual conditions, sites, or actions and the conditions within which the alternative art school operates. I have discovered it is this physical space of inhabiting, interruption and fabrication that is significant to me in this research.

Chapter 2, Spatiality, now presents an analysis of alternative art schools in response to systems and patterns considered within physical and conceptual forms of mapping. This next chapter activates the definitions and descriptions set out in the present chapter. Specifically, I showcase specific instances from my practice to determine the impact of space on their configuration, sites, and operational modalities. Firstly, I introduce the spatial conceptual model that developed from my diagrammatic mapping systems in this chapter. Secondly, I set out my role as a researcher and establish the methodology and application of spatial practices through the introduction of my protagonist roles. Here, I not only put into action the lens of spatial characteristics but also question the alternative art school from a more embedded position.

Chapter 2

Spatiality

Chapter 1 Mapping provided a context for this study and presented my initial survey of the field of alternative art schools and alternative pedagogies through phases of listing and diagramming. I used a diagrammatic and interpretative text to sketch out a visualisation of what I understand as the terrain of alternative education. Situating the alternative within a historical canon of the experimental art school revealed something of the territory of the alternative, providing a durational, geographical, and relational context. I now move to analyse this territory through a lens of spatiality, including an examination of both physical and conceptual space, which is an under-interrogated aspect of the alternative.⁸⁹ Chapter 2, Spatiality, brings together my findings from interventions into Vidokle's list, the Genogram mapping and locating the alternative, to continue the journey through the development of a research process that is essentially a chronicle of connections.

This chapter is divided into three parts: firstly, I extend the diagrammatic mapping practice(s) presented in Chapter 1, reframing these within the context of the space of education to present a conceptual spatial frame that my practice research sits within. Next, I offer and analyse indicative examples that occupy each space within the diagrammatic framework. Following this, I present a case study of *La Escuela ParaSitio/The Para-Site School*, introducing a disruptive spatiality that alternative art schools can adopt. Subsequently, I conduct a comparative analysis of the parasitic model. Finally, I conclude the chapter by reflecting on the implications of spatiality, the parasitic position, and the corresponding emergence of my own interventionist and disruptive modes of investigation. Here, I make reference to Michel Serres's text *The Parasite* (2007) and Chantal Mouffe's theories on agonism, and I introduce the process by which alternative space is produced, with reference to Henri Lefebvre's *Production of Space* (1991).

Engaging the overarching question of my PhD; *what and where are the spaces of alternative art schools? Can the alternative art school be situated outside of the normative*

⁸⁹ The alternative has been studied by others within the context of the Educational Turn, neoliberalism in higher education, professionalisation of artistic pedagogies and within a historical narrative of the experimental. In conversation with PhD and now post-doctoral researchers Sarah Scarsbrook (August 2021) and Susannah Haslam (March 2018). Scarsbrook, S 2021. Artists and the art school: experiences and perspectives of fine art education and professional pedagogies in London art schools, 1986–2016. PhD thesis, Birkbeck, University of London.
Haslam, S.E., 2018. *After the educational turn: alternatives to the alternative art school*. PhD thesis, Royal College of Art.

pattern that currently determines the present and potential future forms of the art institution? I now set out to identify the alternative art school, to determine how the alternative sits in relation to institutional models. Sub-questions specifically arose in relation to spatial considerations. These sub-questions serve as a framework for examining alternative art schools across physical, pedagogical, and conceptual spatial dimensions. They help determine the emergence of various alternative patterns and how we identify them by asking:

- What are the spatialities of the art school and the alternative pedagogies?
- How do the alternative art schools determine what an alternative is?
- What does the alternative art school look like?
- Why does it look like this?
- Which institutional spatial systems does the alternative art school adopt?

Spatial Mapping

Space is the keeper of institutional pattern; it is space that holds the systems, structures, and conditions of where and even how we engage in artistic education. This section introduces the spatial conditions within which the alternative art school operates. Space is an underarticulated theme within the discourse of the alternative art school, and yet space determines the conditions in which the alternative schools exist. Investigating the alternative art school through the lens of spatiality allowed me to consider the spatial features of the alternative art school through both their physical and conceptual forms. I worked towards determining their spatial constructions through drawing exercises, textual analysis, spatial mapping performances, sound recordings and close observation. I started with an examination of a normative space, producing a second short moving image vignette, 'Nothing', conceived as a diagrammatic collage of my initial exploration within an art education space and a place to test my devices (props) for spatial explorations. Throughout 2017, I explored alternative spaces of artistic education, attending exhibitions and programmed public events and undertaking interviews. These works are included in the Research Catalogue at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223287>.

From these preliminary explorations, I attempted to locate the schools, devising five operative spatial concepts that my practice and investigations sit within, see Figure 10. The spatial framework is not static; each of the five spatial definitions acts as a place to enter into a particular designation of spatiality from which shifting of boundaries or displacement can occur.

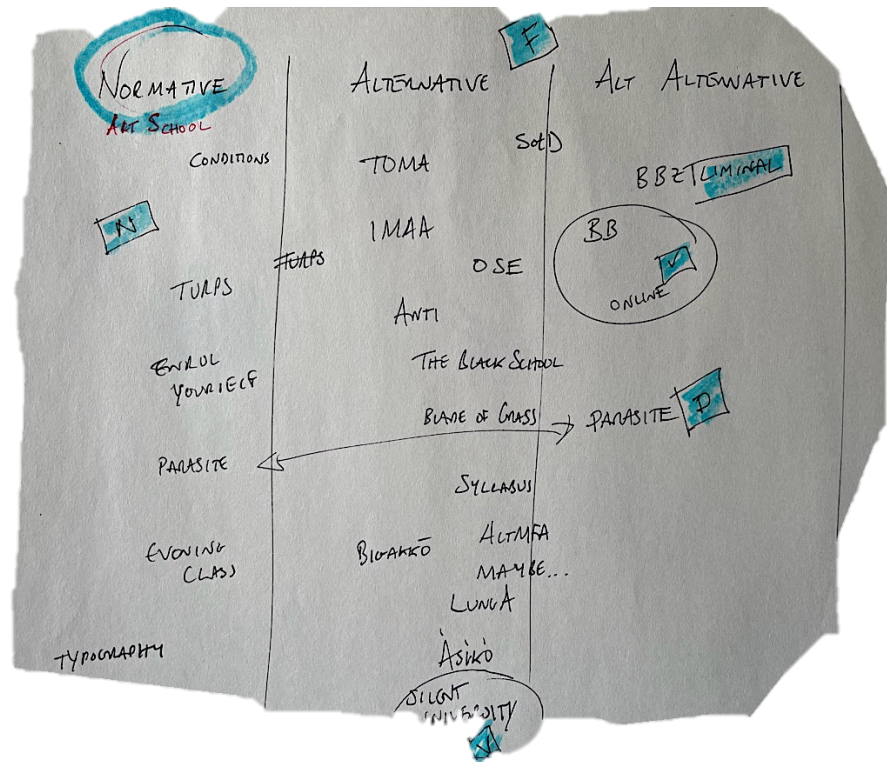


Figure 9. A first sketch identifies spatial characteristics and patterns of an alternative art school in relation to the normative space and models that have the potential to sit outside of the alternative framework.

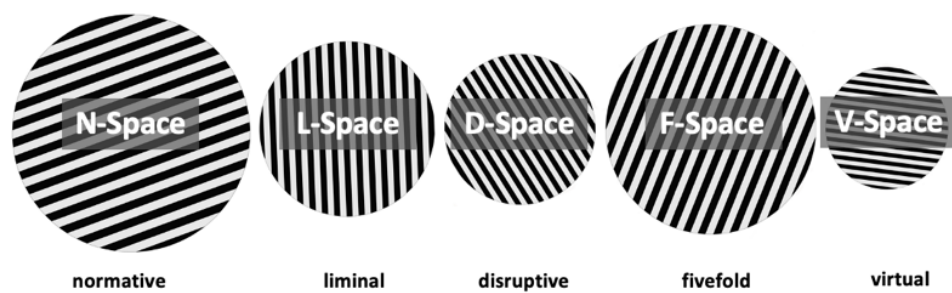


Figure 10. Map of Spatiality 1: The Five Spatialities.

Establishing the Five Spatialities

I developed the five spatialities by selecting alternative art schools from the Genograms and placing them within my characterising definitions; an initial listing of these is shown in Figure 9. I mapped the types of spaces where alternative art schools were situated, ranging from permanent to temporary to nomadic. This framework comprises the normative equating to N-Space, liminal as L-Space, disruptive as D-Space, fivefold as F-Space, and finally, the space of the virtual as V-Space. I present a short introduction to each of these five spatial models as a guide for the reader to understand their distinctive spatial positions. The respective introduction is followed by an indicative example to illustrate the concept in practice. Relevant exemplars correspond to one of the five spatialities, having been selected as models that I have engaged with directly through interviews, conversations, or direct participation; each is UK-based, except for Chto Delat.⁹⁰

Spatial Topologies

N-Space (The Normative Space)

The N-Space maintains boundaries and reinforces institutional structures; it is the space that pervades the institution. It has complex associations supporting the neoliberal policies of individualism, market competition, professionalisation, and education as a tool of capital. I include the normative space within the PhD, as through my research data collection, it transpired that most of those who have initiated alternative art schools and many who participate in them have experienced the normative art school system. My mapping also showed those spaces adjacent to the normative institution and those that operate within the boundaries of the normative space.⁹¹ There are alternative art schools covered by this research that are guided by normative spaces and institutional practices and structures from the art school. They run on an academic calendar year and include the crit, seminar, visiting artist as a tutor, artist tutorial, and end-of-year exhibitions within the timeframe of a 'programme'. Significantly, this normative bounded education acts as the measure from which to regulate the alternative art school.⁹² I encountered other models that actively

⁹⁰ The five examples: 1 Conditions, N-Space; 2 School of the Damned, D-Space; 3 Chto Delat, F-Space; 4 BBZ, L-Space, 5 Black Blossoms, V-Space and 6 The Para-Site School occupying a parasitical space, can be found on Genogram 01 in Box A.

⁹¹ Examples would be Unit X at Manchester School of Art or the Summer and Winter Lodges at Nottingham Trent University.

⁹² This can be observed within a UK context, where alternative art schools are assessed in terms of social engagement and accessibility to art education and/or conditions equivalent to those of the normative in order to determine the allocation of

worked against the normative spaces; the remaining four spatialities are my attempt to articulate these different forms.

Conditions: As Normative Space

Quote

We start with a space (a studio) and a programme (a structure).

Unquote⁹³

Conditions is a one-year low-cost studio programme for artists at 89 Gloucester Road, Croydon. It was co-founded by artist and educator Matthew Noel-Tod, who has experience working within the specialist arts university, and artist-musician-filmmaker David Panos. Noel-Tod discusses property citizenship, spatial precarity, and threats from property developers to artist studio spaces within urban centres.⁹⁴ 'Conditions' is, therefore, a knowing name, one deliberately selected to reflect the precarious situation that the alternative art school sits within. Conditions presents an alternative 'studio programme' supported by Croydon Council as part of the Mayor of London's Creative Enterprise Zone, an initiative launched in 2018.⁹⁵ This is an alternative that is, I suggest, spatially at least adjacent to the normative institution in that it is static, studio-based and runs on academic calendar time. It is a formal programme that includes recognisable normative spatialities, identifiable through group crits, collective discussions, seminars, one-to-one studio tutorials with associate artists, and individual disciplinary practices, all of which reproduce the pedagogical forms of the normative.

The notable difference is that Conditions artists are making without demand; there is no assessment requirement, although there is an end-of-year show in September.⁹⁶ Conditions provide, as one artist states, "milestones to work towards", and a network, crits,

from the Arts Council England, trusts and foundations or to confer some form of regulation and equivalencies that then permits entry, as in the case of the emerging artists showcase, New Contemporaries.

⁹³ I had previously attended lectures in which the speaker would often read from an academic text, emphasising the points of reference through a change in inflexion and the application of 'quote/unquote'. I enjoyed the phrasing of these two words and the way they became almost physical, hanging in mid-presentation, suspended in the lecture space, and bracketing and theatrically emphasising the significant cited moment. Rather than performing the voice of the expert in this chapter, I will use 'quote/unquote' within the text to point towards moments of dialogue, exchange with others, and a back and forth between voices.

⁹⁴Noel-Tod, M., 2021. *High Streets for All?* [online]. Art Monthly 446. Available at: <https://www.artmonthly.co.uk/magazine/site/article/high-streets-for-all-by-matthew-noel-tod-may-2021>[Accessed 10 September 2022].

⁹⁵ Gallagher, T., 2020. *Creative Enterprise Zones* [online]. London Councils Member briefing. Available at: <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Creative-enterprise-zones.pdf> [Accessed 28 August 2022].

⁹⁶ I attended the end of year show 3-17 September 2022 at Shop 48 Whitgift Centre, West Croydon and spoke with exhibiting artists.

and a studio, “addressing the needs of the studio artist, who can often find themselves working in isolation”.⁹⁷ Not everyone at Conditions has been to art school, but most have, and therefore, many participants come with an expectation of what the art school should look like. Some artists use the space for one year with the option to complete a further two years. The primary engagement within the programme is with the studio space; the studios replicate that of their normative models, with critical discussions held here. The methods of working are internal, with each artist working and showing the development of practice within their studio space. There are freestanding spaces that accommodate art-making, primarily sculpture, painting and drawing. When I visited, exhibitions were held externally; I attended a final year show for the 2021/22 group at Unit 48 in the nearby Whitgift Shopping Centre, Croydon.

The artists occupy an industrial warehouse space with internal white brick walls, moveable boards, ample overhead lighting (natural and tube lighting), a blue-painted concrete floor, trestle tables, and industrial racking. One distinguishing external feature is the brightly painted façade in malachite green, perhaps as a branding of the artist in an industrial warehouse space.⁹⁸ Conditions foreground both production and discussion. Since 2022, its scope has been extended to include a professional practice programme delivered through the Institute of Contemporary Arts in central London. The assumption from the term ‘alternative’ that alternative art schools coalesce to provide alternative spaces, pedagogies, and discourses is not always correct. The inclusion of professional practice within the programme demonstrated parallelism with certain conventions observed in normative institutional settings. The artists that I spoke with participating in Conditions had been dissatisfied with their institutional education at Master’s level, with one having dropped out. Another artist was feeling both fortunate and guilty for being given a studio space when friends on programmes elsewhere did not have studio spaces. The consensus I gained from them was that Conditions offered the art education they had imagined they were going to have at a normative institution.

⁹⁷ Reynolds, E. (e.reynolds@ntu.ac.uk) 2022. *Conditions*. 15 September. Email to: Richard Phoenix (richardjamesphoenix@pm.me).

⁹⁸ Conditions studios are located on a ‘light industrial estate’ in West Croydon, opposite a McDonald’s ghost kitchen.

D-Space (Disruptive Space)

The alternative space, in its very manifestation, interposes and disrupts the space of artistic education, rejecting the pedagogical expectation of replication and standardisation, not entering and following the existing conditions, codes, and patterns. In this broad context, all the alternative art schools could be deemed disruptive in that they are conscious of their alterity and the very thing they work around or against. My consideration of disruptive space emerged following a keynote presentation on hybrid architectural practice given by Dr Craig L. Wilkins at the Alternative Art School Fair at Pioneer Works in New York in 2016.⁹⁹ Wilkins (2016) proposes the *disruptive* as a conceptual position to inhabit; the D-Space is “actively in opposition”, overcoming the common narrative of the institutional or normative space.

However, the D-Space is deliberately and consciously made; it has the potential to accommodate what Chantal Mouffe terms the “agonistic space”. Mouffe (2000) identifies two forms of antagonism: the first form inhabits a space where there is no commonality, that is, a space of two enemies; the second form, which she calls “agonism”, inhabits a space not of *enemies*, but what Mouffe terms, “*adversaries*” or “*friendly enemies*”.¹⁰⁰ In the latter situation, the adversaries occupy a space of commonality, yet both wish to organise it divergently; it is in this conflictual oppositional space that critical things can happen. The D-Space, therefore, is the space of criticality; it is conceived as the space of intervention, and in that sense, it must be manifest within other spaces. Most importantly, the D-Space has the potential to unfold and expand the space in which it operates.

The School of the Damned (SotD): Participation as Disruptive Spatial Practice

Quote

*The alternative offers up the possibilities for new spaces of exchange, new zones of connectivity, and the erasure of not knowing or not belonging. But it also offers up the identity of the gang or group, of further exclusivity, increased knowingness, just more of the same. Groupness becomes a fine line to navigate.*¹⁰¹

Unquote

⁹⁹ Pioneer Works, 2016. *Program- Alternative Art School Fair* [online]. Pioneer Works. Available at: <https://pioneerworks.org/programs/alternative-art-school-fair/> [Accessed 12 July 2018]. Although Wilkins is presenting ideas with consideration to architectural and urban spatial practices, I found the language and concepts resonated with my own disruptive practices within art education.

¹⁰⁰ Mouffe, C., 2000. *The democratic paradox*. London: Verso, p. 13.

¹⁰¹ The quote was conceived after an email exchange with Natasha Cox, a participant in School of the Damned, from November 2017–March 2018. On one occasion, we debated the formulation of space as practice. Cox, N., and SotD, 2017. We also held a conversation in London in 2018. Reynolds, E. (e.reynolds@ntu.ac.uk) 2018. *SotD, on Slack*. 27 March. Email to: Natasha Cox (tasha.cox9@googlemail.com).

School of the Damned (SotD) is a UK-based alternative art postgraduate programme formed in 2014 as a response to the increasing costs of study in the UK. The SotD inhabits space and invests in transient spatial paradigms and time forms. Each year the selected applicants inform how SotD will structure the next iteration of the school. As one SotD artist in conversation with me described it as “a bunch of people chosen by a bunch of other people to hang out for no other reason than the fact they said they would”.¹⁰² There are no fees or forms of monetary exchange, but SotD operates a student-initiated programme that is supported by peers; through the reciprocal exchange of guested space, an extended regional network is created. Occupying no fixed place and initially meeting in the geographical locations determined by the participants, SotD is conceptualised as a collective nomadic art practice. In some ways the spaces that SotD inhabit become the material for artistic practice, a malleable constituent of a group forming and reforming.

Through co-creation and an itinerant engagement with space, artistic practices are encountered rather than preconfigured. Emerging from this is an alternative ephemeral pedagogy, one that is not always about the creation of physical things made over an extended period but rather a pedagogy in space, constructed through moments of exchange and encounter; interactions may occur intermittently among group members or in exchange with others outside. The spaces that SotD occupy become disruptive because SotD insinuates itself into public spaces and other arts organisations, and it creates alternative art school moments, which are consistently in flux and responsive to its own convocation in space. During interviews and an ongoing dialogue with SotD and myself in 2018, we debated the nature of the group and its invitational structure.¹⁰³ SotD states, “the student body share roles and the responsibility to aid each other’s education as well as the development of the programme”.¹⁰⁴ The activities and transitory positions that SotD take are a form of practice. This very freedom in the nomadic had reportedly been fun for some, yet it led to two underlying concerns: a lack of educational rigour and the lack of diversity among SotD participants.¹⁰⁵ One SotD artist suggested, “you actually get more out of it from thinking

¹⁰² Reynolds, E. (e.reynolds@ntu.ac.uk) 2018. *SotD*. 29 March. Email to: Ellen King and SotD (via slack).

¹⁰³ The interview I conducted with SotD was kindly facilitated by 2018 alumni Natasha Cox, who posted my questions on ‘Slack’, an online relay chat platform that allowed others in the SotD forum to view and comment not only on my questions but on each other’s answers.

¹⁰⁴ SotD, 2016. [online]. *School of the Damned: 2016 manifesto* [online]. Lewisham Art House, 2016. Available at: <http://www.lewishamarthouse.org.uk/project-space/school-of-the-damned-end-of-year/> [Accessed 28 August 2021].

¹⁰⁵ During my conversations with SotD in 2018/19, two participants had mentioned the lack of development of material skills, “that would be useful to inform their own practice”. A participant also acknowledged a lack of plurality of voices. SotD acknowledged their whiteness in a short statement published in response to the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 and their wider recognition of the Black Lives Matter movement.

schoolofthedamned, 2020. Beyond solidarity: WHAT SHOULD BE HERE? *schoolofthedamned* [Instagram], 5 June. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CBEFesiFISK/> [Accessed 28 August 2021].

about and making links and talking to people in between the scheduled trips and activities, even though these were all organised by us, ourselves, not some outside force”.¹⁰⁶ In a further conversation, the nature of the (sometimes impulsive) programming was reiterated by another artist, “I think the arbitrariness is part of what makes the school work by the way, you have to believe in this thing that doesn't really exist in order to get something from it”.¹⁰⁷ SotD sets parameters for spatial practice, considering how space is produced, as a way of exploring the urban and regional.

More recently, and since the COVID-19 pandemic, the SotD class of 2022–23 moved to a hybrid online and offline model that has expanded into four groups with around 102 participants in total globally. The experience within space remains one of a democratic organisational structure overlaid with an element of the irreverent. Currently, the SotD social media sites state “that all the members are scattered across the UK but also throughout Europe and the rest of the world”.¹⁰⁸ Some groups are meeting once a week, whilst others are meeting once a month. There are groups that meet only online and others that also meet occasionally in person. As a recent Instagram promotion to learn more about SotD states, “it’s all up for grabs, everything’s possible really or REALLY???”¹⁰⁹

F-Space (Fivefold Space)

The fivefold space, or F-Space, is a space of sharing and modifying. It is the art of space-making within marginalised locations, repurposing space and situating yourself within the unsanctioned space. I developed the F-Space concept through a consideration of spaces that disperse normative space or deflect the normative spatial attributes, encouraging spatial characteristics that extend, overflow, and expand outward. In this sense, the F-Space intervenes within the normative space; it is constantly changing, being mobile, interconnected, transitional, and open to encounter. It allows for individual and

¹⁰⁶ Reynolds, E. (e.reynolds@ntu.ac.uk) 2018. *SotD*, on Slack. 27 March. Email to: Natasha Cox (tasha.cox9@googlemail.com).

¹⁰⁷ And following on from this,

in a similar way, it's the fear that gives school its magic. by agreeing to do it in the first place, you're already saying that you don't know what this thing is, but you're looking for something to give you a new direction, to open things up a bit. It's the downtime that does it, that reels you in and gives you things to explore, within the structure that gives you a reason to meet and do the work in the first place. Each time I came away from a meeting, I would feel kind of annoyed, or unsettled uncertain, like I had a problem I couldn't answer that I needed to chew over. And gradually the problem became so interesting that I started to enjoy all the weird feelings.

Reynolds, E. (e.reynolds@ntu.ac.uk) 2018. *SotD*, on Slack. 27 March. Email to: Natasha Cox (tasha.cox9@googlemail.com).

¹⁰⁸ SotD, 2022. School, an update on applications, schoolofthedamned [Instagram], available at:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CXQmMhFIH-4/?hl=en> [Accessed 9 December 2021].

¹⁰⁹ SotD, 2022. Conway Hall Sunday Concerts, schoolofthedamned [Instagram], available at:

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CiAjrwaISOG/?hl=en> [Accessed 8 September 2022].

collaborative agency; it is a space accessible to those who wish to encounter a space through different modalities. The space is public, evolving, hospitable, and utilised by five actors:

1. the residents who permanently inhabit the space
2. the visitors/excursionists who pass through the space
3. the alternative art school that engages with itself in the space
4. the ethnographer as a participant in the space
5. the space itself, it is a performative site

The F-Space is aware of the site and orientated toward specific actions directed by the group, or individuals, within the alternative art school. What is striking within this model is that the space of activity and performance is shared by others outside the alternative art school. The alternative art school exists in the site yet is not necessarily contingent on a specific site for its existence. The fivefold alternative space can be considered, in this context, as a site-specific intervention, one where points of inflection and extension allow for individual and collaborative agency.

Chto Delat: In the Space of the Fivefold

Quote

How can we become more?

What's next after next?

Where has communism gone?

*How to organise our pessimism, now?*¹¹⁰

Unquote

Employing performance through learning theatre, radio plays and political theory, Chto Delat is a collective formed in 2003 in St Petersburg and Moscow. From this emerged a free educational platform The School of Engaged Art, founded in 2013. The genealogy of Chto Delat's alternative pedagogy is strikingly different from that of many of the alternative art schools I encountered in that it is derived from an academy system of workshops and systematic questioning through art, literature, and philosophy. Engaging the urban spaces of St Petersburg and Moscow, The School of Engaged Art questions normative ways of teaching pedagogies through its choreographed interactions with space, following an intrinsic imperative to occupy the urban, not with an exhibition but with knowledge production,

¹¹⁰ *Questions from Nezhnost/Tenderness*, a video performance by Chto Delat collective realised by Nina Gasteva, Tsaplya Olga Egorova, Nikolay Oleynikov, and Dmitry Vilensky, May 2020, [online]. Available at: <https://chtodelat.org/> [Accessed 19 July 2021].

which they evolve and show through the Brechtian practice of learning plays, *Lehrstücke*.¹¹¹ The *Lehrstücke* offered a way to engage with political theory, art, activism and leftist views, which became more marginalised after the fall of the Soviet Union. Not unlike the social justice labour plays and theatre of Highlander Folk School examined in Chapter 1. The *Lehrstücke* offers a heterogeneity of procedures and roles that question and prompt thinking on the conditions for living. Through its use of *Lehrstücke* Chto Delat and the School of Engaged Art function as platforms for encounter with not just art but with political solidarity.¹¹² Operating outside of the formalist modernist paradigm of the Bauhaus and Black Mountain College, Chto Delat refers to themselves as a workgroup rather than a collective, which is to say they are not socialising together, but are as Anon (2018) states “together to produce something”.¹¹³ The workgroup, acting in a dialogue between and across theory, philosophy, and art thinking, is dedicated to the idea that the university is about universality and the state needing to educate its populace. Political forms of contemporary art and philosophy have a different resonance in Moscow and St Petersburg and indeed Russia than the UK.

The educational programme that is the School of Engaged Art operates with three artists running workshops.¹¹⁴ The programme is intensive, encompassing teaching formats that focus on acting, filmmaking, poetry, pedagogical exercises, and theatrical experiments. The students respond to texts and use these to engage and politicise knowledge production. Delivered through short modules, one week per month, classes start at 10am and run until late in the evening, with a party at the end of the week. The participants stay in cheap hotels, as this is funded for those coming from the provinces.¹¹⁵ The programme can be extended as required and adapted to respond to the political situation, unlike under the institutional model. In allowing for this mode of education, Chto Delat operates within the fivefold space, yet it has no space for the neutral or unengaged. The School of Engaged Art offers an

¹¹¹ The learning-play [*Lehrstück*] is essentially dynamic; its task is to show the world as it changes (and also how it may be changed). The *Lehrstücke*, (translated as), lesson plays or learning plays, were originally experimental plays and works written by Bertolt Brecht in the 1920s and 1930s. Brecht took a didactic approach to learning through acting, role-playing, exaggerated gesture, and the adoption of postures and attitudes that merge the traditional divide between actors and audience. Brecht, B. 1977.

¹¹² Given the extreme difficulties under which Chto Delat are currently operating I am being deliberately vague in acknowledging the exact details of interviews undertaken and where possible I provide online references. Two of the coordinators at the School of Engaged Art graduated from the Repin (Russian Academy of Arts), St. Petersburg State Academic Institute of Painting, Architecture, and Sculpture, which has a traditional ‘academy’ method of teaching disciplines. Anon., 2018. Chto Delat and School of Engaged Art: Interview with Elle Reynolds, London, 16 February.

¹¹³ The production of texts and accompanying artworks is evidenced in the Chto Delat reader. Chto Delat. 2016. *The Chto Delat Reader on Performative Education, Back to School*. [online]. Available at: <https://chtodelat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/back-to-school-full.pdf> [Accessed 19 July 2021].

¹¹⁴ Each of the three received art degrees from traditional Russian art schools that have based their pedagogies on German technical teaching. Anon., 2018. Chto Delat and School of Engaged Art: Interview with Elle Reynolds, London, 16 February.

¹¹⁵ Chto Delat was supported by grants from the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation and, more recently, its own Mutual Aid Fund. In conversation and Interview with Elle Reynolds, London, 16 February.

education that is directly connected with life, a dramaturgy of class struggle, which in its marginality is somehow prolific, as Bertolt Brecht (1994) suggests, “there is capacity to reflect real life and to do so in a fantastical, personal, individual way”¹¹⁶.

The School of Engaged Art is about more than just art. Anon, one of the founders in conversation, made the assertion and reiterated several times, “today it is essential to practice an art that does not hide in the safety of institutional and pedagogical ghettos”.¹¹⁷ The School exists as part of Chto Delat, which in turn exists under an umbrella of art. Otherwise, it could be perceived as a political school of radicalism. So, making alternative education in these conditions, at this time, holds a distinctive significance.¹¹⁸ Chto Delat is about asking the bigger questions of *what is to be done?*¹¹⁹

L-Space (Liminal Space)

My mapping also reveals those alternative art schools that invite other imaginaries of education, those models that reject the normative, echoing Wilkins’s (2016) assertion that for some, “the price of the normative space is too high”. I conceived the liminal as a space that accommodates imaginaries, a transitional space pushing against the normative institution. On the way to somewhere better, it sits on the margins of the alternative. I appreciate that the term liminal has become a buzzword and is overused within the context of sensory thresholds and online spaces. However, I look to relocate the liminal within a context of transitional space, as a space characterised by ambiguity, fluidity, and a sense of transformation. Liminal spaces are spaces created by those who are not at the centre or those who experience normative spaces differently. The L-Space is the space of intersectionality, space that not only acknowledges but foregrounds the diaspora, the queer, and people of colour. The L-Space embraces speculation, other pedagogical languages and

¹¹⁶ Brecht, B., 1994. *Brecht on theatre: the development of an aesthetic*. Translated by John Willett. New York: Hill and Wang, pp. 160–161.

¹¹⁷ Angelotti, M., 2017. *Organising new forms of collectivity: a conversation between Chto Delat and Martina Angelotti*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.visibleproject.org/blog/project/the-school-of-engaged-art-saint-petersburg-russia/> [Accessed 19 July 2021].

¹¹⁸ After more than two decades under Vladimir Putin's leadership, the cultural landscape in Russia reflects a strong nationalist stance, with significant support from government funds promoting a conservative cultural perspective. Art and music face scrutiny not only when created by overt critics of the state but also when they incorporate foreign influences. The situation has been further intensified by the 2022 invasion of Ukraine and a Supreme Court ruling on November 30, 2023, designating the international LGBT movement as extremist and subsequently outlawing it in Russia. This has resulted in arrests and the detention of individuals in camps without formal charges (source: <https://time.com/6236822/russia-gay-propaganda-law-discrimination/>). The pervasive and ongoing repression creates an environment where creative artist educators, such as Chto Delat and the School of Emergencies, operate under exceptionally hazardous conditions.

¹¹⁹ Since 2022, The School of Engaged Art ceased to exist, and a new initiative, The School of Emergencies, was constituted as a temporary educational initiative. Since 2023 The Emergency Project Room, was created after members of Chto Delat were forced to seek asylum in Germany.

narratives, Afrofuturism, and interconnected visionaries. The L-Space can be barely perceptible to some. To others it implicitly states, 'I am here'.

In an interview with American artist Jibade-Khalil Huffman (2019), the notion that "You start the game tired" is acknowledged.¹²⁰ This observation is featured in an online article discussing the experience of emotional depletion that artists of colour can experience in the art institution.¹²¹ Although the article is written from an American perspective, I would suggest that many of the themes debated there are not unfamiliar to those students and academics from ethically diverse backgrounds entering or established in UK art institutions. Instead of fighting to gain entry to institutional spaces, Wilkins (2016) suggests that we "reject the spaces that reject us".¹²² What if we look to create other spaces, ones that operate in the margins and at the edge of normative space yet are centred and celebrated by those building and using them? To return to Wilkins (2016) theory of the spatial, he states that "spaces are rarely fixed, ...they can be accumulated, hacked, mashed".¹²³ In this context, the L-Space is deliberately made; not an excuse, but an explanation.

BBZ: As a Liminal Space

Quote

*We are already disrupters. Space is a system of communication constantly reinforced in every aspect of our lives through codes, behaviours, and modalities that we have created. There is in the art institution a uniformity of spaces, and associated behaviours: the studio, crit room and end-of-year exhibition. Yet who has access to any of these spaces? Permission to use space differently can rarely be sought within the institution.*¹²⁴

Unquote

BBZ BLK BK: Alternative Graduate Show 2018 and 2019

¹²⁰ Huffman, J-K., and Smith S.E., 2018. *In Conversation*. [The Camera Club of New York]. 21 June. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LqOn8dYzv7w&t=578s> [Accessed 19 July 2021].

¹²¹ Melissa Smith (2019) states, "at a time when work by some black artists is more in demand than ever, life at the academy remains riddled with obstacles". Smith, M., 2019. *Young black artists are more in demand than ever—but the art world is burning them out* [online]. Artnet. Available at: <https://news.artnet.com/market/young-black-artists-burning-out-1523446> [Accessed 20 July 2021].

¹²² Wilkins, C. L., 2016. *The architecture of arts education*. [Lecture at Alternative Art School Fair, Pioneer Works, New York]. 20 November.

¹²³ Wilkins, C. L., 2016. *Diversity among architects: from margin to center*. London: Routledge, pp. 44–45. Wilkins discusses rejecting spaces, proposing *we'll just steal space*. A fuller discussion of this position was presented during the keynote talk at the Alternative Art School Fair, Pioneer Works, New York, 2016.

¹²⁴ An amalgamation of observations from an interview and discussions with Tia Simon-Campbell, one of the originators of BBZ, 2018 and 2019.

BBZ was a Black Queer art and DJ collective founded in London, in 2016.¹²⁵ The name is textspeak for ‘babes’ and here also an acronym for ‘Bold Brazen Zamis’. The very name opened up another kind of space, moving away from the academised naming of the normative school, academy, etc., proposing an application of the Black vernacular in phraseology and modus operandi. BBZ aimed to challenge obsolete ideas by activating a form of micro-politics challenging languages of gender, race, sexuality, and other identities. BBZ moved from just making nightclub spaces as a creative form of socialising to a directed form of making something together, a normative configuration within artistic education and shifted this physical form of presentation, reframing how art academia is organised for art students who do not make up the majority in UK art institutions. Initially, BBZ built the Black Book (BBZBLKBK), an online directory of current Black and Brown artists based in the UK and Ireland, then reconceived the traditional end-of-year show in both 2018 and 2019. BBZ presented the Alternative Graduate Show (AGS) as the physical manifestation of the BLKBK in the form of an end-of-year exhibition located within the Copeland Gallery in Peckham, south London. The gallery was transformed into a celebratory exhibition space, which included performance and sound alongside sculpture and painting.

What happens when the same tools are used in different spaces? In reorienting the instrument of the end-of-year show or graduate show, a historical rite of passage for the art student completing a ‘traditional programme of study’. BBZ brought a different dynamic, showcasing ten emerging (largely from the normative art institutions) QPOC artists in a space that did not ‘pathologize’ but allowed the work on display to be seen.¹²⁶ BBZ enabled the social and political merely by conceiving a Black/Queer graduate showcase and a capacity to engage with this through applying a liminal spatiality. That is by questioning who and what could occupy the spaces left by the institution, shifting the rules and languages and how these are understood. In this respect, BBZ shaped space towards a specific purpose, both physically and conceptually. BBZ’s form of curated space would perhaps be a contested space within the normative university, where it would be seen as fragmented and controversial. Yet I observed the space filled with otherness, a way of inhabiting alternative art school spaces without having to pretend or apply a different cadence.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ BBZ initially worked in partnership with the London art collective Sorry You Feel Uncomfortable and was supported by Dazed Media. Simon-Campbell, T., 2018 and 2019. BBZ Co-founder: interview with Elle Reynolds, Brixton and North Greenwich, London, July and August 2018 and May 2019.

¹²⁶ BBZ was a platform to showcase Queer Womxn, Trans and Non-Binary artists of Black Ancestry.

¹²⁷ The BBZ Alternative Graduate Show offered a platform for artists with a body of work equivalent to three years of practice or who have just completed an undergraduate degree programme of study. Applications were through an open call on social media.

Simon-Campbell, T., 2018 and 2019. BBZ Co-founder: interview with Elle Reynolds, Brixton and North Greenwich, London, July and August 2018 and May 2019.

V-Space (Virtual Space)

Finally, I introduce the space of the virtual, or V-Space, a digital space, connected and networked. Digital platforms, including social media, are used by the alternative art schools as both tools of cultural production and spaces for resisting the normative institution. This facilitates the appropriation and creation of spaces for democratic expression, albeit within the confines of mainstream platforms characterised by privatisation, control, and censorship. The V-Space opens other modes of spatiality, collaboration, community, and activism; seen through this lens of the alternative art school, the V-Space is a means of being visible, a political object. The V-Space offers a platform to those proposing alternative pedagogical economics outside of the normative systems that do not represent us. This is the space for examining other kinds of infrastructure, models of communication, and collective research, one that does not reproduce the linguistic space and systems of the institution. It is a dialogical space, one in which to propose and exchange ideas, perform, document, debate, and apply visual imagery as language. As such, the V-Space has the potential to be a holding space for what Legacy Russell (2020) terms ‘glitch’, a space to propose the speculative.¹²⁸ The V-Space of the alternative art school creates its own interconnectedness and protocols for operating, moving between registers of informality and structure; it is also a space to give to others.

A fuller investigation of the V-Space falls outside the scope of this PhD. With the rise of machine learning and AI, alternative art schools are increasingly engaging with advanced technologies as ecosystems for collaborating or networking. Insights into how alternative art schools adapt to or integrate virtual spaces and computational practices require a separate study in itself. For example, The School for Poetic Computation in New York (established in 2013) uses computation as a tool for building community. Through coding and collaborative hardware practices, it critically engages with issues of decoloniality and social justice. The V-Space is a dynamic and rapidly evolving area of study, and I am acutely aware that my engagement with the online space is but one facet of the V-Space.

¹²⁸ Russell, L., 2020. *Glitch feminism: a manifesto*, London: Verso., p. 129. Russell suggests, “the glitch mobilizes...this mobility is gorgeous, slippery, keyed up, catastrophic. It is the thing that keeps us unbound, pushing back against the hegemony”.

Black Blossoms: Online (Afr0-Futurism as Archival Practice) Space¹²⁹

Quote

The system finds a way to eat us, to co-opt us into the system.¹³⁰

Unquote

Bolanle Tajudeen is the founder of Black Blossoms, an expanded curatorial platform based in London, showcasing contemporary Black artists and women since 2015.¹³¹ In 2020, the Black Blossoms School of Art and Culture was established with the intention to expand critical and diverse thought. Black Blossoms (2021) homepage states, “the aim of the school is to decolonise, deconstruct and democratise art and creative education”.¹³² In dialogue with myself, Tajudeen (2022) emphasised that “it is not an equality or diversity art school; it is not about allyship or finding ways to fit in”.¹³³ Tajudeen conceived the idea of a programme while at university as a safe space for Black women and non-binary people to study together.¹³⁴ At first, it was a conference that later evolved into an exhibition, collaboratively supported and co-presented within the exhibition spaces of Art on the Underground in partnership with the London Drawing Group.¹³⁵ The move to online was prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the necessity to be financially stable during 2020. Changing to a paid subscription-based model, offering two courses a month or six classes a year, with 300–1500 people online, mitigated the contained spatial limitations of the in-person model. The Black Blossoms statement indicates its founding principles, emphasising that themes are devised around concerns in relation to intersectionality through ‘race, gender, everything else’.¹³⁶ In conversation with me, Tajudeen (2022) stated “that as creatives we are placing ourselves in a white space, asking, why would we do that?”¹³⁷ The space of Black Blossoms centres on the Black experience, so those outside this space who sign up are very mindful of

¹²⁹ The spelling of Afr0-Futurism is taken from the title of an archival practice course at Black Blossoms.

¹³⁰ Tajudeen, B., 2022. The Black Blossoms School of Art and Culture, Founder: Zoom interview with Elle Reynolds, London, 9 September 2022.

¹³¹ Tajudeen is also lead tutor of Art in the Age of Black Girl Magic, an in-depth course on Black womxn artists, which she devised in 2017.

¹³² Tajudeen, B., 2021. ‘Black Blossoms, Homepage’ [online]. Black Blossoms. Available at: <https://www.black-blossoms.online/> [Accessed 19 July 2021].

¹³³ Tajudeen, B., 2022. The Black Blossoms School of Art and Culture, Founder: Zoom interview with Elle Reynolds, London, 9 September 2022.

¹³⁴ In 2015 whilst at the University of the Arts, London, Bolanle Tajudeen started UAL So White as a campaign to highlight the ongoing lack of diversity in staff at UAL.

¹³⁵ Tajudeen, B., 2022. The Black Blossoms School of Art and Culture, Founder: Zoom interview with Elle Reynolds, London, 9 September 2022.

¹³⁶ Tajudeen, B., 2022. The Black Blossoms School of Art and Culture, Founder: Zoom interview with Elle Reynolds, London, 9 September 2022. The principles of Black Blossoms draw from US Feminists: The Combahee River Collective Statement. Combahee River Collective, 1977. *The Combahee River Collective Statement* [online]. American Studies: Yale Education. Available at: https://americanstudies.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/Keyword%20Coalition_Readings.pdf [Accessed 10 September 2022].

¹³⁷ Tajudeen, B., 2022. The Black Blossoms School of Art and Culture, Founder: Zoom interview with Elle Reynolds, London, 9 September 2022.

the space they have entered and check themselves. The classes reflect this proposition with online course titles such as ‘Art and Activism in the Age of Black Girl Magic’ and ‘Black to the Future: Afr0-Futurism as Archival Practice’. Tajudeen (2022) sees this as “filling in the gaps of art history education”.¹³⁸

Black Blossoms works to break down the barriers of academia, demystifying its language, working from the spaces of social media to create an educational platform for a broader swathe of languages and framings to be prevalent. As a mode of self-education, Black Blossoms offers short courses that frame social and climate concerns for students of colour and others, Tajudeen is aware that Black knowledge is valid outside our community; our knowledge is important. Tajudeen is alert to the primacy of individuality, which is more profound in the West and to the dominance of the single voice in the educational space. During the online lectures, there are moments for smaller groups of artists and curators to meet in the digital space of breakout rooms; Tajudeen identified these as key moments for constructing collectivity and making new networks, sharing social media, and building social currency. Discussion leads to forming new spaces and allows for access to communities and for new communities to form. In this way, the V-Space of the short courses allows for other spaces to open; participants exchange messages and texts and write collaborative essays, poems, and scripts if they so wish to write. Black Blossoms online site creates a unique art education space, one that is intergenerational and moves across disciplines and discourses; curator meets exhibitor, artist meets writer. Anecdotally, online social media platforms provide a space for Black artists to promote and showcase work.¹³⁹ Black Blossoms uses the V-Space for experiments approached from a critical perspective, projects anchored within the UK Black political landscape and bringing together diverse groups that are often isolated within institutional spaces and less confident and therefore less willing to participate or talk in these environments. Tajudeen (2022) refers to Black Blossoms “as a different destination, somewhere to heal”.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Courses including Curating Black Art, a theory-based historical overview, start with the historical overview of black art, moving to the implications of banning Black artists in the US and the lack of representation of Caribbean artists in the UK, alongside the current position of catching up. Tajudeen, B., 2022. The Black Blossoms School of Art and Culture, Founder: Zoom interview with Elle Reynolds, London, 9 September 2022.

¹³⁹ I have looked for studies on this phenomenon and found very little, perhaps an area for further study.

¹⁴⁰ Tajudeen, B., 2022. The Black Blossoms School of Art and Culture, Founder: Zoom interview with Elle Reynolds, London, 9 September 2022.

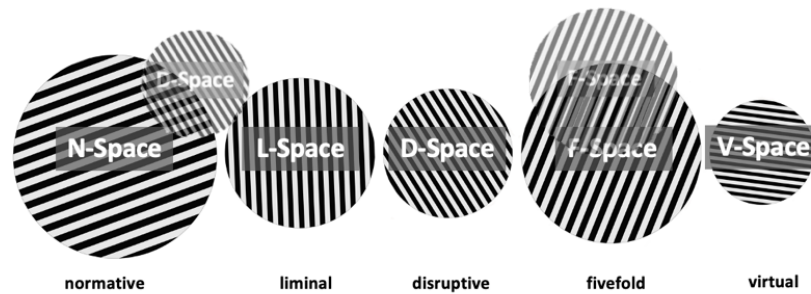


Figure 11. Map of Spatiality 2: The Five Spatialities.
These are not always singular but have the potential to touch or be intersecting spaces.

Spatial Taxonomies

My spatial diagrammatic and corresponding case studies work in combination, setting out the educational environment and proposing a reconsideration of art school spaces. I have shown through the short case studies the possibilities of making space more and for educational purposes, such as Chto Delat perform, or the nomadic visitor spaces of SotD. Conditions exist within the boundaries of what can be considered an alternative art school yet is delineated by the spatial conventions of the N-Space. In the relational space of Black Blossoms and BBZ, making spaces for ‘ourselves’ and the reconsideration of relationships to construct other values and knowledge systems. Engaging approaches that work to mitigate against hierarchies, against the N-Space, through exchange and interactions of mutual support.

Through my spatial diagrammatic, I have invented new taxonomies and developed other discourses for considering the alternative art school. I have used this diagram (Figure 11) to map various alternative art school spatial models, directly engaging with them to identify diverse educational languages and reveal the unique systems of each. The five spatialities have generated new typologies and new forms in which to situate and understand the alternative art school. The spatialities are intervening, forcing the institution to re-think and develop new conceptual tools and social relations; they are a resource for future explorations.

Each of the spatial topologies and their corresponding examples reveals differing structures and decentralised systems. The examples discussed here have each shifted the parameters of art education in creating an alternative space outside of normative boundedness. I have scarcely touched on the processes and decentralised systems involved in the production of space, yet through my brief introduction to the five examples, discrete modalities and systems can be observed.

Parasitism

The diagrams in Figures 10 and 11 illustrate five spatial variations. However, within this framework, there is the potential for intersections, allowing categories to coexist and supporting points of cross-pollination. To illustrate this proposition, I will now draw attention to the concept of parasitical space, a modality that infiltrates and contaminates the normative space whilst being dependent on the normative for its ability to thrive. It is within this understanding of intervening in space that I discuss a variation on the form of the D-Space and introduce La Escuela ParaSitio/The Para-Site School. What happens if we inhabit the space from within, never being visible?

Variations on the D-Space: The Parasitical Space and Unfolding Space

The English language definition of *parasite* has two primary senses according to the translator's notes Serres (1982): "a [microbe] that takes without giving" or a "guest who exchanges his talk, praise and flattery for food".¹⁴¹ In the translator's introduction to Michel Serres's seminal text, *The Parasite*, three English interpretations of the French word *parasite* are provided. The third interpretation offered in the translator's notes, in addition to the two senses shared with English, is that of "static in the system or interference in a channel".¹⁴² This sensing of the term *parasite* sits outside the binary framing of parasite and host, as shown in the reproduction of Serres's (1982) diagram in Figure 12. By offering this third sense, Serres makes possible a method of weaving in other types of networks through a spatial mode of intervention. The parasitical space that Serres presents acts in accord with the normative institution. It is not there merely to disrupt the normative systems but uses the normative to support other systems. The interrupter/static thus presents the possibility of a spatial system that creates other spaces. Returning to Wilkins, this could be re-interpreted as a stealing back of space, conceiving of something limitless and voluminous. I would term this an *unfolding of space*; the *parasite* extends space so that people who would not usually be invited in can access it.

¹⁴¹ Serres, M., 1982. *The Parasite*. Trans. Schehr. L. R. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. pp. vii–x. Translators notes and introduction.

¹⁴² Ibid. p. 19.

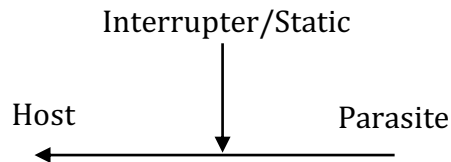


Figure 12. Serres's diagram shows the elementary link of the parasitic chain.¹⁴³

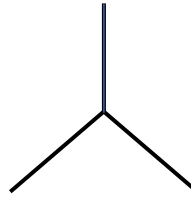


Figure 13. Serres's diagram shows the matrix of three interchangeable positions as equal.¹⁴⁴

In the second diagram from Serres, Figure 13, the interrupter/static is presented as equal to the other. Serres states, “each [position] is in line with the other, and each can play the third”.¹⁴⁵ If, as Serres proposes, the interrupter/static can be equal to the *host* and *parasite*, how might this be interpreted? I now introduce a variation of the D-Space within consideration of Serres's concept of interrupter/static.

The Para-Site School

La Escuela ParaSitio/The Para-Site School is a space established in 2010 in response to the DREAM Act in the United States.¹⁴⁶ It is an antagonistic platform offering a certain kind of accessible education that travels with artist and instigator Felipe Castelblanco.¹⁴⁷ In a conversation with me in 2017, Castelblanco described how he conceived Para-Site School as “more of a logic [in contrast to a course or programme], or something that can be deployed and then put back, a kind of criticism that is time specific”.¹⁴⁸ The school is envisaged as a portable container accessing the residual space of the normative institution, with both

¹⁴³ Ibid. p. 19.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 19.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 19.

¹⁴⁶ As a rudimentary elaboration the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, known as the DREAM Act, is a United States legislative proposal to grant temporary conditional residency, with the right to education and to graduate from a two-year community college programme.

¹⁴⁷ Castelblanco, F., 2017. Para-Site School Founder: In conversation with Elle Reynolds, Central Saint Martins, Granary Square, Kings Cross, London, 26 May. Castelblanco, F., 2021. *Homepage* [online]. La Escuela ParaSitio/The Para-Site School. Available at: <https://parasiteschool.org/> [Accessed 12 July 2021].

¹⁴⁸ Castelblanco, F., 2017. Para-Site School Founder: In conversation with Elle Reynolds, Central Saint Martins, Granary Square, Kings Cross, London, 26 May.

enduring and temporary qualities acting simultaneously, an educational proposition that is fluid and shapeshifting, even slippery.

In 2015, Colombian/US artist Castelblanco was awarded the Starr Fellowship at the Royal Academy of Arts (RA) in London.¹⁴⁹ On being awarded the residency, Castelblanco invited three international artists living in London to conduct a month-long residency at the RA through his ongoing project, the Para-Site School.¹⁵⁰ The school became an extension of Castelblanco's own artistic residency and practice, extending the space for others, and, as Castelblanco suggested, it attempted to "demystify the isolating artist-in-residency model by taking more resources than I was given".¹⁵¹ The fellowship at the RA unfolded the space for the artists in distinctive ways, notably:

- Amplifying the physical space of a residency in allowing others to engage with the associated privileges.
- Elevating the visiting student/artist, opening the social capital of the city.
- Providing opportunities to have international students attending the RA.¹⁵²

Para-Site School is an ongoing proposition, dependent on and exploiting the normative institution through the deployment of parasitical spatial practices. The Para-Site School continues to seek out places to host, adapt and nurture unfolded space before withdrawing and re-emerging elsewhere. In their essays, Stefano Harney and Fred Moten argue that contemporary universities have become entangled with economic and social systems that they view as oppressive and exploitative. In the opening statement to Chapter 2 of *The Undercommons*, Harney and Moten (2013) suggest that "the only possible relationship to the university today is a criminal one".¹⁵³ Castelblanco engages a form of critique and resistance, one that Harney and Moten advocate, challenging the status-quo and disrupting the expected norms of academic institutions such as the Royal Academy.

¹⁴⁹ The Starr Fellowship comprises a year-long art residency open to contemporary artists who are US nationals. A bursary of £26,000 (2022/23) and access to the Royal Academy resources is provided. Royal Academy Schools, 2021. *The Starr Fellowship* [online]. Available at: <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/the-ra-schools> [Accessed 23 December 2021].

¹⁵⁰ A call was put out by Castelblanco for nominations, 'artist who fit the profile', and three artists were selected. South London Galleries education programmers nominated Shepherd Manyika, an artist known to me and interviewed as part of this PhD. The other Para-Site School resident artists nominated were Canadian artist Melanie Coles and Turkish artist Serra Tansel. The programme, seen as a pilot experiment, opened up space for four residencies. Each artist had access to everything that a Starr fellow with an RA residency card would, including an open studio, cafeteria discount, computer lab, workshops, library and archive, technical support and a co-created RA exhibition at the end of the residency. Manyika, S., 2017. Para-Site School artist: In conversation with Elle Reynolds, Central Saint Martins, Granary Square, Kings Cross, London, 22 June. La Escuela ParaSitio/The Para-Site School, 2015. *Royal Academy ParaSite A.I.R Show* [online]. Available at: <https://parasiteschool.org/post/121041507611/2015-royal-academy-parasite-air-show-royal> [Accessed 12 July 2021].

¹⁵¹ Ibid. Part of the proposition to the Royal Academy (RA) from Para-Site School was, what does London feel like? It is diverse, yet the complication of the RA is that it is an uncredited institution. Therefore, the RA cannot host students who are not European (pre-withdrawal 2020) or UK citizens. Castelblanco acknowledged an interpretation of diversity within the context of representation for UK artists.

¹⁵² The RA's independent status renders it ineligible for International Student Visas.

¹⁵³ Harney, S. and Moten, F., 2013. *The undercommons: fugitive planning and black study*. London: MINOR COMPOSITIONS. The opening to Chapter 2, pp. 22–43.

In the case of Para-Site School, the form of the school actively enters the space of the institution, creating other physical and conceptual spaces, not having to seek permission to use the space unconventionally. Castelblanco is very much aware of the entitlements he has as a well-regarded contemporary artist and how he can access and apply these privileges.¹⁵⁴ In making spaces, Castelblanco also understands the systems he can disrupt, and he works out a form of intervention responsive to each of the normative spatialities. From this, a structure of protocols is established that support the development of knowledge within the Para-Site community and its members. These protocols site themselves within the normative institution, sometimes unbeknownst to the host. The Para-Site School does not have a widely recognised leader, a big show or extensive documentation through a publication. In this sense, it does not exist to bring social-cultural capital to the artist Castelblanco.

As a system, Para-Site School operates effectively within larger institutions, though these do not necessarily have to be located in urban spaces.¹⁵⁵ To be activated, the parasitical mode of the D-Space occupies the space of common exchange; the alternative space is positioned by Castelblanco through the transactional and relational dimensions of the institution. By considering the notion of 'transaction' within the institution and how the transactional space is established, Para-Site School devises systems that critique and mitigate the normative institution. In one sense, Para-Site School critically examines the institution's sense of value and knowledge and how this becomes manifest, thereby revealing the processes of acquiring knowledge through the relationship between the status of the professor and that of the student. In this revealing process, Para-Site School brings the bare elements of the university into focus, bypassing security and pushing back on institutional boundedness to allow for people, space, and students to be considered in relational terms. Relevant here is Irit Rogoff's (2006) theory of 'smuggling' and the correlation "between that which is in plain sight, that which is in partial sight and that which is invisible".¹⁵⁶ I find it useful to consider 'smuggling' as a strategy relevant to the unfolded space. In this context, the unfolded space is smuggled into the normative institution, yet it extends beyond the normative bounded space to one of unboundedness, a place where we reconsider the space as a container, one that opens out. For example, I propose that the

¹⁵⁴ In our conversation Castelblanco stated he, "plays the game...using his male privilege to open the spaces to others, where a Black disabled women would perhaps not be invited into the spaces as easily".

¹⁵⁵ Castelblanco discussed projects in rural areas of the north-western US and forthcoming projects with indigenous groups in the Amazon. Castelblanco, F., 2017. Para-Site School Founder: In conversation with Elle Reynolds, Central Saint Martins, Granary Square, Kings Cross, London, 26 May.

¹⁵⁶ Rogoff, I., 2006. *Smuggling-an embodied criticality* [online]. Xenopraxis, Theory Practice Hub: York University. Available At: https://xenopraxis.net/readings/rogoff_smuggling.pdf [Accessed 19 July 2021], pp. 1–7.

notion of linear time can be considered as bounded within the space of the normative, but linear time transgresses and becomes an unbounded form within parasitical unfolded space. The Para-Site School has a particular form of embedded spatiality, mediated through Castelblanco; on the one hand, it is constrained by the normative space and annual cycle of the Starr fellowship, and on the other, parasitical time deviates from institutional time of schedules and routines to open up adjacent time. The start or end points of any given activity are facilitated by the time spent within the unfolded space. In further considering this concept, we can include the extended spaces of time, ecologies, structuring, and relationality.

Creating and accessing the unfolding space is a tricky commitment that people do not always want to make, yet what the unfolding space creates holds a specific topology, one that other voices are invited to enter. Castelblanco (2017) states that the intrinsic notion of this kind of project “is something you carry and finish,” suggesting as an author, as a creator you should be “actively working against finishing”.¹⁵⁷ In this sense, from the moment of initiating ideas, the artist needs to constantly negotiate how to operate and how to unfold and extend space through the hands of others.

When are when are we parasites and when are we hosts?

It is worth considering what criteria determine whether we function as parasites or hosts in different contexts: when are we parasites, and when are we hosts? Within the matrix from Serres (Figure 13), the actions of making the D-Space and intervening in the normative institution make other spaces. The N-Space becomes co-opted and at the service of groups who would not normally inhabit the normative space, benefitting groups within the D-Space. Upon conceiving and entering the disruptive D-Space, one must be alert to the opportunities and the limitations that N-Space can provide. When activated, the D-Space is strategic and has a political dimension, one that intervenes and leaves a residual space within the normative institution. It has the power to capitalise on its own interruption to conceive space anew. The D-Space is, therefore, less about definitive conditions and more about modes of becoming.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Rogoff, I., 2006. *Smuggling-an embodied criticality* [online]. Xenopraxis, Theory Practice Hub: York University. Available At: https://xenopraxis.net/readings/rogoff_smuggling.pdf [Accessed 19 July 2021], p. 6. Rogoff introduces the idea of a spatial container as inherently adaptable and capable of accommodating expansion “to design a containing space, one that echoes the containers in which things move around, and at the same time one that opens out to the world”.

¹⁵⁸ At the end of Castelblanco’s fellowship, the RA discussed possibilities for a parasitical residency system. Castelblanco, F., 2017. Para-Site School Founder: In conversation with Elle Reynolds, Central Saint Martins, Granary Square, Kings Cross, London, 26 May.

I have identified opportunities within the normative institution, presenting an example of an alternative art school that practises a specific classification of a disruptive spatial system. Through La Escuela ParaSitio/The Para-Site School, I introduced a form that operated nomadically and existed within a shared urban space. In the final section of this chapter, I test the hypothesis of the five spatialities and thereby reflect on the tool of spatiality to propose an expansion of the concept of the parasitical.

Pearl Forming Emerging Method/Irritant at Work

Quote

*A natural pearl forms when an irritant works its way into a particular species of oyster, mussel, or clam. As a defence mechanism, the mollusc secretes a fluid to coat the irritant. Layer upon layer of this coating is deposited on the irritant until a lustrous pearl is formed.*¹⁵⁹

Unquote

In Chapter 1 I established what I perceive to be the alternative art school, and in the present chapter, I have so far proposed a conceptual framework in which to situate the alternative art school, developing this through a lens of spatiality and providing examples of alternative art schools that are located within each of the five spatialisations. These examples have been mapped against the definitions for alternative models emerging in Chapter 1 as a way to identify and convey the particular systems that the spatiality of the alternative art school allows. The ways that the alternative art school infiltrates and operates within space are heterogeneous, as I have shown throughout each of the short case studies. What has emerged as a significant theme is the activation of a parasitical model of operation within the D-Space, but with the potential to extend into other spatialities. A parasitical system of the alternative art school lodging within normative spaces, inserting itself into the bounded space of the institution and co-opting the space of the digital.

In the early stages of my research, I was asked, *do alternative art schools make alternative art?* My answer was yes and no. They make alternative spaces that open possibilities for other things to happen or be considered. It was this alterity imbricated within the *yes and no* that I was particularly interested in revealing. The alternative methods of practice were only disclosed when I undertook a close look at the field of the alternative art school. Only then was I able to understand and acknowledge the nuances within the alternative systems. Working on the five spatialities was getting me closer to demonstrating the operational processes within the alternative art school spaces. Subsequently, I then positioned my spatialities within Serres's three interpretations of *the parasite*.

¹⁵⁹ Pearl Knowledge, 2022. *Homepage* [online]. Available at: https://rawpearls.com.au/pearl_knowledge [Accessed 10 September 2022].

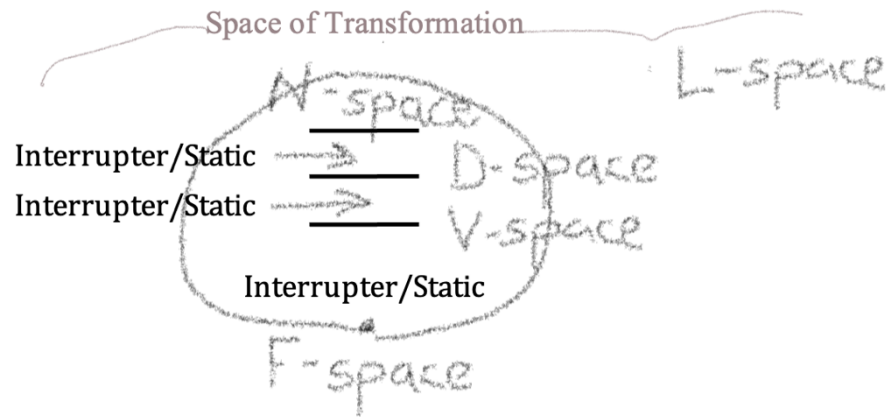


Figure 14. Positioning the five spatialities and Serres in dialogue.¹⁶⁰

Host, Static and Parasite

I examined the spaces around and between the positions of host/static and (interruption)/parasite to propose locations for the five spatial formulations. This is shown in Figure 14, my reconceptualisation of Serres's philosophical thematic diagram. Serres links the three themes of host, static, and (interruption)/parasite into a central narrative within *The Parasite* text through the fable of the guest (rat). This fable evolves into an examination of the relationality of one thing to another and the ubiquity of the parasitical. The rat fable contains what Serres calls the "contrapuntal matrix", here Serres presents *the parasite* (physical noise, living animal, human relation) hidden in the body of another organism and taking its food/energy, yet within these narrative layers as Serres (2007) proposes, "a parasite who has the last word, who produces disorder and who generates a different order".¹⁶¹

In my spatial interpretation of Serres, the normative space is the host to the alternative art school, a host that reveals how we can perform within (seemingly) stable structures. The role of the parasitical alternative is performed not as something fixed in space but as a discordant imprint, hidden within an existing spatiality, moving through it physically and conceptually. The alternative art school adds to the space, distorting, expanding, and exploring the space in new ways. The alternative art schools highlight the blind spots of space and add new spatial systems within existing spatial systems. These conceptions of the alternative art school and alternative pedagogies intervening in space and extending physical

¹⁶⁰ The diagrammatic procedures used in Chapter 1 introduced the concept of layering and stacking, and applying this to Serres's three interpretations reveals yet another framework to understand the five spatial positions and present the potential for a more embedded enacting position of research.

¹⁶¹ Serres, M., 2007. *The parasite*. Translated by Lawrence R. Schehr. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 3.

and virtual space as a form of static interruption and mode of interference led me to consider the processes of activating the space and operating spatially. The philosopher Elizabeth Grosz (2001) articulates space thus; “*Space, like time, is emergence and eruption, orientated not to the ordered, the controlled, the static, but to the event, to the movement or action.*”¹⁶²

I propose in this context another interpretation of the parasite and conceive the form of the parasite as supplementary and constructive, as a spatial symbiotic collaborator in the imaginary, as opposed to the extractive and apocalyptic model that comes from the English binary reading of parasite and host. In taking the three positions of host, parasite, and interrupter/static as equivalent and interchangeable, as in Serres’s schematic Figure 13. Serres (2007) acknowledges that the parasite is not a finite system but “a space of transformation”.¹⁶³

Disrupting

I was pondering the moments of disruption, not just the temporal but the extent of these interruptions. If a parasitical approach creates expanded spatialities, other ways of collective working, and new frequencies for locating art practices, then what are the residues the alternative leaves after vacating the space? It became apparent to me that the tools of my diagrammatics applied to map the alternative and the relationally defined spatial schematic of Figure 14 would need to extend to a spatial form of investigation that included the corporeal. A system would need to be developed that would show the alternative art schools’ disturbances within the normative scheme to distinguish between the parasite, host, and interrupter/static, yet not produce and perform a hierarchy within this triadic structure. A model would also need to be present to capture the residual traces of the parasitical intervention(s). It would be alert to and tune in to the signals and spatial undulations of its own being.

I was aware just as alternative pedagogies and the alternative art school, as parasites, modify the spatial setting to create a spatiality that is innovative, that any research position beyond that of a data collector would be producing another form of spatiality, a new stratum within the frequency of interference. This co-opting of space points to the host’s excess space, a surplus or what Serres (2007) refers to as “*excédent*”.¹⁶⁴ The surplus space created by the host is the space in which the parasite directs and redirects relations.

¹⁶² Grosz, E., 2001. *Architecture from the outside*. Massachusetts: MIT Press, p. 115.

¹⁶³ Serres, M., 2007. *The parasite*. Translated by Lawrence R. Schehr. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 72.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 155.

Through an interplay between the static/noise and alternative/signal, the alternative art school of the D-Space intervenes in the power structures and knowingly or unknowingly presents a critique within space. My formulation of the Serres diagrams focused my thinking. It allowed me to consider other ways to extend the application of qualitative research methods to not only critique and observe but also experience and participate within alternative spaces. I considered the different approaches and positions I could take as an interpreter (interrupter/static) of alternative spaces, setting out to:

- Experience participation in an alternative art school through a physical embodiment.
- Observe other people's participation in an alternative art school at close hand (deeper, more insightful, and more meaningful).
- Develop interactions with participants in the alternative art schools to understand better the context of their interview responses and our textual exchanges.
- Test research objects in the spaces of the alternative art school to bring other interpretations.
- Situate myself within the research using an ethnographic methodology.

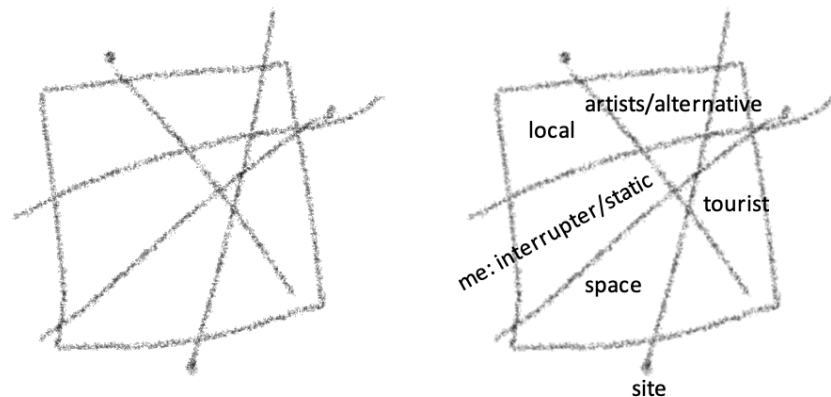


Figure 15. Thinking through a site as a choreographed performative space.¹⁶⁵

Residing Within Space

Henri Lefebvre's account of the body and space is useful here to help consider the different actors located within the space of Figure 15. Lefebvre's expansive text *The Production of Space* (1991) debates physical and conceptual space and its relationalities within an urban context. It is physical and conceptual meeting points that are of particular interest in this context. In Chapter 1 'Plan of the Present Work', Lefebvre introduces the reader to social space and nature's (physical) spaces of energy flows. Lefebvre (1991) proposes that "physical

¹⁶⁵ A *No Telos* conceptualisation: thinking through a site as choreographed performative space. The sketch shows a bounded space of a site, a spatial entity in which the alternative is located. The different actors within the space are placed inside the site, separated by their different trajectories, or significant factors for being in the space.

space has no ‘reality’ without the energy that is deployed within it”.¹⁶⁶ Later, in Chapter 3, ‘Spatial Architectonics’, Lefebvre (1991) debates how space is ‘occupied’ by a specific body, stating that “each living body *is* space and *has* its space: it produces itself in space, and it also produces that space”.¹⁶⁷ Here Lefebvre (1991) presents a movement away from the meaning of space with its natural energy flows to a consideration of the corporeal in space and the inherent energies the physical body brings. What is distinctive about the theory is that Lefebvre goes on to suggest that ‘productive forces’ could be introduced to social space to develop a specific kind of “social and determined/determining spatial practice”.¹⁶⁸ This would engender different relational possibilities and consequences. A social construction of space through a performative and even contentious process is implied.

Looking from the vantage point of spatiality exposed the topology of the alternative spaces and various locations, scales, structures, modes of inhabiting spaces and the features that determined their alterity. It showed both the deficit of conceptual space and the creative occupation of physical space within the normative institution. Applying the spatial framework of N-Space, L-Space, D-Space, F-Space, and V-Space allowed me to focus on site, context, and environment. It highlighted the way these spatial concepts can impact the types of interventions and pedagogies the alternative art schools undertake. Each of the five spatialities demonstrates a reconfiguring of power relationships between the normative institution and the alternative art school. The overlaps between and deviations from these suggested spatial categories have also been uncovered in this chapter, and in the example of La Escuela ParaSitio/The Para-Site School, I have shown that one cannot exist without the other. The parasite position has been emphasised within this chapter as a means of looking at spaces overlooked in the normative institution, agitating the relationships of disciplines, articulating and activating different desires, and claiming a different space from that of the N-Space. The parasite has been presented as a way to understand power positions, structures and social exchanges, and how systems exist.

It has been a long research journey, and accordingly, my methods have needed to evolve because the politics of education have changed so much in this space of time. The emerging spatial typologies thereby necessitated a more dynamic approach to investigation and intervention. This shift in modality is characterised by increased activity, where the inherent agonistic and *frictive* elements become notably more engaged and proactive. I was aware

¹⁶⁶ Lefebvre, H., 1991. *The Production of Space*, London: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 6–13.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p.170.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p.171.

that traversing embodied enacting systems and spatialities would require consideration of thematic structuring to bring a cohesive form to the study whilst still allowing the practice to be itself in its recalcitrance and unruliness. The TOMA 1 and 2 interviews and ongoing conversations with TOMA participants have supported the findings in Chapter 2. Indeed, I could have focused this thesis solely on the interviews undertaken with The Other MA participants in 2017 and 2018 and those conversations I had with individuals who instigated an alternative art school. However, these discussions presented a particular perspective, one that focussed on the organisational rather than the experiential.¹⁶⁹ The spatial definitions outlined in Chapter 2 conceptualised the different forms that art education can take, leading me to consider a development toward a physical positioning, inserting myself into the operational modalities of the alternative art school and an emergent method of implicating myself within the five spatialities. It was, therefore, necessary to move beyond the contained data format of an interview to undertake an operative role as a participant and active agent within the research. Part 2 Disrupting introduces more playful, performative investigative tools and interaction with the research materials.

¹⁶⁹ Especially when I was in dialogue with the originators and organisers of the spaces.

Part 2 Disrupting

Research Catalogue
The Three Protagonist Roles, tools and enacting spaces are demonstrated via <i>Enacting</i> https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853 on the Research Catalogue exposition;
The space of TOMA and activation of Three Protagonist Roles can be viewed within <i>TOMA</i> https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223284 on the Research Catalogue exposition;
An interdiction, development and testing of the Diagonal Practices framework can be observed at https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223905 on the Research Catalogue exposition <i>Diagonal Practices D\P</i> .

Chapter 3

Enacting

In Chapter 2, I introduced the five conceptualised spatialities of N-Space (Normative), L-Space (Liminal), D-Space (Disruptive), F-Space (Fivefold), and V-Space (Virtual). These conceptualisations emerged from the visual and contextual mapping that revealed the different spaces that the alternative art school takes. As the research developed, I was motivated to explore these five conceptual spatialities through a more engaged mode of practice to query:

- What is the educational space of the alternative art school?
- What dominant forms of educational practices does the contemporary alternative art school take from the normative institution, and how does it enact these?
- What strategies does the alternative art school apply to disrupt these dominant forms?

In evolving the research investigation developed in Chapter 2, performative procedures characterised by an experiential approach were emerging. I recognised that exploring embodied enacting systems and spatialities from Part 1 *Defining* would necessitate a level of care in assembling and organising to maintain a structure to the study while also preserving the authenticity of the practice with its intrinsic modes of resistance and unpredictability. Part 2, *Disrupting*, thereby introduces a set of playful and performative investigative tools and encourages interaction with the research materials. For this transition from *Defining* to *Disrupting*, new tools were required to research the systems and structures of the alternative art school to occupy these spaces in other ways. To achieve this, I developed novel investigative tools and performative procedures characterised by a deeply embedded experiential approach was manifest. In this chapter, I introduce the three performers, a collection of their accounts and the overarching framework that they sit within.

These innovative methods incorporate the activation of three distinct roles, referred to as *protagonists*, enabling me to adopt a polyfocal viewing as a distinctive tool of investigation. The *three protagonist roles*' development occurred naturally following reflection on the TOMA interviews and experimentation with 'uninvited conversations' as a form of disruptive spatial intervention; see <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223287> an

example on the Research Catalogue.¹⁷⁰ I contemplated the notion of experiencing, inhabiting, or even enacting performative interventions within the confines of alternative art school spaces; of immersing myself as a participant within these spaces, which predominantly exhibited a white demographic and, aside from TOMA 1, typically consisted of individuals significantly younger than myself.¹⁷¹

This imperative for a polyfocal viewpoint is underscored by insights drawn from the theories of agonistics devised by Chantal Mouffe (2007), of dissensus devised by Jacques Rancière (2010), and together with Rosalyn Deutsche's (1996) critique of spatial politics, these will be referenced to assist the reader in situating the deliberately adversarial elements within the emergence of the triocular. Moving away from the single lens of the individual and myself as an expert, the three protagonist roles facilitated my entry into spaces and a critical distance from which to operate. I use the term 'the enacting space' to mean a performative context within which one can embody a chosen position to stage and act a role.

The Three Protagonist Roles

Taking multiple positions, I devised the three protagonist roles as collaborative investigators, able to enter the alternative art school from three different vantage points, those of commentator, investigator, and surveyor; these attitudes developed into the characterisations of Vigilant Observer (VO), Articulate Detective (AD) and Evaluative Contributor (EC).

To undertake social transformation, a singular viewpoint is not enough; multiple ways to comprehend the complexities of our entangled social conditions are required. Thereby, the positions of the three protagonist roles offer a polyfocal lens from which to explore the alternative art school, peer-to-peer learning, and artistic research. Each of the protagonists uses a range of tools to assist them; these include Viewing Frames, a Gyroscopic Device, Mouthpieces, Silent Questions, a Lecture in Reverse, Scholé Poems, a Glossary, Vinyl Text as demarcations, and Feedback Cards. The Research Catalogue expositions at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853> demonstrate the application of these tools.

¹⁷⁰ I had expected to find different insights from the TOMA interviews, but of course, my one-to-one interview method fixed the discussion around the individual, regardless of how I tried to navigate the conversation to the physical space, participation, co-creating, or collective understanding that comes from working alongside others. Other investigative tools were required.

¹⁷¹ As the research developed, I found ways to extend my position and locate myself within a variety of contexts.

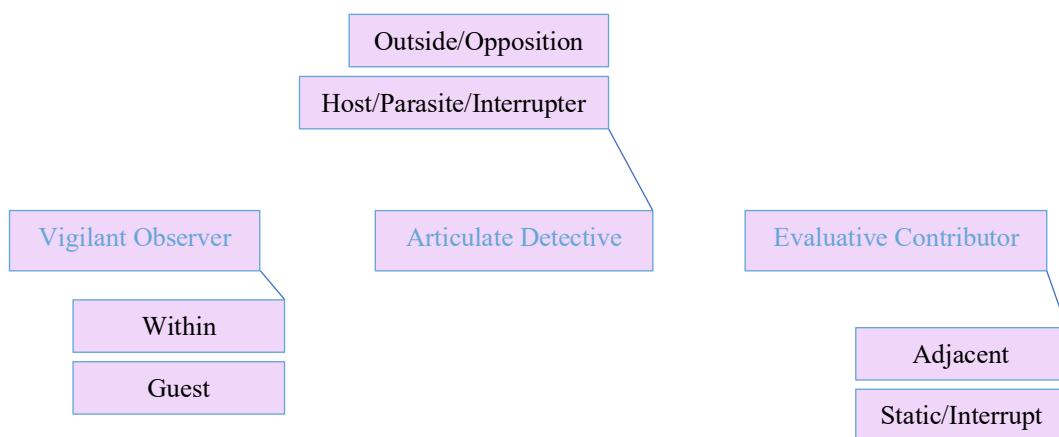


Figure 16. The diagram indicates the conceptual characteristics of the three protagonist roles, applying Serres's parasitical definitions. The schematic shows the three protagonist roles of Vigilant Observer (VO), Articulate Detective (AD), and Evaluative Contributor (EC) placed within the frames of Serres's and Mouffe's theories. Placing the protagonists within this conceptual framework aided me in determining which characterisations to activate and the tools I intended to test, predicated by the specific spatial context I was entering.

I present the enacting capabilities, the performative ontology and the agency that underpins each of the three protagonist roles. In Chapter 2, I considered Serres's (2007) diagram of the "elementary link of the parasitic chain" as a source to draw out and articulate the modes of disruption and intervention possible within the five spatialities.¹⁷² Taking again Serres's three propositions of (1) Host, (2) Interrupter/Static, and (3) Guest (Parasite), I considered what it would mean to translate these into three characterisations that could enter the spaces of art education. I, therefore, developed the three protagonist roles with the Vigilant Observer approximating Serres's Guest, the Articulate Detective to Parasite and the Evaluative Contributor to Static, see Figure 16. This allowed me to engage in an interventionist participatory mode, one that operated through critique, exploring how space was conceived, shaped, and adapted. As a reminder from Chapter 2, a caveat to be noted is that in French, there are double meanings in that "hôte" is analogous to guest and host in English, and parasite, which in English refers to a biological organism or ingratiated social status, can also be interpreted as 'static' or 'noise' in French. The three protagonist roles became necessary to locate the systems and apply the tools of this research from a position of being *within*, rather than *outside*, the spatialities of the alternative art school. The three protagonist roles would, therefore, displace the central and singular viewpoint and encourage multiple

¹⁷² Serres, M., 2007. *The parasite*. Translated by Lawrence R. Schehr. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 19.

vantage points and narratives. Go to the *Enacting* exposition at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853> on the Research Catalogue to view the definitions, characteristics, and activation of the three protagonist roles. I elaborate on these positions derived from Serres as I now introduce the three roles.

The Vigilant Observer (Invited Guest)

As an invited participant, the Vigilant Observer takes a unique position. It is the Vigilant Observer that allows the other two protagonist roles to enter the space of the alternative art school. By interacting with the devices and languages inherent to a given scenario, the Vigilant Observer assumes the role of an intermittent and playful provocateur, challenging the established languages and methodologies of participatory artistic education. Engaged in artistic research as a practitioner, the Vigilant Observer observes and analyses the interactions within the alternative art school but also elicits enquiries into the essence of artistic enquiry, maintaining a critical anthropological vantage point from which to record the alternative art school space.

The Vigilant Observer protagonist was invaluable in that the Vigilant Observer enabled access to the alternative art school as a guest.¹⁷³ The Vigilant Observer was the watchful and effective mediator of the alternative art school. Ever present within each of the physical spaces, the Vigilant Observer critically interrogated the sites and spatial systems of the alternative art schools. As an attentive presence, mindful of others, the Vigilant Observer was the protagonist role that was repeatedly present in the physical space of the alternative art school. Those who encountered the Vigilant Observer recognised the observer position and understood that this was located outside of the hierarchy of the peer-to-peer or instructor-student dynamic. Once embedded within an alternative space, the Vigilant Observer became inconspicuous, operating indirectly and outside of pedagogical structures, the invited guest.

Interestingly, the online or V-Space rarely saw the Vigilant Observer activated, as the virtual was already a space of observation. There would have been a strangeness within the online spatiality if the Vigilant Observer had been relegated to the position of surveillance observer. This implies something static and related to the individual rather than to the environment or spatiality. In the V-Space, the Vigilant Observer was unable to move to different physical positions or engage with individuals for ad hoc or transitory moments, one

¹⁷³ Despite four decades of working in universities, I often feel self-conscious within the art education space, as though I do not fully 'fit in' with those around me or align with its shared conditions and attitudes. I therefore transformed the role of not 'fitting in' into that of Vigilant Observer. This Vigilant Observer position permitted 'fitting in' as a disclosed and known observer.

of the primary ways I had positioned the Vigilant Observer in other spaces. In this way, the Vigilant Observer requires the peripheral space to operate within.

The online space that I established was deliberately a choreographed educational space, a place for physical bodily movement and collaborations in a prescribed timeframe. As a result, the V-Space was dependent on the Articulate Detective to instigate activities and the Evaluative Contributor role to evaluate conditions and levels of interaction. The moments of digital rather than physical participation surprisingly engendered an impetus for these two protagonists to be part of the group.

The Articulate Detective (Parasitic Host)

Taking an ethnographic approach, making a systematic study of the space of the alternative art schools, from the position of the participant, the Articulate Detective is the parasite within the triadic of the three protagonist roles, hosting and unfolding space whilst engaging in the collective experience. The Articulate Detective is also an object biographer, examining the application of the pedagogical tools, notably the lecture, seminar, and crit. Additionally, the Articulate Detective acts as a moderator, facilitator, artistic researcher, and examiner of space. The Articulate Detective directs the spatial conditions and encounters, having first applied the Vigilant Observer role to establish the conceptual infrastructure and systems of the alternative art schools. The Articulate Detective role was activated within the context of what Serres terms the “thermal exciter” a producer of change within spatial relationalities, extending the entry points from which to participate and engage more directly with and inside the alternative art school space.¹⁷⁴ This adaptive position encourages any outcomes to be multiform. The Articulate Detective, as a performative characterisation, engaged directly with alternative art school participants, activating and disrupting the tools of education, both commenting on and investigating the alternative’s spatialities. This protagonist activated performative tools and led others to participate in its familiar pedagogical spaces and systems of lecture, crit, and seminar. One attribute of the Articulate Detective was an ability to host situations, activating the protagonist’s tools unseen or through a chameleon-like ability to acclimatise to different spaces. This protagonist exercised agency, having the autonomy to select and negotiate with other participants, forging a space for others to unlearn and encouraging moments of encounter through the application of performative tools.

¹⁷⁴ Serres, M., 2007. *The parasite*. Translated by Lawrence R. Schehr. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 196. Serres provides a considered account of the parasite as a thermal exciter, “the parasite is a differential operator of change. It excites the state of the system: its state of equilibrium (homeostasis), the present state of its exchanges and circulations, the equilibrium of its evolution (homeorrhexis), its thermal state, and its informational state”.

The Articulate Detective role operated most effectively when it was working in or with an alternative space for extended periods and thereby had an introduction to the participants and familiarity with the space. Though reactions were sometimes unforeseen, and responses improvised and adaptable, most people who engaged with Articulate Detective interventions and tools expected to gain or exchange information and knowledge. The Articulate Detective role was least successful when unplanned, particularly in situations where the participants adopted the role of audience members and came with a preconceived notion of what to expect.

The Evaluative Contributor (Static, Guest)

The Evaluative Contributor shows consideration of conviviality, conditions of cooperation and hospitality within the alternative art schools. The Evaluative Contributor is ever-present. Performing as an enabler of art education, cementing social relations by building an ecosystem of collaborators as a resource, asking questions and formulating responses in support of others, yet engendering aspects of dissensus through gentle suggestions, proposals, and quiet interventions. The Evaluative Contributor operates within the inconspicuous space, participating in the alternative art school through administrative duties, researcher assistant positions, and as a specialist advisor. This consultative position is situated within the alternative art school through a deep embeddedness facilitates opportunities to introduce new systems and advise on existing ones. This protagonist role allowed the art schools to approach the Evaluative Contributor and for the Evaluative Contributor to operate in an advisory capacity by implementing Serres's (2007) doubling premise of "hôte" to include a supplementary guest, in this way the Evaluative Contributor became an active participant in the procedures of the alternative art school.¹⁷⁵ Encountering and then understanding the practices of an alternative art school can be intimidating for those who are unfamiliar with the established forms of art education. My inclusion of the Evaluative Contributor within the research was fundamental in occupying a third position, one that engaged my own knowledge of art schools and applied this through the Evaluative Contributor role. The Evaluative Contributor was adept at responding to the art school space, offering a critique of operational modes, and building in playful systems from which to develop collectively.

¹⁷⁵ Serres, M., 2007. *The parasite*. Translated by Lawrence R. Schehr. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Serres's, translators preface p. vii and The Satyr and the Traveller (The Parasite, 15). Hôte has the double meaning of 'guest' and 'host'.

Hosting

Significantly, I encountered a level of complexity in the choreography of the three protagonist positions when I entered the five spatialities. I was invited as a guest and then acted as a host within a guest; that is, I performed as a parasite within the existing parasitical positions I was adopting. Returning again to Serres's (2007) philosophical intertext, *The Parasite*, through the Vigilant Observer position, I articulated the French term, "hôte", an expression that has no equivalent in English yet performs in French the double meaning of both 'guest' and 'host'.¹⁷⁶ The observing position was often the one that others initially offered me, so I went along with this. The Vigilant Observer role afforded me the opportunity to make directed observations and close study of spatial behaviours, whilst remaining relatively inconspicuous. Yet the conceptualised Vigilant Observer position of the invited guest also actualised the simultaneous position of the host, thus, allowing the other two protagonists access and validating them.

Although the three protagonist roles possess particular dispositions, the form of collaborative investigation they establish generates a level of adeptness to both permeate and defy the institution and the alternative art school. The Vigilant Observer was most consistently activated in the role of 'guest', yet the Articulate Detective and Evaluative Contributor needed careful consideration in terms of when they were actively performing and for me to establish clear distinctions between their respective characteristics. Applying the protagonists as polymorphic critical tools is in itself disruptive and puts into practice Chantal Mouffe's theory of democracy structured through the agonistic. As Mouffe (2007, p. 4) states, the agonistic approach is one that "makes visible what the dominant consensus tends to obscure and obliterate".¹⁷⁷ In this context I use the lens of the three protagonist roles to survey and reveal the spatiality of the alternative art school, thereby the protagonists decentre the educational space. Within their (own) enacting spaces, additional learning environments are constructed to accommodate other operational structures. By widening the field of artistic intervention in this way we also introduce greater critical power, as these multiple forms become what Mouffe (2007) might call "social relations that elude the grasp of value".¹⁷⁸

In evolving the Evaluative Contributor role, I instigated a gently interventionist mode of exchange, developing a method of contributory participation to evaluate a given situation

¹⁷⁶ Serres, M., 2007. *The parasite*. Translated by Lawrence R. Schehr. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 190.

¹⁷⁷ Mouffe, C., 2007. Artistic activism and agonistic spaces. *Art and Research: Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*, 1 (2), p. 4.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 1.

by establishing a form of research that used something I termed the *frictive*, “any substance that increases friction” (Pantaleo, 2017).¹⁷⁹ It is in the conflictual space of the agon that Mouffe’s theory of agonistic pluralism is located, a theory that places the conflictual within a model of democracy, one that encourages a plurality of ideas to develop. The *frictive* embodies the agon and in doing so adopts Haseman’s (2006) theories of “performative research”.¹⁸⁰ Within my interpretation of “performative research”, there is recognition of the historical discourse and practice of Institutional Critique and the recent shift to Infrastructural Critique. The *frictive* combines the activation of spaces through fictional scripted narratives with the mode of the protagonist’s resistance by proposing another kind of spatiality within the alternative art school. A scripted narrative for the Lecture in Reverse can be viewed at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853> on the Research Catalogue exposition. In this sense, the *frictive* is a form of interruption, but one that is improvised and instigated by the Evaluative Contributor in response to the spatiality in which the Evaluative Contributor is located.

Attention to language became an instinctive aspect of my research as I tried to articulate different attitudes and ways of activating disruptions. Therefore, I have provided a Glossary on page xiv, and included a version in the Research Catalogue exposition at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853>. The Glossary serves both as descriptive elements and provocations, prompting consideration of novel approaches to engage with artistic education. This contributes to and further enriches the development of my exploration within the three protagonist roles and their spatial terminology. The terms are prompts from which to reshape and choreograph alternative educational spaces.

Of significance were the distinct yet consistent ways in which the three protagonist roles functioned. The Articulate Detective activated a co-created and experiential mode of knowledge production. As referred to earlier, the Vigilant Observer functioned well in hierarchical spaces; they operated less well in the spaces of the virtual and the non-hierarchical. Here, the expectation was one of a co-production, whether through participation with others or instigating a collaborative event. The Evaluative Contributor occupied a liminal space, sometimes outside of the main didactic site, or was a conduit between spaces, circulating between those with knowledge (teachers) and those developing

¹⁷⁹ Pantaleo, E., 2017. *Etytree* [online]. Available at: <https://etytree.toolforge.org/label=agon&lang=eng&ety=1> [Accessed 28 July 2021]. Any substance which increases friction.

¹⁸⁰ Haseman, B., 2006. A manifesto for performative research. *Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy*, “Practice-led Research”, (118), pp. 98–106.

the knowledge (students). The activation of the three protagonist roles emphasised the systems and hierarchies within arts education, which in turn allowed the protagonists to exist.

One of my initial intentions was to observe how difficult it was to challenge the ways that artists are educated, particularly when countless forms of art pedagogy of the lecture, seminar and crit seem to have become overriding and universal systems. These shared behaviours and rules within artistic education are considerable, yet the three protagonist roles successfully developed and implemented tools of speculation and spontaneity, and tools for navigating and negotiating art school, and for moving across and intervening in the five spatialities.

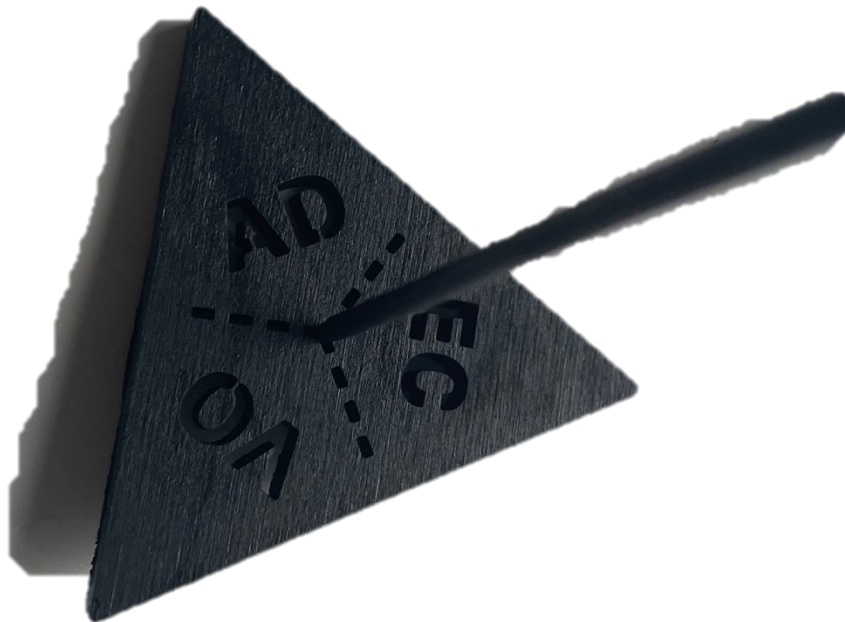


Figure 17. Image of the Gyroscopic Device.¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ An illustration showing the Gyroscopic Device. Constructed from wood in the form of a spinning top, with corresponding initialism for the three protagonist roles. It was used as a tool to select one of the three protagonist roles in situations where it was not obvious which one to activate. Although only frequently galvanised, the tool is discussed in the methodology section and referenced in the present chapter.

The Protagonist's Tools and Props

As part of the research capabilities associated with Vigilant Observer, Articulate Detective, and Evaluative Contributor roles, I designed narrative and performative devices as tools for the protagonists to employ actively. The Gyroscopic Device shown in Figure 17 is one such tool. I introduced it to situations that held an element of uncertainty or time restriction. In these conditions, I performed one role, selected by spinning the device.¹⁸²

The tools of the three protagonist roles and their characterisations perform and support a conceptual model for others who are interested in art pedagogy to take and apply within learning and teaching. This methodology extends the field of research and the design of art pedagogies through the development of tools for questioning and notional building of art educational space and embeddedness within a given organisation, but also tools of critique for navigating and negotiating art educational systems and for moving across art practices. Within this is the possibility to grow this speculative enacting space as a process, a framework and an infrastructure that can be placed within any given location.

Additionally, I made six portable wooden props: two floor-standing signage stands adorned with vinyl text imperatives applied by the Articulate Detective. These props were strategically designed to fulfil a distinct spatial and environmental purpose, serving to partition and reshape the physical space for the audience. Yet, the deliberately monotonal rectangles remained relatively inconspicuous. To view their activation, go to the Research Catalogue at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223287> and at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853>. The primary function of the props was to support the three protagonist roles, in particular, the disruption of space in a very visceral way. Both the tools and props are instruments or implements that enable the three protagonist roles to carry out specific actions or tasks within the five spatialities. The tools and props are adaptable and can be deployed collectively and applied to subvert educational forms, producing different outcomes, considered within Haseman's (2006) paradigm of "performative research". In his text, Haseman refers to philosopher J.L. Austin's concept of "perlocutionary speech acts as utterances".¹⁸³ According to Haseman, these acts are the 'acts' that a speaker performs upon a listener, enacting what they name.¹⁸⁴ In this framing, the three protagonist tools enter a familiar space and endeavour to introduce

¹⁸² The Gyroscopic Device is a physical object and is included in Box T. For example, the Sauerkraut Weekender was orchestrated by SotD 2019. There was a schedule of social activities, and it seemed expedient to test and perform one characterisation for each activity using the Gyroscopic Device as a selection tool.

¹⁸³ Haseman, B., 2006. A manifesto for performative research. *Media International Australia incorporating Culture and Policy*, "Practice-led Research", (118), p.102.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

something unfamiliar by leveraging the very familiarity and expectations embedded in the educational systems. The ‘acts’ of the lecture, seminar, and critique, in which the three protagonist roles I engage, both masquerade and perform. They reflect the conditions of the educational space while simultaneously being integral to it. Building on the concept of constative utterances as a means of institutional critique, the performative language of education takes on dual roles of *speaker* and *audience*, operating within a pre-established shared understanding. In initiating this mode of linguistic performance, my intention was not only to describe but also to introduce a form of transformative power, bringing the described elements into existence as tools for interrogating the educational space. This enacting requires a certain choreography or sequencing from which to examine a space. Invitational texts were the main tools of the Evaluative Contributor; these came in the form of choreographic games designed to bring participants together, impelling them to explore and move through a given space over time as a group. The tools of the Evaluative Contributor included a numbered and sequential set of seventy interrogatives and provocations assembled around educational prompts, written in black type on A4 sheets of yellow ochre paper; go to <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853> in the Research Catalogue exposition to view a sample of these. I termed these Silent Questions.¹⁸⁵ Applying Silent Questions, the audience/participants are encouraged to dwell in the space with each other, move around and act together in quietness, to contemplate the interactions between the selected protagonist, the space, and the participants, immersed in the space itself and the sounds, gestures and performativity of each other.

Within a Lecture in Reverse, the signals of a lecture, uttering of words and authoritative tone suggest an informative oration. The Research Catalogue at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853> gives an outline of the lecture. Silent Questions both query and provoke, conveying authority in their mode of presentation and demand for a timely response. In a sense, the three protagonist roles put into practice, or enact, ‘performative utterances’; they act out the sentences, actions, and gestures of a thing, be it a lecture or a response to a question. In this way, my performativity and that of my tools encourage others to enact and disrupt the established spatiality.

The performative tool of a Lecture in Reverse (LiR) was activated by the Articulate Detective, intended as a critique of the historical art lecture still prevalent in some art

¹⁸⁵ I developed Silent Questions from a workshop I attended led by sound artist and theorist Brandon LaBelle, at Open School East, Hackney, London, in June 2016.

schools. To usurp this indexical mode of presentation, I reverse the lecture, opening with the first slide that asks, *any questions?* I then develop the lecture in an improvised form, responding to the questions that the audience asks. If there are no questions, then the lecture continues, developing into a conceptual talk through a somewhat absurdist yet logically constructed visual narration designed to work backwards and activate forms of thinking. In this sense, a Lecture in Reverse is a form of co-creation of space, not working in isolation but pushing at the institutional frameworks from within. These tools shift the focus of power and allow others to explore alternative or even institutional spaces and systems, acknowledging the space of the institution yet questioning what can be done differently in these spaces. Both tools of Lecture in Reverse and Silent Questions allowed for a more embodied and participatory level of engagement compared to mere research observation. I later developed a variation of Silent Questions as a gestural series of provocations for the online V-Space, titled Choreographic Questions.

Other experimental texts activated as tools of the Evaluative Contributor included spatial critiques presented in the format of a performative verse, titled Scholé Poems, along with fold-out publications featuring proclamations and quotations, that I termed Mouthpieces, go to <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853> on the Research Catalogue to view.¹⁸⁶ Whilst the Articulate Detective and Evaluative Contributor protagonists applied their narrative and choreographic tools, the Vigilant Observer relied on visual and auditory observations to make recordings as documentation of the three protagonist roles processes and their mapping of art education.

Sites of Investigation

The present chapter now sets out a selection of pedagogical spaces in which the three protagonist roles were activated. Each of these locations corresponds to one of the five spatialities outlined in the previous chapter. I had been testing the three protagonist roles and the various tools over several years in an array of educational contexts. Presented as a table *Sites of Investigation*, Figure 18 indicates the particular combinations of protagonist roles and tools that I deployed in the different event spaces.

¹⁸⁶ The Scholé Poem texts distributed at the Sauerkraut Weekender are included in Box T and the TOMA Archive.

Sites of Investigation				
Spatiality	Location	Event	Three Protagonist Roles	Tools
L-Space	Cracking the Established Order (CtEO), Pace Studios, Leicester	A two-day interdisciplinary conference that explored practice-based research, 27 th and 28 th June 2019.	AD, EC	Lecture in Reverse, Mouthpieces, Feedback Cards, Reading Group
L-Space F-Space	Nida Art Colony (NAC)	Nida Doctoral School and residency space at Nida Art Colony, Lithuania, August–September 2018.	VO, AD, EC	Lecture in Reverse, Mouthpieces, Feedback Cards, Reading Group
L-Space	No Telos	Research Assistant, intervening, disrupting, and documenting. Venice, July 2017.	VO, AD	Performative Mapping
L-Space	No Telos	A collaborative artistic research project for exploring the critical role of uncertainty, disorientation, not knowing, and open-ended activity. Venice Biennale Research Pavilion, July 2019.	VO, EC	Silent Questions and Publications
D-Space	Open School East (OSE)	A free, independent art school and community space that focuses on collective learning through the arts, conceived in 2013. London and Margate, July 2019.	VO, EC	Silent Questions
D-Space	School of the Damned (SotD)	Sauerkraut Weekender at Metal Art School, 2018.	EC	Feedback Cards and Chalkboard
N-Space	Theorem	Theorem exposition of PhD students' work in progress works held at Anglia Ruskin in Cambridge, May 2019.	VO, AD	Lecture in Reverse, Exhibition
V-Space	MA, Applied Arts, Vienna with Nottingham Trent University	Online: collaborative choreographic exchange with Charlotta Ruth, 2019.	AD, EC	Choreographic Questions
F-Space	Ugly Duck, Alternative Art School Weekender (AASW)	An alternative art school network of self-organising groups who came together to reconsider the shape of academic art education and question how an interrogation of ethics and practice might challenge the art establishment, March 2019.	VO, AD, EC	Lecture in Reverse, Exhibition, Film Screening, Scholé Poems
Key	VO Vigilant Observer AD Articulate Detective EC Evaluative Contributor	L-Space: Liminal Space D-Space: Disruptive Space N-Space: Normative Space V-Space: Virtual Space F-Space: Fivefold Space LiR: Lecture in Reverse (performative lecture)		

Figure 18. Table showing spatialities as sites of the protagonist's enacting interventions and investigations.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ The table provides an overview of the settings of the three protagonist roles I will be discussing in this chapter. In employing Mouffe's theory of the agonistic and Serres's of the parasite, the accounts of each event will reveal the potential of multiple disrupters to conceive a space for new points of view and ways of learning, through engagement with the three protagonist roles and their tools.

The adaptive relationship between the three protagonist roles, the audience and spaces of education is mediated through the re-purposing of instructional educational tools. This procedure of enacting education through didactic forms of pedagogy references Jerome Bruner's eight essays on learning and methods of teaching in *Toward a Theory of Instruction* (1974). As Bruner (1974) notes, "predisposition, structure, sequence...are required in preparing curriculum materials".¹⁸⁸ I adopted Bruner's descriptions to underpin these protagonists' tools and Haseman's *A Manifesto for Performative Research* to support the concept of unfolding and refolding educational systems back into educational systems.

I now present short case studies that took place in five different locations. After establishing the contextual groundwork for each case study, I discuss my enactment of the protagonist roles and the findings that emerged in their respective spatialities. I conclude the chapter by returning to Serres to analyse the disruptive positionalities, considering the parasitical orientations of 'guest', 'host', and 'static', in which the three protagonist roles sit.

Variations of Space

I tested the three protagonist roles in a range of locations to develop their distinctive characteristics and particular functions as research tools. It was necessary to enact them both in normative space and the alternative art school, to fully investigate the five spatialities and identify how they could be activated and to what extent each protagonist's role performed as an embodied disrupter. These disruptions can be viewed within the Research Catalogue exposition at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853>. This exposition follows the three protagonist roles as I inhabit their different positions, negotiating, working through and in relation to educational spaces. Sometimes, I mobilise one protagonist role in a singular moment; sometimes, I enact one for an extended period; at other times, I switch between them after shorter periods.

Inclination

This PhD project has been presented not as a monologue but as a polylogue, a chorus, and multiple narratives, through which a series of interventionist and embedded explorations have taken place. It is an overlapping investigation that has attempted to foreground the alternative art schools as interruptive and agonistic. Returning again to Mouffe (2008), I have

¹⁸⁸ Bruner, J., 1974. *Toward a theory of instruction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 70.

considered the provocation to contest the fixed conventions, conventions and fixity that she suggests can be changed;

*every hegemonic order is susceptible to being challenged by counter-hegemonic practices-practices that will attempt to disarticulate the existing order so as to install another form of hegemony.*¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Mouffe, C., 2008. Art as an agonistic intervention in public space. In: Seijdel, J., ed. *Art as a public issue: how art and its institutions reinvent the public dimension*. Rotterdam: Amsterdam NAI Publishers, p. 9.



Figure 19. Still images of Silent Questions performance in Venice, 2019. For moving image documentation, refer to the Evaluative Contributor area of the Research Catalogue.
<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853>.



Figure 20. A Lecture in Reverse performed at Theorem. The Articulate Detective in the N-Space, holding a viewing lens.



Figure 21. Theorem exhibition space: comprising two exhibition tables showing documentation, Genograms and moving image works, curated by the Vigilant Observer, situated in the N-Space.¹⁹⁰

¹⁹⁰ In extending a notion of spatiality through assemblages of text and image, I started to test the cutting out of the space from its surroundings in the documentation to isolate a particular intervention; this developed into collages as a visual mechanism to show more of the enacting and highlight the five spatialities.

Spatial Disruptions

I now provide findings from my activation of the three protagonist roles locating them within my five spatial definitions, testing and enacting their distinct characteristics. I selected an array of educational spaces for distinct reasons of scale, each presenting a unique composite of institutional, research-oriented, and invitation-based environments. Encounters varied, occurring both within gatherings of alternative art schools and research-focused environments. Spaces such as the expansive Alternative Art School Weekender permitted multiple interventions devised in advance and for the three protagonist roles to construct new spaces within existing environments. Whilst the Sauerkraut Weekender was more improvised and responsive to the actions of others. Initially, I assumed one of the three protagonist roles, predominantly relying on the Vigilant Observer role as an entry point into each site. Notably, in online spaces such as Choreographed Exchanges, where everyone was familiar with my objectives, the Vigilant Observer introductory role proved unnecessary. The methodological activation of a second protagonist hinged on my intent, whether I aimed to test a specific tool embodied by the Evaluative Contributor role or to disrupt the space, exemplified by adopting the Articulate Detective role. These protagonist combinations were pivotal within the research, facilitating diverse forms of disruption. This approach allowed me to emphasise the interplay between educational philosophies and spatial/pedagogical characteristics, balancing improvisation (as seen with the Articulate Detective role) and predictability (as observed with the Evaluative Contributor role).

N-Space: Testing a Lecture in Reverse and an exhibition with the Vigilant Observer and Articulate Detective at Theorem

N-Space	Theorem	Theorem exposition of PhD students' work in progress works held at Anglia Ruskin in Cambridge, May 2019.	VO, AD	Lecture in Reverse, Exhibition
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Theorem, a symposium and research event, was one of the first public testing sites for the Articulate Detective to perform a Lecture in Reverse outside of the alternative art school. It was also the space where the Articulate Detective protagonist was, at times, rendered inoperative. Significant to the limitation of the Articulate Detective's activation were two factors. Firstly, the impact of the enclosed spatial configuration of a traditional lecture room, which I had not been able to access prior to the Lecture in Reverse. Secondly, the audience's

expectation of academic norms, namely, the presenter should be an expert and transmitter of information.¹⁹¹

The Articulate Detective started a Lecture in Reverse by asking, 'Any Questions?'. This interrogative performance style and the tone of delivery, in this spatial context, did not make the Lecture in Reverse engaging or participatory. The audience simply did not respond to the conceptual provocation or potential for absurdist elements. The Articulate Detective had provided clues to the performative mode of the lecture through an installation of objects at the front of the lecture room, the expectation being that it would prompt the audience to notice a connection between the lecture performed in one space and the Vigilant Observer's exhibition of research materials situated in another part of the building. Interestingly, the audience for the lectures was different to that of the exhibition space, those who had spent time looking through my *Genograms*, print publications, toolkit of objects and watching the moving image works did not appear to be present in the lecture space.

There was some audience interaction at the end of Lecture in Reverse from those who had belatedly noticed the collection of sculptural forms and tools placed to the side of the whiteboard screen, despite no direct references having been made to them during the lecture performance. It was apparent that few in the audience had looked at the display of Vigilant Observer research materials located in adjoining rooms and the table of works placed within the group exhibition. The distance, both physically and conceptually, between the objects and the lecture was too great. My intention was that objects would have been encountered by the audience before the lecture. Yet, the staging of the tools and performative prompts by the Articulate Detective and Vigilant Observer was just too nuanced. I was looking to test how new types of thinking around educational space could be initiated, to make manifest the space in which we were located and to see how we could question and oppose this space together. I had expected that a Lecture in Reverse would stimulate the start of a different kind of conversation and that the audience would ask questions and be provocative. Yet, it was not enough for the Articulate Detective to turn up and expect the audience to participate. Why would they? I needed to stage the space and implement a more literal form of signposting to direct the audience to the exposition and lead them into the enacting space by introducing the Articulate Detective, the objects on display and their function. This would have enabled the audience to consider their own

¹⁹¹ N-Space of fixed tiered wooden seating, ceiling projector, audio speakers placed under a pull-down projector screen, metal, AV control panel in a metal casing, grey carpet, institutional fixtures.

participation and engagement as a group and to generate more responses. The institutional form of a Lecture in Reverse and the spatiality of the room elicited certain expectations from the audience and limited their understanding of the tools of the research. The audience questions at the end of the lecture highlighted the normativity of their expectations; they were focused on the chronology of alternative art schools and my investigation of their histories rather than the tools and processes of my investigation. In this way, Theorem was very much a standardising academic environment framed by the academic institutional imperatives, the N-Space. As a space for an outsider to attempt to enter and disrupt, it required yet another kind of space be created, one that would initiate some form of audience engagement with materials and with the three protagonist roles.

The L-Space: Testing the Articulate Detective and Evaluative Contributor at Cracking the Established Order (CtEO)

L-Space	Cracking the Established Order (CtEO), Pace Studios, Leicester	A two-day interdisciplinary conference that explored practice-based research, 27 th and 28 th June 2019.	AD, EC	Lecture in Reverse, Mouthpieces, Feedback Cards, Reading Group
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The difficulties at Theorem led me to review the Articulate Detective's enacting of a Lecture in Reverse performance. I refined the script of 'Any Questions?' to prepare for a performance at CtEO (Pace Studios, Leicester 2019) evolving a more considered introduction and timing of activities. The revised introduction included a narrative from the Articulate Detective indexing the spatial conditions, together with the introduction of the Mouthpieces, Figure 24 and <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853> on the Research Catalogue exposition. These comprised textual works on red, blue, or yellow paper, read aloud by the audience.¹⁹² The beginning of the lecture employed Feedback Cards as tools to engage and direct audience participation. These additional 'tools' allowed a Lecture in Reverse to be developed with the audience rather than 'presented' by the expert. This repositioning of the protagonist developed the conditions for a less confrontational and more dialogical environment, with the Articulate Detective becoming an interlocutor within the space, a viewpoint more receptive to a participatory experience. The shifting of the Articulate Detective also allowed the somewhat confrontational mode, as performed at

¹⁹² Examples of the Mouthpieces can be viewed at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853> on the Research Catalogue. The colour palette and A3 paper sizing make reference to the standard paper formats and primary colour theory introduced at the Bauhaus.

Theorem, to be more clearly defined as a characterisation, one that explores forms of disruption within educational spaces. The effect was that the audience moved to the position of participants and worked with each other to consider and produce the educational space.



Figure 22. Pace Studio 1 at CtEO, the Articulate Detective had been allocated a large windowless practice room, usually used for performing arts.



Figure 23. Pace Studio 1 at CtEO, the Articulate Detective's props.



Figure 24. Entrance to Pace Studio 1, at CtEO. A3 red *Mouthpiece* definition.

As with Theorem, there had been no opportunity for me to access the space prior to the scheduled session, so an element of improvisation during the enacting was required. The Articulate Detective elected to use a 'found' lectern as a holding space for the Mouthpieces and Feedback Cards (Figures 22, 23 and 24 and on the Research Catalogue exposition <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853>) to signify their importance and to further emphasise the usual centralised position of the lectern/presenter within a lecture spatiality. Starting the performance, the Articulate Detective occupied the fixed seating with the audience, asking any questions, then continued by reading from the Mouthpieces, which was initially disconcerting for some; they looked to the central position of the lectern for reassurance, uncomfortable that the 'lecturer' was amongst them. The reading became a form of a manifesto, with content developed by the participants; the audience selected which texts to read and in which order. This form of participation allowed for the construction of their own individual and group directives. At this stage, the audience/participants were gradually becoming aware they had moved beyond watching education to entering education as performers and meaning-makers. At this juncture, I introduced the text props and strategically arranged them within the studio space. However, it is worth noting that this approach could have been more effective had I gained access to the room in advance. Unfortunately, these limitations in timing did not allow the audience to navigate the space freely, they were already seated upon Articulate Detectives' arrival.

However, the Articulate Detective had developed a form of spatiality within another spatiality, shaping a particular educational form out of a temporary and peripheral space, the L-Space. In considering the Articulate Detective's 'subversions' and 'interruptions', I return to the concept of antagonism proposed by Chantal Mouffe (2007) and the critique of spatial politics provided by art historian Rosalyn Deutsche (1996). In the introduction to *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*, Deutsche proposes that social space is produced and structured by conflicts, yet with this recognition, democratic spatial politics begins. Deutsche (1996) implies that closed spaces repel anything that contravenes the harmony or consensus of the group, suggesting in the introduction that "conflict, far from the ruin of democratic public space, is the condition of its existence".¹⁹³ It is in this conflictual and democratic space that the Articulate Detective continues the construction and reconstruction of the educational space. Through a considered and interruptive lecture format, the Articulate Detective guided an instructional playfulness to activate learning. By encouraging interruptions within the Lecture in Reverse, the Articulate Detective directed the group to create additional tools, questions, and new systems of connectivity, generating materials for learning that they could take away. The Articulate Detective challenged the lecture medium as a singular form of learning. By scaffolding the normative lecture, the potential to then subvert and allow a place for sharing to exist was initiated. CtEO had offered the three protagonist roles an opportunity to work within an existing location, reconfigure this and build the L-Space.

¹⁹³ Deutsche, R., 1996. *Evictions: art and spatial politics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, p. xiii.

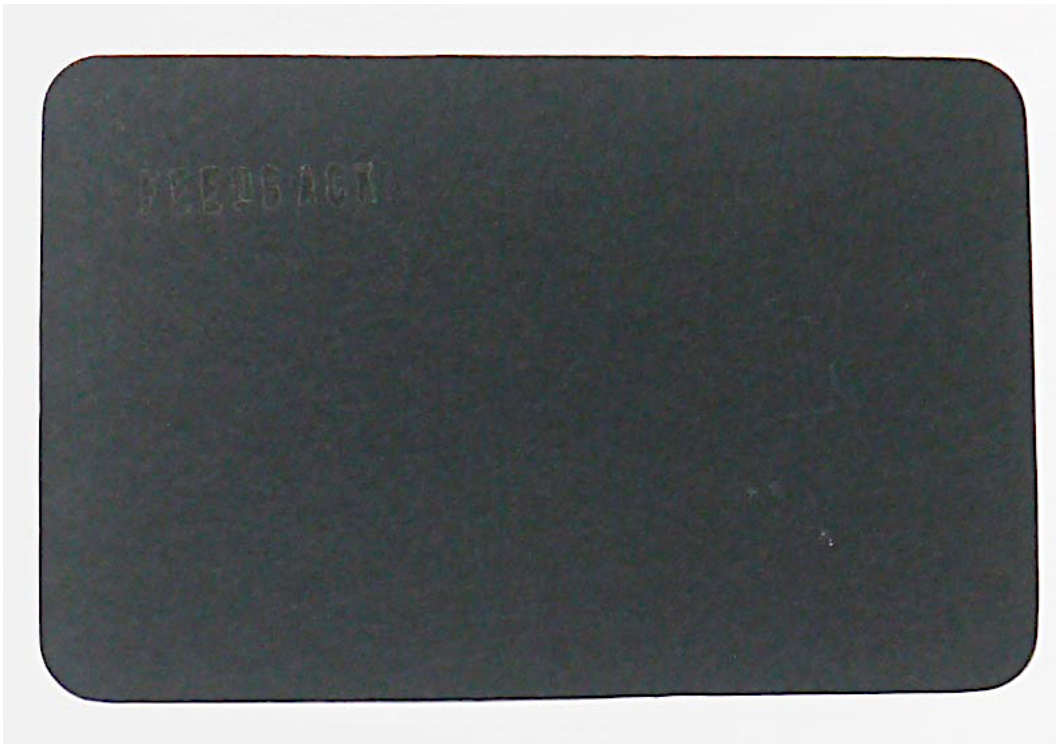
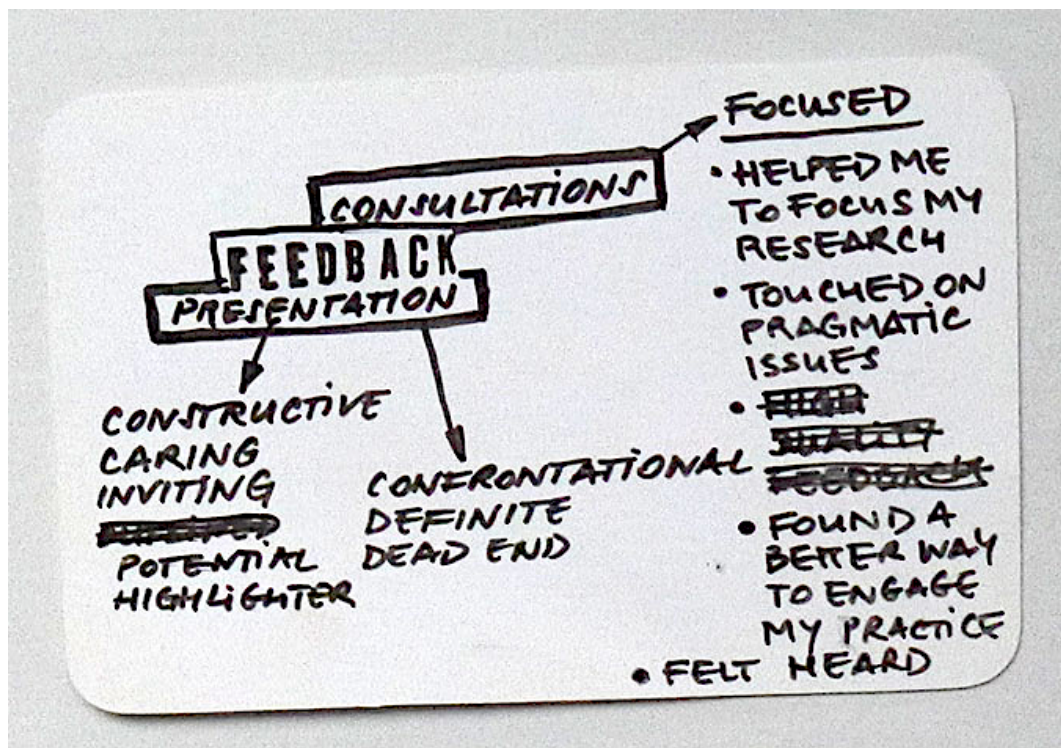


Figure 25. A black *Feedback Card* as used by the Articulate Detective. Interestingly none of the audience attempted to write on the black card.



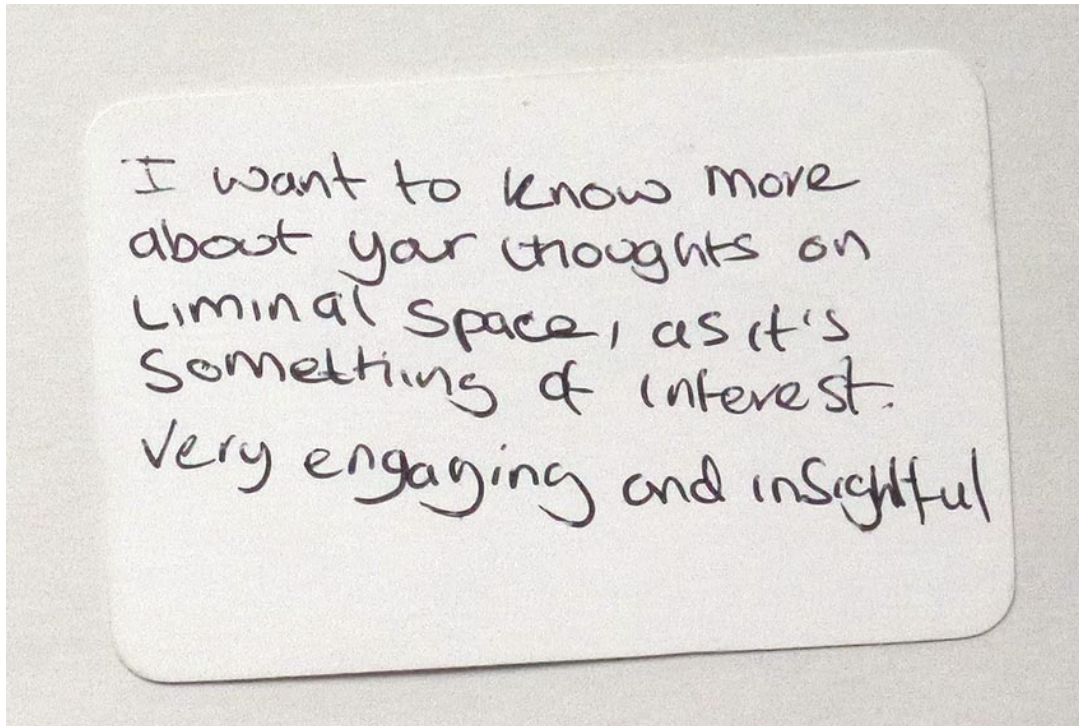


Figure 26. The white *Feedback Cards* were completed by participants. Both black and white versions had 'feedback' hand-printed on one side. Examples from CtEO.

F-Space: The disrupter within, all three protagonists at the Alternative Art School Weekender (AASW)

F-Space	Ugly Duck, Alternative Art School Weekender (AASW)	An alternative art school network of self-organising groups who came together to reconsider the shape of academic art education and question how an interrogation of ethics and practice might challenge the art establishment, March 2019.	VO, AD, EC	Lecture in Reverse, Exhibition, Film Screening, Scholé Poems
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The Alternative Art School Weekender (AASW) at Ugly Duck's London warehouse allowed me to explore the three protagonist roles in a larger physical space. The *weekender* was conceived as a sharing event for thirteen UK alternative art schools and peer-led organisations.¹⁹⁴ As such, the AASW provided an opportunity to activate the three protagonist roles at the same and different times within the multiple spatialities of the fivefold. Yet this required me to consider how and when to activate each of the three and in which spaces. I opted to mark divisions using my ochre vinyl on the large, shared warehouse floor, such that the Articulate Detective had a performance area for the Lecture in Reverse.

¹⁹⁴ There were thirteen hosts as well as additional contributing schools and collectives, extending well beyond those that had been advertised. The spaces were varied; some were used for reading groups and exhibitions, and there was a print workshop from the environmental group Extinction Rebellion and a rooftop gardening event. I received an invitation to perform a Lecture in Reverse and was then also able to include a static exhibition.

The Vigilant Observer was enacted within the space of a screening booth and performed an accompaniment to my short vignettes 'Something' and 'Nothing'; see the Research Catalogue expositions at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223281> and <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223287>. The Evaluative Contributor was both a workshop convenor and an occasional receptionist. A lesson I had learned from Theorem was to build with a directed purpose, to clearly define the protagonists, their tools and what was to be activated and to guide the audience to these.



Figure 27. Lecture in Reverse at the Alternative Art School Weekender.
Articulate Detective in the F-Space.

The expansive space of the AASW was transformed by the Articulate Detective into five smaller areas designated for specific activities. This was then delineated by placing lines of yellow ochre tape on the floor. It became necessary for me to physically map a form of hospitable space which connected and established a relationship between the three protagonist roles. This allowed the audience some sense of relationality and it also permitted me to expand the sites of performance. The yellow lines extended from the Vigilant Observer's exhibition area of wall text, photographs, and drawings, titled 'Site of Disruption', to incorporate the Evaluative Contributor's discussion workshop area and the Articulate

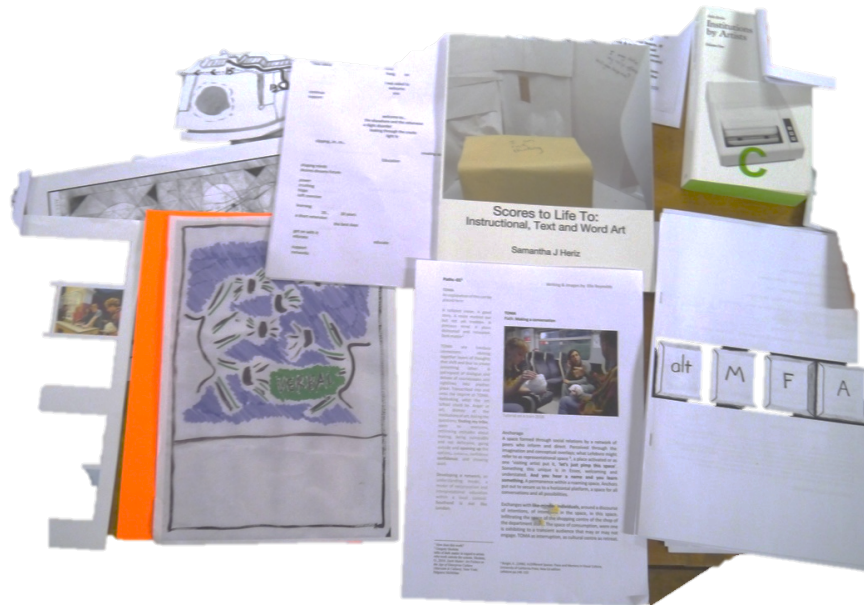


Figure 29. Scholé Poem for the TOMA train crit placed alongside other reading materials on the reception desk at Alternative Art School Weekender. The reception desk was one of the Evaluative Contributor's assembly spaces.¹⁹⁶

D-Space: A Sauerkraut Weekender, the Evaluative Contributor disrupting

D-Space	School of the Damned (SotD)	Sauerkraut Weekender at Metal Art School, 2018.	EC	Feedback Cards and Chalkboard
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The Sauerkraut Weekender was two days of exchange between alternative art school The Other Master of Arts (TOMA) and the 2019 participants of School of the Damned (SotD). The *weekender* took place at TOMA's temporary space at Metal Art School in Chalkwell Park. During the weekend, some participants opted to stay overnight in Southend, while others commuted from London. I chose to attend the subsequent social events, using these moments as an opportunity for conversations and to conduct two of the TOMA 2 interviews. This was an opportunity for me to observe and engage with two very different alternative art schools in a social and participatory context that centred on a weekend of walking, socialising, and making sauerkraut. I elected to test the Evaluative Contributor protagonist role at the *weekender*, I was keen to, of course, participate and also undertake a supportive role, assisting TOMA artists, documenting their activities, and contributing to the collaborative atmosphere of the shared TOMA and SotD territory.

mark of entry into the Lecture in Reverse space. However, this seemed too transactional and went against the ethos of the Weekender. I elected to keep them as keepsakes or symbols of participation; in this sense, they can be considered TOMA artefacts.

¹⁹⁶ The train crit Scholé Poem was selected with approval from TOMA as an informative text/artwork that was denotive of TOMA.

The 2019 iteration of SotD was self-organised, collaborative, and nomadic, firstly functioning as a collective, then co-evolving to develop a fluid curriculum. As such, SotD followed the Do-it-Yourself (DIY) and Do-it-Together (DIT) alternative art school models, whereas TOMA followed a Do-it-with-Others (DIWO) model.¹⁹⁷ It was interesting to observe the itinerant space of SotD and the cohabited space of TOMA. The meandering form of SotD supported a very different type of participant who was much more confident in exploring their art practice outside of a studio or exhibition setting.

The Evaluative Contributor arrived without the required ingredients, yet in the spirit of sharing, there was enough cabbage and rock salt to go around. A spare lidded jar was foraged from the adjoining Metal Arts kitchen. The actual workshop itself was one of being in a room with others, sharing the space and the activity of making sauerkraut, Figure 30. The Evaluative Contributor expected a more relational encounter, yet the event was surprisingly procedural. Peer-led with an androcentric bias, as one member of the SotD acted as a workshop leader, instructing the group through the activity. The Evaluative Contributor used the workshop time to engage in conversation, make sound recordings, visually document the event, and provocatively pose questions to the workshop leader. The disruptive behaviour of the protagonist's role brought a particular dynamic and even oddness into the workshop space in that the convenor was not the only person moving around the room and speaking.

The Evaluative Contributor introduced strategies that could be disruptive or frictive to create something more akin to an ambivalent space. The Evaluative Contributor's disordering of the space of instruction was intended to reveal the potential for different approaches, ones where others could bring in their expertise and experiences so that future workshops would not be dominated by a singular voice and singular cultural reference. During the workshop, the Evaluative Contributor established a drawing and writing space on the chalkboard, Figure 31, re-envisioning the culinary workshop by listing other options to sauerkraut: pickled cabbage, *curtido*, *arrimado*, etc. Other participants added their recipes to the list. In asking improvised questions the Evaluative Contributor was provoking an alternative introduction to the histories and peculiarities of fermented food. While not immediately recognised by all members of the two schools, the challenge posed by the workshop format was nonetheless apparent. The Evaluative Contributor brought alternative

¹⁹⁷ Rosalind - Upstart New Media Art., 2006. *DIWO-Do it with others: resource*, [online]. Furtherfield Archives. Available at: <https://www.furtherfield.org/tag/do-it-with-others/> [Accessed 9 April 2023]. DIWO appeared in the New Media Lexicon Rosalind (2006) compiled by artist Ruth Catlow.

activism to the Sauerkraut Weekender space. Cultural and culinary expertise from individuals was reflected on the kitchen chalkboard as another way of sharing knowledge. I considered the positions from which I had entered the space of the *weekender*. On occasions, it is from within the perceived assumptions of equity and equality of the non-hierarchal that the concept of democracy as transformational is conjured.



Figure 30. Participation of TOMA and SotD at the Sauerkraut Weekender.

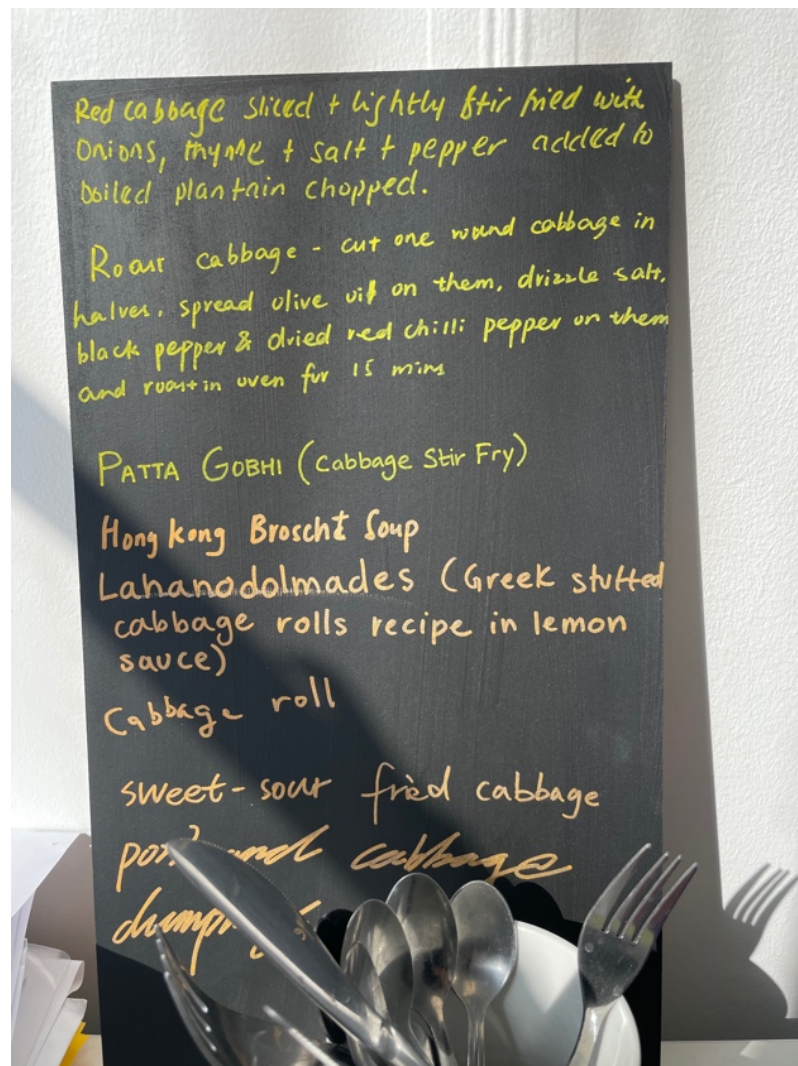


Figure 31. Evaluative Contributor's Chalkboard at the Sauerkraut Weekender.



Figure 32. Evaluative Contributor's jar of sauerkraut, Sauerkraut Weekender.



Figure 33. TOMA and SotD artists at the Sauerkraut Weekender.

Chantal Mouffe suggests that democracy exists but must be contested in order to subvert the consensus. Through this impetus, a position of what Mouffe (1999) terms “conflictual consensus” is produced.¹⁹⁸ As a form of investigative criticality, simultaneously operating inside and outside of participation, the Evaluative Contributor’s frictive mode is located within the spaces of the agonistic. The distribution of the hierarchy and the process of participation in collective activities are revealed. Additionally, in these agonistic spaces, certain aspects of conflict can be positive and lead to the production of new meaning. It is from these positions of agonism that I examine and challenge the collective act of participation. The theories of Mouffe and Rancière support my conceptual frictive activations of the D-Space (my interventions, rifts, and disruptions) as acts of resistance and contestation within educational structures and systems.

V-Space: Choreographic Questions, the Articulate Detective and Evaluative Contributor instigating choreographic questions as a choreographic exchange

V-Space	MA, Applied Arts, Vienna with Nottingham Trent University	Online: collaborative choreographic exchange with Charlotta Ruth, 2019.	AD, EC	Choreographic Questions
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Mediated through the screen and interconnected networks, Choreographic Questions was an instructional and invitational participatory project, a variation of Silent Questions, devised by the Evaluative Contributor. It was activated online in collaboration with a time-based artist, choreographer, and dancer, Charlotta Ruth, based in Vienna and at another event with Irish performance artist Niamh Hannaford, see Figure 34. Using adapted versions of Silent Questions as instructions for performing movements or as ‘instructional devices’ for choreographic play. The Choreographic Questions were activated in a choreographic exchange, which comprised an event at which instructional devices also included Charlotta Ruth’s wordplay, together with the Evaluative Contributor’s ludic games and performative reading.

The V-Space sustained a gathering across other time zones and geographical locations. As a heuristic site, the V-Space offered participants an opportunity to collaborate, introducing new ways of moving and communicating within the frame of the screen. This elicited a particular form of participation, which was one of being physically separate yet

¹⁹⁸ Mouffe, C., 2005. *On the political (thinking in action)*. London: Routledge, p. 52. Mouffe provides an account of conflictual consensus: “distinguishing between the categories of ‘antagonism’ (relations between enemies) and ‘agonism’ (relations between adversaries) and envisaging a sort of ‘conflictual consensus’, providing a common symbolic space among opponents who are considered as ‘legitimate enemies’.”

negotiating and acting together. As the group shared ownership of the V-Space, there was a willingness to co-create and improvise, leading to outcomes that were less predictable and more fluid than those of the N-Space. There was an opportunity to extend the dialogical within the V-Space using the mouthpieces across screens, working with text in the virtual backgrounds behind participants, and in devising the physical environment or site of each participant within the V-Space. As with Silent Questions, the making and negotiation of movement and collective space-making all mediated a specific relationship between the audience/participants and audience/performers.

The V-Space created was decentralised, negotiated and rhizomatic; that is, spaces evolved in unexpected directions. The V-Space was one of democratic instructional workshops, moving from the premise of instruction as an invitation to a collaborative yet individualised journey of discovery. Following the initial introduction to the workshops, the participants became increasingly conscious of each other and their movement, albeit through a peripheral view, and they began to respond to each other rather than to the Evaluative Contributor. In this way, sequencing of Choreographic Questions within the V-Space emerged as a messy practice yet allowed for unexpected responses through scored physical actions and gestures. However, it was difficult to get a sense of the whole (as a performance piece) within the V-Space experiments. Nevertheless, the performative messiness of the constituent parts added another dimension to the overall sense of movement, with the participants animated across a multiplicity of screens within the individual yet shared online space.

There was an openness and willingness from participants to *play* in the multidimensional private/public V-Space and even perform on screen. The V-Space within the alternative art school and the institution enables new languages and informal systems to be present and co-developed. We simultaneously occupied both internal and external positions, inside and outside, collaborating while existing within our individual spheres of isolation. If cumulative workshops were to evolve, the V-Space would offer the possibility to build an online ecosystem of performers and devise a new choreographic language through responses, sense-building and connection. This application of Choreographic Questions holds another possibility for inserting the alternative art school into the institution.

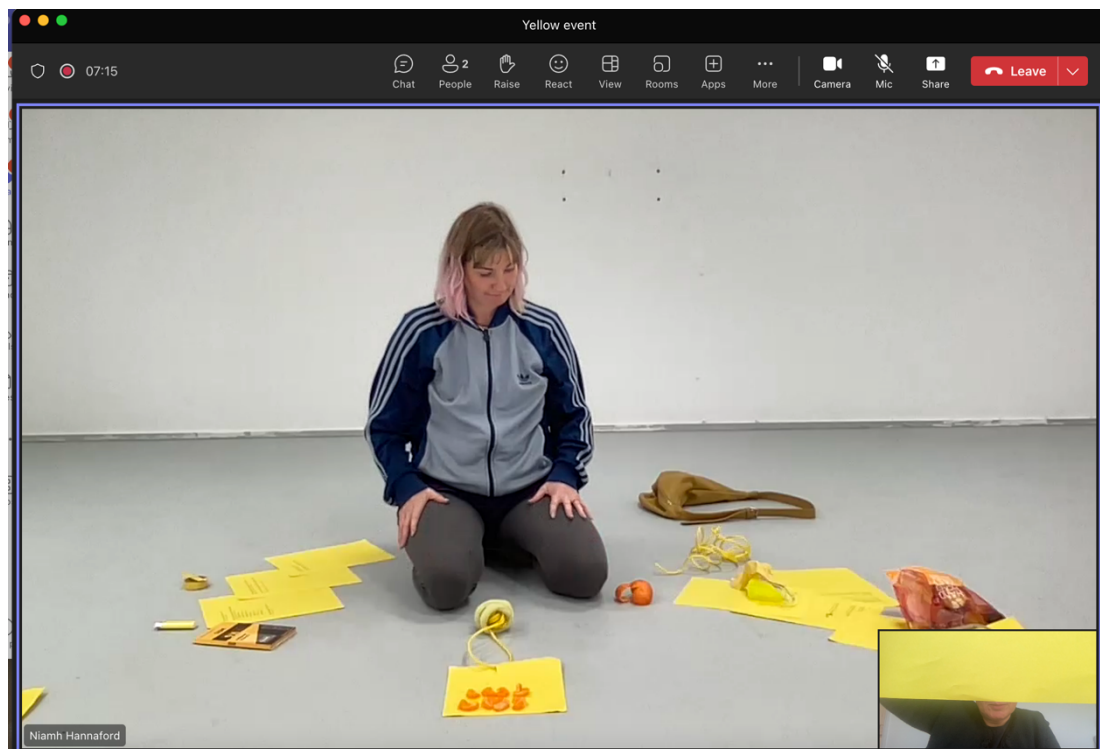


Figure 34. Choreographic Questions, a variation of Silent Questions in the V-Space. Tested and performed with artist Niamh Hannaford in July 2022.

Performing Space

In considering the deployment of the three protagonist roles and their distinctive tools, I observed how I was able to refine their performative aspects for different spaces and audiences. Activating the same role in divergent spaces provoked distinctive responses. When I was enacting a Lecture in Reverse within a normative academic environment, as at Theorem, the audience had a certain expectation about the experience they were going to encounter. This expectation was hard to dismantle as the audience assumed institutional roles, and the notion of a shared experience or group exchange was at odds with this static learning or N-Space. When I allocated tasks to the audience, as at AASW and CtEO individuals were encouraged to participate, to work as a collective and to build a space that supported and yet operated outside the three protagonist roles' performance space.

The actions of the Articulate Detective presenting the performative work, a Lecture in Reverse was more successful when a rapport had already been established with a group and when attention was given to a considered staging. If props, objects, and intentions were applied, a level of improvisation and disruption could be introduced. It became apparent that

the three protagonist roles require an assembly of participants and a shared space within which to operate; if the space is too prescriptive, the operation of the three protagonist roles becomes redundant.

This chapter has provided a collected account of the testing phase. Applying my five conceptualised spatialities of art education as locations to structure my embodied criticality and my own performativity through the three protagonist roles. The spaces encountered in the chapter extended beyond the alternative art school to include more normative and institutional research platforms. By intervening in spaces, I refined the three protagonists' tools and assisted in developing their specific characterisations. The triadic engagement of the protagonist roles engenders a heightened sense of critical reflection on one's pedagogical methods. As such, the selection of case studies in this chapter has brought a continuous fluidity to the PhD and a reorientation towards its interventionist forms within both alternative and normative spaces. Different encounters are possible within alternative and normative when the invitation to enter a space is extended over a longer timeframe.

The moments of real significance were at the Alternative Art School Weekender, Nida Art Colony, and in the V-Space when the spatial positions were sometimes made explicit, as in applying a Lecture in Reverse and in the case of the Alternative Art School Weekender distinctive, through demarcation of different protagonist spaces. I found that audience participants responded to the constructed spaces, actively participating if invited to do so. Additionally, there was an openness to collaborate in virtual environments, whether with the alternative art schools or the N-Space, if considered infrastructure space was developed. I observed that the very nature of artists in an online space invites a collaborative rather than a didactic platform. The V-Space involves the awareness that any participation would be mediated and observed through a screen, with the exchange of visual information through gestures, movements, and occasionally, the sound of bodies moving within a private space.

The notion that the alternative art school as a space is inherently democratic and progressive is not necessarily true. The more covert application of the Evaluative Contributor also revealed some of the alternative art school spaces and encounters to be quite fixed. I had anticipated more opportunities for playfulness, sharing and investigation of alternative pedagogies. Yet this was not always the case. The typology of the alternative is wider than that of the normative art school. Yet, there is complicity within alternative education,

evidenced by how easily a group returns to a didactic form of learning, as in the Sauerkraut Weekender workshop.

Testing out Haseman's "performative research" at AASW led me to extend interventionist approaches that fundamentally had an educational schematic. The organisation of space and the institutional are prevalent within the physicality of the N-Space, which maintains hierarchies; these hierarchies are so powerful that interventions can often go unseen. Thereby, the stability inherent in institutional systems, along with the resulting predictability, can create opportunities for disruption and *smuggling*. Serres (2007) asks, "how does the parasite take hold?" and answers, "he tries to become invisible".¹⁹⁹ The parasite is the 'hot air' of the thermal exciter or static in the background.²⁰⁰ It should be noted that the institutional can provide institutional cover, it engenders a level of invisibility, a space for escape from scrutiny and, therefore, opportunities to explore and test.

The interventions I generated unsettled and made visible the systems. My tools innovated and opened the institutional structures to make others consider sites of education in other ways and shift the behaviours we activate in these spaces. Both the Vigilant Observer and Evaluative Contributor activated a form of communication manifest within the spaces as static, whilst the Articulate Detective guest was pervasive through interventionist and provocative activations. Unquestionably, the Vigilant Observer and Evaluative Contributor are embodied as background noise and static within the five spatialities.

My disposition throughout this research has been to assume a supportive demeanour with which to undertake the research and demonstrate how my findings can be effectively embodied in a pedagogical practice. In the same way that I have shown the alternative art school to activate a co-dependence on resources, I have enacted the three protagonist roles as independent yet mutually interconnected personas, reliant on each other to enter the five spatialities, to operate within the conceptual formulations of the rhizome and practice of the agonism. These operational frameworks are unfixed and evolving. Consequently, I am still deciphering how to analyse these associated components. The three protagonist roles have enabled me to adopt activist positions within alternative art schools, uncovering their defining spatial characteristics. Yet, they have also indicated the necessity for methodologies that facilitate critique and nurturing within artistic education. As such, this PhD is an interpretation of my ongoing commitment to both caring *for* the

¹⁹⁹ Serres, M., 2007. *The parasite*. Translated by Lawrence R. Schehr. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Serres, introduction to *The Parasite*, p. x.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

subject and caring *about* the subject. The subject is art education. The research is about my intrinsic learning and a commitment to staying present within art education, considering art education as an embodied objectivity, as a community, what Donna Haraway (1988) terms “situated knowledges”.²⁰¹ Therefore, the application of disruptive and agonistic enacting tools within space has been considered alongside respectfulness and sensitivity to any situation. It has been about maintaining, nourishing, and keeping the subject alive.

Diagonal Practices Toolkit

In the final part of this chapter, I draw together my tools, including the three protagonist roles, to consider how and where they may be situated to sustain and support art education. I present the conceptual framework that acts as a container for my overarching toolkit and contemplate its activation.

Care and Inclination

This PhD project has focused on prototyping, constructing, and testing an experimental investigation toolkit. A rhizomatic methodology serves as a final addition to the toolkit that has been built over the course of the research; it is a covering, a protective surface that demonstrates a political modality and institutional critique, and one that cares for art education.

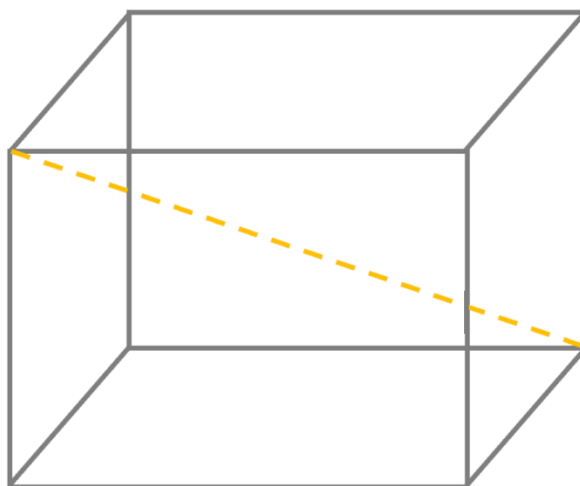


Figure 35. Diagonal Practices (D\P) Spatial Sketch.
Visual depiction of the toolkit, considering permeability and portability.²⁰²

²⁰¹ Haraway, D., 1988. Situated knowledges: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective [online]. *Feminist Studies*, 14 (3), p. 590.

²⁰² Diagonal Practice (D\P) spatiality sketch number 2. The diagonal slash, the backward line, cuts across and through and makes something more. Figure 35 is a second sketch made to work out a spatial diagrammatic proposition to articulate my embodied position within the research and the concept of making more.

I introduce Diagonal Practices (D\P), the overarching framework for the toolkit, and as such, it serves as one of the tools. The prototypes and development of the Diagonal Practices framework are on <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223905> the Research Catalogue exposition, as a series of spatiality sketches. I have felt myself thinking and attempting to work in the transversal mode against others and wanting to make art education more substantial, collaborative and situated within social and political contexts. Mouffe (2008) states that society is “always politically instituted and never forgets that the terrain in which hegemonic interventions take place is always the outcome of previous hegemonic practices and that it is never a neutral space”.²⁰³ If we are to reconfigure the unjust or predisposed space, how and why must we rethink it? A spatial proposition that disarticulates, displaces and then re-engages is required. Diagonal Practices present a conceptual position that is engaged with the relationship between critical pedagogy and the social. This positioning is simultaneously in, alongside, and outside a direct and directed engagement with the alternative art school. Working diagonally cuts across the normative verticality of the hierarchical frameworks; it accommodates the agonistic and extends the space of criticality, setting up new research problems. I note that Sociologist Marina Sitrin (2006) introduced the term “horizontalism” when examining autonomous education. It refers to a system of working without hierarchy and with a constant requirement for self-analysis and self-criticism.²⁰⁴ With imagination, the diagonal can accommodate the horizontal within a slight inclination, increasing the potential for critical space. As such, the space of Diagonal Practices is transversal, crossing, meeting, and moving through, allowing diverse temporal spaces for research. I am indebted to the Jamaican Scholar Professor Shirley Anne Tate and American philosopher Professor George Yancy, who, in the context of institutional racism, urge for “diagonal ruptures”.²⁰⁵ I drew inspiration from their institutional critique when devising the Diagonal Practice framework.

Leaning \

As a topology, Diagonal Practices dissect the institutional and structural lines that continue to frame the N-Space of UK higher education. This toolkit, which includes the conceptual rhizomatic framework, is intended to build, structure, and enable different kinds of spaces.

²⁰³ Mouffe, C., 2008. Art as an agonistic intervention in public space. In: Seijdel, J., ed. *Art as a public issue: how art and its institutions reinvent the public dimension*. Rotterdam: Amsterdam NAI Publishers, pp. 9–10. My study has identified the constituent spaces of art education so that these may be reconfigured.

²⁰⁴ Sitrin, M., ed., 2006. *Horizontalism: Voices of popular power in Argentina*. Edinburgh: AK Press. Notably Sitrin discusses *horizontalism* within South American and South Asian autonomous collectives, in particular, Colectivo Situaciones (2002–2003) in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Cybermohalla (2001) in Delhi, India.

²⁰⁵ Tate, S. A., 2017. *What should white culture do?* [Symposium, Royal College of Art, London] 11 November.

In conversation with me, a co-founder of Chto Delat paraphrased philosopher Rancière, stating, “you need violence, you need force, something that will force you to think and look more rigorously”.²⁰⁶ By embracing complexity instead of seeking simplification, we facilitate the convergence of conflicting viewpoints and theories, fostering a nuanced coexistence that maintains an inherent sense of unfixedity. The potential of the diagonal line is expansive. In drawing, it is dynamic, suggesting movement. As a backslash on a keyboard, it is the tool that allows for special characteristics to function; it can create a break or directional paths into new terrains. Its tilt provides an invitation for other systems to be brought into the spaces; the diagonal is always in touch with whatever it cuts. Through its inclination, it proposes a predilection for more than one mode; when viewed from different positions, its trajectories, deviation, and attitudes of affect produce an alternative measurement to traditional straight-line distances, a brace or support system and tension between one space and another. My contribution performs a diagonal manoeuvre from which a deep diagonal practice emerges. There is an emphasis on the position of the \ in relation to the institution, inclination, the desire(able) line.²⁰⁷ Within the toolkit, the \ is the quiet disrupter; potentially, it is the fourth protagonist.

Constructing D\P: Smuggling

The evolution and utilisation of Diagonal Practices (D\P) involved considering approaches and formulating questions and acts of prototyping directed towards effecting some form of transformation within the alternative art school. As a demarcation line, the diagonal is expansive and allows for drifting and speculation, not a binary of inside and outside. Working diagonally is expansive; it takes more of what you have whilst simultaneously offering a larger area for questions. Diagonal Practices allow another kind of inflexion.

I first tested D\P at the Summer Lodge art residency in July 2019, smuggling the concept into the form of a symposium; see the Research Catalogue exposition at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223905>.²⁰⁸ There, I applied what I have referred to previously as Harney and Moten’s concept of stealing, Rogoff’s concept of smuggling and a practice that has more recently been termed by Joseph-Salisbury and

²⁰⁶ I interviewed one of the co-founders of the Russian collective Chto Delat in London, in 2018.

Rancière, J., 2010. *Dissensus. On politics and aesthetics*. Translated by S. Corcoran. London: Continuum, p. 42. They were paraphrasing a passage from Rancière who debates the essence of consensus, suggesting this cannot be achieved without conflict or violence.

²⁰⁷ Desire lines are unsanctioned paths [made and] worn by frequent footsteps. Luckert, E., 2013 *Drawings we have lived: mapping desire lines in Edmonton* [online]. In Edmonton. *Constellations*, 4 (1). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.29173/cons18871> [Accessed 11 August 2023].

²⁰⁸ Summer Lodge (referenced in my introduction) was an art residency using the spaces of the Art Department at Nottingham Trent University during the summer break each July for up to ten days; established in 2009, it ran for eleven years and unofficially for three years prior to this.

Connelly (2021), “reparative theft” within the context of anti-racist scholar activism.²⁰⁹ Political theorist Oliver Marchart (2008) maintains that the institutional forms are representations of the consensus, what he terms “consensus machines”.²¹⁰ Through the mechanism of a symposium, the Articulate Detective facilitated bringing artists, poets, writers, researchers, curators, and participants together. The symposium allowed alternative kinds of scholarship, black histories, queer politics, feminist spaces, the palaver (talking space) for discursive moments, the poetic, and communal eating at a diagonal table setting.²¹¹ I contemplated the feasibility of testing the position of Diagonal Practices within an alternative art school. I also considered how best to draw together my tools, which include the three protagonist roles and other activity tools, to consider how they may be situated to sustain and support education. I am cognisant that these operational frameworks are dynamic and continuously evolving, they serve as both descriptive elements and provocations.

In the next chapter I will provide an account of the three protagonist roles with one alternative art school over an extended period. The move to a deep case study and presentation of documentation builds on personal engagement through interventions with the UK alternative art school, The Other Master of Art (TOMA). By extending the operational framing of the parasitical and the agon I look to refine the tools further and practice the vocabularies of the three protagonist roles from which to perceive the alternative art school.

²⁰⁹ Joseph-Salisbury, R. and Connelly, L., 2021. *Anti-racist scholar-activism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 62. Joseph-Salisbury and Connelly suggest the term “reparative theft” in response to not waiting for permission.

²¹⁰ Marchart, O., 2008. *Hegemony machines documenta x to fifteen and the politics of biennialization*. [online]. On Curating 2022. Available at: <https://www.on-curating.org/book/Hegemony-Machines.html> [Accessed 30 April 2023], p.26.

Marchart, 2008, pp. 87–98, debates consensus as educational strategy in the essay *Hegemony Machines, documenta X to fifteen and the Politics of Biennialization*. Although he wrote this essay in the context of curating and exhibition, there is something relevance to the critique of the institutional space, here and in the essay’s theoretical appendix, *Field and Discourse*, pp. 122–131.

²¹¹ I channelled the privilege of being in the academic space of a seminar room and studios and used my financial resources from teaching to fund others coming into the institution, paying fees, travel and accommodation expenses.

Chapter 4

The Other MA

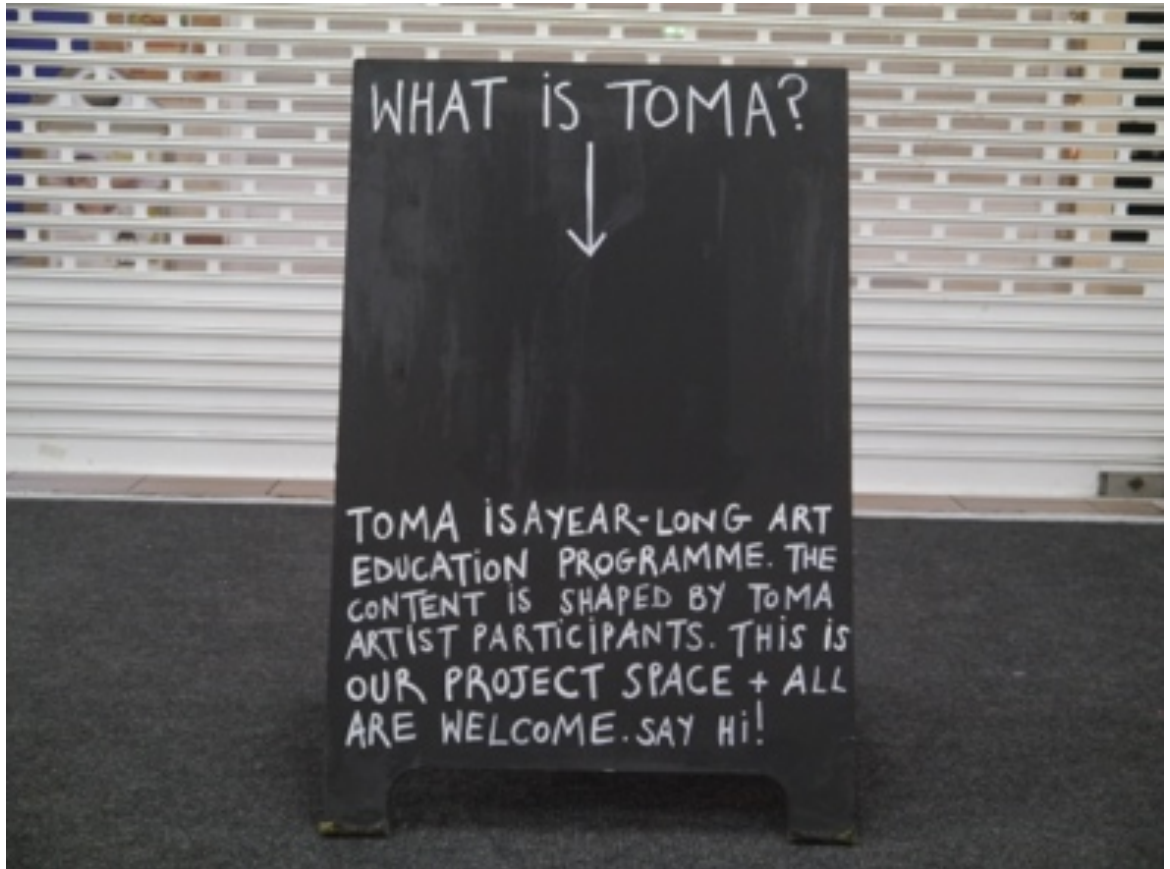


Figure 36. Display board at the entrance to The Other MA, The Royals Shopping Centre, Southend-on-Sea, June 2018.

“No one ever really leaves; it’s a commitment to a strange family”.²¹²

²¹² Quotation taken from TOMA 1 associate in conversation, 9th November 2018.

In the previous chapter, I introduced the three protagonist roles and their performative interventions across my five devised spatialities. These roles were enacted within corresponding alternative art school forms, providing a level of investigative criticality within performed and situated spaces. Through the application of these roles, I tested the boundaries and flexibility within the five spatial constructs to test the edges and flex the five spatialities of N-Space, L-Space, D-Space, F-Space, and V-Space as conceptual frameworks for structuring my exploration and interventions. This chapter will explore possibilities, concerns, collaborations, ideas, and systems, drawing on debates around participation. Within this framework, the chapter will situate the three protagonist roles alongside my five spatialities, using a single case study of TOMA.

Although I was evolving the three protagonist roles simultaneously within other alternative art schools and art education spaces, the opportunity arose to spend an extended period with an alternative art school, TOMA. Sensitive to the opportunities that arose and receptive to their potential, I witnessed the school's evolution from its inception in 2016 with the inaugural cohort, TOMA 1, through its progression in 2018 and 2019 with participants from TOMA 2 and TOMA 3.²¹³ As such, TOMA is the primary case study that operates as the central axis of my thesis and anchors the overarching enquiry. This chapter provides an account of collectively building an alternative art school, revealing TOMA's organisational thinking, organic hierarchies, and sharing systems. Throughout this chapter, I maintain a dialogue with the writing of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, and I continue to engage Michel Serres's theory of the parasite. In this way, I explore TOMA through the conceptual framework of agonism and consider it as a form that resists the normative institution. I placed the three protagonist roles within the space of TOMA as a form of agonistic collaboration, a co-creating disruptive aesthetic. There is both agonism and what Haraway (2016) terms *sympoiesis* within this approach in that the three protagonist roles must work together, as the Vigilant Observer is invited into the TOMA space, which in turn assures entry for the Articulate Detective and Evaluative Contributor.²¹⁴

²¹³ I am referring to the TOMA alternative art school and its corresponding education programme when addressing TOMA. I make no distinction between the school and its participants, just the time of participation, TOMA 1 2016–17 (12 months), TOMA 2 2017–18 (12 months) and TOMA 3 2019–2022 (18 months), TOMA 4 2022–2023 (18 months) and TOMA 5 2023–2025 (18 months). TOMA did develop other features beyond the education programme such as the exhibition programme and TOMA Project Space and I distinguish these later in the text.

²¹⁴ Haraway, D., 2016. *Staying with the trouble: making kin in the chthulucene (experimental futures)*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, pp. 33–34. Haraway proposes one interpretation (from M. Beth Dempster) as “collectively producing systems that do not have self-defined spatial or temporal boundaries”. I am interested in Haraway's collective systems of “knowing and doing”. Figure 37 shows the relationship between the three protagonist roles.

It's Not Far, and It's a Good Place to Go

TOMA is an alternative art school located in Southend-on-Sea, Essex, UK, deriving its name from an acronym taken from The Other MA. TOMA was formed out of significant resistance to London, actively working against the pull of the capital's art world with its specialist arts universities, a proliferation of galleries, and administrative and cultural centres.²¹⁵ TOMA is like other alternative art schools in the UK, taking the space left by the demise of the regional art school whilst addressing the need for a local, affordable, human-scale education.²¹⁶ While noting the caveat that TOMA and other UK alternative art schools should not be considered a corrective for a lack of community cohesion or access to education.

I have followed TOMA since its inception, drawing on my unique experience of teaching in art schools, including working with a small group of students who later established alternative art schools, among them, Emma Edmondson who founded TOMA. Alternative histories and genealogies, unlike those of traditional institutions, are often unmarked and undervalued, despite their significant impact. In many of the normative and highly regarded places in the UK I have worked and written about, reputations and legacies are frequently fabricated or overstated, obscuring and belying the lived realities of those who have studied or worked there. The role of the artist in creating new, counter-archives including those of the alternative is vital. My mapping of TOMA includes a repository of its invitational materials and ephemera, which act as access points to its history. Documenting these stories and experiences from the very beginning felt essential to preserving the narrative of TOMA and its unique contributions to art pedagogy in the UK.

The school started in 2016 on a twelve-month alternative art education model, established with support from local artists and initially based at Metal Culture Art School Chalkwell Park, Southend-on-Sea. TOMA was conceived, instigated, and run by artist Emma Edmondson, devised in response to Edmondson having had a place withdrawn on *Socially Engaged Practice*, a postgraduate programme at Goldsmiths, University of London, in 2016.²¹⁷ To provide some indication of the extent of the roles and tasks

²¹⁵ The journey takes 72 minutes and is just over 44 miles from London (Liverpool Street) by train to Southend Victoria. Though I undertook several journey variations, I used Greater Anglia and c2c trains of significance later in the study.

²¹⁶ A TOMA monthly fee is required, with a tiered system in place to address financial barriers and acknowledge the historical challenges some individuals may face in accessing art education. In 2024/25, fees are offered as follows: Tier 1 £154.35, Tier 2 £118.65, and Tier 3 £84, with two sponsored free places available since 2019/20.

²¹⁷ The programme was subsequently withdrawn with one week's notice, and although another programme was offered, it was not the subject that Emma had been interested in. In response, Emma started to look for other programmes outside the institution and then decided to create their own.

Edmondson has undertaken and to provide some critical distance, I will refer to Edmondson as the Founder.²¹⁸

A fundamental principle of TOMA (2016) was to offer “responsive, affordable, accessible art education”, with a belief in lifelong learning and the aim “to make the possibility of postgraduate style art education accessible to all”.²¹⁹ From its inception to the present day, TOMA (2016) is “offering the only post-graduate art programme in Essex”. TOMA is different from other UK-based alternative art schools in that it established itself as a Master of Art (MA or MFA) level equivalent from the onset.²²⁰ The expectation has been that TOMA artists would not only enter with a practice or set of concerns to develop but also come with a practice that they were willing to dematerialise or engage through interdisciplinary exploration, alongside a willingness to develop new artistic approaches. TOMA is significant in that it is intergenerational and available to those who have not completed a formal postgraduate qualification. Other UK-based alternative art schools I researched included several comprised of artists who had just completed MA/MFA programmes. From meetings I had with those at other UK-based alternative art schools, a consistent motivation for looking outside the institutional models was that the alternative art schools provided a post-MA space to build a community. As an associate of the peer-led learning programme *Syllabus* (2018) put it, “The alternative was partnered across the UK, and it would hopefully widen networks for me. Also, I was interested in having a conversation with those people outside London”. Another significant rationale for attending an alternative art school was to maintain a practice in a supportive environment with the opportunity to collaborate and experiment. An interview with a SotD participant (2018) suggested “this encouraged me into action, collaboration, play, research, messiness and making”.²²¹

TOMA in the Disruptive, Fivefold and Liminal Space

In 2016, the regional arts organisation Metal Culture offered the newly conceived TOMA a short-term incubation space.²²² The first year of TOMA was thus anchored within Metal

²¹⁸ I use founder not just in the context of the originator of TOMA but also that of a generator of the ethos and direction of TOMA, facilitator of collaborations and convenor of workshops, reading, tutorial and crit groups.

²¹⁹ Interview with Emma Edmondson in 2016. From the outset, TOMA addressed the flexible need for part-time and adult education, acknowledging the requirements of the working-class artist, who has largely become overlooked in the UK in recent decades.

²²⁰ AltMFA, established in 2010, has Master of Fine Art in the title. However, it is peer-led and self-organised. Discussion with AltMFA member since 2013, Sadie Edginton, November 2021.

²²¹ Interview with *Syllabus* ii associate. Conversations with artists who had been on *Syllabus* ii and *Syllabus* vi and *School of the Damned*, Class of 2018.

²²² Metal serves as a catalyst organisation and incubator for local community initiatives, nurturing the development of ideas. With permanent locations in Liverpool, Southend-on-Sea, and Peterborough, Metal actively builds community

Culture before TOMA became a Community Interest Company (CIC) in 2019. A fledgling TOMA used part of the converted mews block part of Chalkwell Hall in Chalkwell Park.²²³ Once the space at Metal Culture had been secured, it became apparent that there were limitations to access and the forms of collaborative activities that could be undertaken there. The requirement for a certain fixity in TOMA 1, operating within Metals' timetable as an educational programme, influenced its early stages, where it was necessary to adhere to their schedule and the spaces that were made available. Metal's Chalkwell Hall was the first of many spaces in which I interacted with TOMA. Each one could be placed within my topology of L-Space because wherever TOMA landed was a place of speculation and possibility. At the same time, TOMA was consciously holding the space of disruption, the D-Space. TOMA occupied the complexities of the political fivefold, the F-Space. These are the three spatialities that I will focus on.²²⁴

Although freed from close regulation and the need to justify pedagogical decisions to funding bodies, TOMA 1 was initially organised on a structure similar to most institutional models. TOMA needed to situate itself within the N-Space, to assume institutional (Metal Culture) time, instruction, procedures, and practices and, in so doing, implement a contained pedagogy through the requirement of a weekly schedule.²²⁵ The TOMA timetable included the recognisable institutional forms of the crit, artist's talk, seminar, and workshop sited within Metal Culture's space. Local external venues were used to hold exhibitions. These included Southend's Beecroft Art Gallery, Paul Robinson Solicitors and later Havens' Department Store, both in Westcliff-on-Sea. By 2018, TOMA had become an established and prominent UK-based alternative art school, as evidenced by its inclusion in New Contemporaries, a London exhibition showcase for emerging artists.²²⁶

through art residencies, education days, workshops, and cultural events. There is also low-cost accommodation for visiting artists, a facility in which I have resided on two separate occasions.

²²³ The single-storey stable block forms part of Metal Culture's Southend Centre for Art and Education, adjacent to Metal's artist residency space set within Chalkwell Hall. I arrived for the Autumn evening sessions, a forty-minute almost two-mile walk from Southend Victoria terminus, along the busy A13 in the dark, to Westcliff-on-Sea, the suburb where TOMA was located. There was a notable lack of street lighting as I made my way from the main road into the park. The expectation appeared to be that most evening visitors would arrive by car. TOMA 1 were able to book the Metal Culture artist residency space, meeting room, kitchen, first-floor library space, and artist overnight space at Chalkwell Hall. I undertook some of the TOMA 1 interviews in the second-floor artist's room and stayed there overnight in 2022.

²²⁴ I was unable to spend time with TOMA during 2020–2021 and the COVID-19 pandemic. As such there is additional research required to explore the online pedagogic experiment that this period imposed, and the corresponding pedagogic inventions that were undertaken within the N-Space and V-Space.

²²⁵ For the Founder, there appeared to be limited opportunity to disrupt the delineated spaces of Metal Culture. The focus was to establish TOMA 1. Unlike the Para-Site School (introduced in Chapter 2), which establishes the alternative art schools within *someone else's space*. The Founder is a strong visionary; however, at the outset, TOMA could not immediately trouble the institutional structures. Initially, the Founder just needed to motivate the TOMA 1 group to establish their own participatory projects and consider art pedagogies.

²²⁶ The Founder, along with AltMFA and School of the Damned, had contacted New Contemporaries in November 2017 for inclusion. TOMA also appeared in Thorne, (2017) and De La Puente, G. and Muhammad. Z., (2019).

In 2016, participation with TOMA 1 was weekly on Thursday evenings and weekends, at a cost of £75.00 per month. The twelve-month programme included:²²⁷

- gallery visits to London
- critical theory group (which included the production of an essay)
- visits with and to other alternative art schools
- three TOMA crits
- three tutorials
- one-week residency (these have included Merz Bahn in the Lake District and Art House Wakefield)
- an end-of-year show as a celebratory and collaborative event

Situating the Three Protagonist Roles

I performed and tested the three protagonist roles within TOMA 1 and 2 over an extended period from 2016 to 2018 and then intermittently during 2019. These interventions included attendance at TOMA's Education Programme of crits, talks, exhibitions, workshops, meetings, and visits, initially at Metal Culture and later in the TOMA Project Space located from 2017 to 2021 at Unit 13, a former shoe shop, at the Royals Shopping Centre, Southend-on-Sea.²²⁸ My time spent with TOMA allowed me to trial the scalability of the three protagonist roles. I was able to refine their distinctive interventionist approaches and adapt different temporalities within space for each of them. It was also an opportunity to apply the full range of protagonist tools for investigation which I then later used within other alternative educational spaces. For example, I fabricated a black triangular prism naming tool and three A-size acrylic Viewing Frames from which to select spaces within the field of investigation; see these in use at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223287> on the Research Catalogue exposition. Using this procedure led to a decelerated form of looking and closer

²²⁷ TOMA initially ran for twelve months, with the offer of a TOMA Associates Programme (TOMAssociates) for those who had completed twelve months but wanted to extend their TOMA experience. The Associates Programme ran alongside and included access to the TOMA Education Programme, with its visiting artists and workshops. TOMA 3 had two funded spaces available as a form of bursary, one of which was provided by artist Sarah Lucas. As part of the move to organisational transparency, TOMA now offers tiered pricing for what is currently an eighteen-month programme, with a May start and March 'end-of-year' exhibition. Initially, the extra six months were added to accommodate the issues associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and at the request of the artists to extend the time within the fabric of the programme. I provide a list of TOMA dates during the period of this thesis.

TOMA 1 2016–2017 (12 months with 10 participants).

TOMA 2 2017–2018 (12 months with 10 participants) plus TOMA 1 associates (TOMA associates programme for artists who wanted to continue for another year with TOMA).

TOMA 3 2019–2022 (18 months with 12 participants) with additional time missed due to COVID-19.

TOMA 4 2022–2024 (18 months with 12 participant spaces).

²²⁸ TOMA Education moved into Unit 13, the Royals Shopping Centre, in 2017, opening to the public as a Project Space on Saturday 3rd March 2018. The Royals Shopping Centre was sold to a local hotel group in August 2022 and TOMA alternative art school relinquished the Project Space at the Royals on 15 March 2022 and moved to The Old Waterworks in Westcliff-on-Sea. However, TOMA continued to use the Project Space for exhibitions until October 2022.

observation of the L-Space of TOMA pedagogy.²²⁹ The position of the three protagonists was dependent on the conditions and opportunities available, given the characteristics of each protagonist's role. I worked predominantly in a responsive way, noting the various sensory and environmental factors: atmosphere, sounds, light, textures, smells, walls, floor, fixtures, bodies, as well as potential collaborators and adversaries, in addition to the insights I was looking to uncover. If occasions presented themselves in which it was not clear which role I should perform, I used the Gyroscopic Device.

A selection of performative operations is documented within the main body of this chapter and can be viewed on the Research Catalogue exposition at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223284>. These were sometimes planned and specific, at other times improvised or speculative events. In testing out the three protagonist roles over an extended period from 2016 to 2019, I layered a conceptual framework of investigation on top of an alternative pedagogy whilst being attentive to the actions of the TOMA artists. As the three protagonist roles were deployed, they tested out a set of relationships not just with TOMA but with each other. The extended time with TOMA systems and structures allowed me to investigate the degree to which a self-described alternative art school can truly represent an alternative to a normative institution. I return to the central question of my thesis: *What and where are the spaces of alternative art schools? Can the alternative art school be situated outside of the normative pattern that currently determines the present and potential future forms of the art institution?* In this context, I posed the following questions:

- What characterises the educational space of TOMA?
- Why and how is TOMA designated as an alternative art school?
- How does participation in an alternative art programme manifest in educational and practice-based terms?
- What does TOMA contribute to this educational space?

Mouffe contends that society is a series of practices whose aim is to establish order but always within the context of contingency. If a solution is found, then the resolution of conflict results in a reduction or closure of the issue at stake. Bishop (2004) concisely articulates the cultivation of antagonism, as described by Mouffe, as an essential societal mechanism, arguing that “a fully functioning democratic society is not one in which all antagonisms have disappeared, [...] a democratic society is one in which relations of

²²⁹ I then used this method of selection, contemplation and field survey during the ‘close looking’ walking and survey performances I conducted during No Telos at the Research Pavilion, Venice, 2019.

conflict are sustained, not erased”.²³⁰ Mouffe (2014) suggests that the construction of an equivalent or an alternative hegemony could be proposed. This would engender the form of the adversarial and, through a process of critical progressiveness, would constitute, as Mouffe (2014) asserts, “the transformation from antagonism into agonism”.²³¹ Agonism, therefore, constitutes a particular form of conflictual space, a space where there are some rules and some understanding of those rules, as in the space I established for a Lecture in Reverse.²³² These conflictual spaces hold their own power structures what I term here hegemonies of agonism, inherent within the field of agonism.

While examining the theories of antagonism mobilised into agonism and then into agonistic pluralism, I sought to move between a gentle form of constructive disruption and a transversal interconnected zone, conducive to exploration and discovery. In agnostic pluralism, the intention is to accept fervour between two adversaries as a space of democracy. Reengaging with Marchart (2019), who explores a “forming of antagonism”, a term applied by Marchart “to describe the functioning of democratic institutions that would allow for regulated conflictuality”, I started to define the notion of the *frictive*.²³³ Marchart (2019) states that antagonism is simultaneously “grounding and degrounding social relations”. It holds the relational space. It is in this relational space, the holding space of different forms and positionalities, that I mobilise the three protagonist roles.

Serres (2007) uses the metaphor of the parasite to explore the disruptive and transformative nature of relationships between different entities, such as individuals, organisms, or ideas. He implies that parasites can be seen as agents of change or disturbances within systems that challenge the normative order by introducing new elements or altering existing dynamics. Serres puts forth that systems are constantly evolving and that disruptions caused by parasites are necessary for adaptation and growth. In this way, I locate the three protagonist roles as agonistic, as disrupters. In adapting Serres’s (2007) diagram of the “elementary link of the parasitic chain”, introduced in Chapter 3, the Guest/Host/Guest relationship serves as a metaphor for understanding the dynamics of diverse interactions within my five spatialities.²³⁴ The

²³⁰ Bishop, C., 2004. Antagonism and relational aesthetics. *October*, (110), pp. 65–66.

²³¹ Mouffe, C., 2014. *How is architecture political?* [The Architectural Exchange 2, Lecture to Architectural Association, London]. 13 December. [online]. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TivdkiHXTJ0> [Accessed 28 July 2021].

Mouffe, 2014. Mouffe debates this broader exploration of radical democracy and a move towards a shifting mode of political engagement from one based on enemy relations to one characterised by respectful and inclusive associations.

²³² Performed at the invitation of TOMA during the Alternative Art School Weekender, March 2019.

²³³ Marchart, O., 2019. *Conflictual aesthetics - artistic activism and the public sphere*. London: Sternberg Press, p. 27.

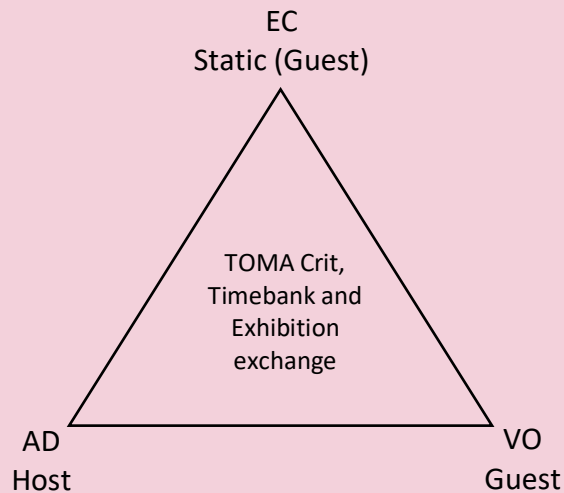
I referred to this space in Chapter 3 as the space of the *frictive*, (see also the Glossary).

²³⁴ Serres, M., 2007. *The parasite*. Translated by Lawrence R. Schehr. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 19.

Guest/Host/Guest framework illustrates the interconnectedness, mutual dependence, and transformative potential that exist within these relationships. Figure 37 shows the positions of the three protagonist roles, taking each of their parasitical positions and locating them within TOMA crits, timebanking and exhibition making.

In considering the holding space as a spatial and situated practice and as a place to enact the three protagonist roles that reverberate against each other in their 'frictivity,' but are also necessary for each other to exist, I return to the role's conceptual matrix within Serres's *The Parasite* (2007) and my subsequent framing of them as Guest/Host/Guest. I acknowledge there is, within this conceptual framework the possibility of agonistic relationalities between the roles and any given space and situation in which they have been placed.

Evaluative Contributor. Conduit of space and time analysing, reviewing, and examining TOMA providing feedback and reflections through Scholé Poems. Sitting in the TOMA Project Space at the desk, acting as a consultant, interviewer, observer, and interlocutor for TOMA 2 and 3 artists.



Articulate Detective. Gifted time and space from the Evaluative Contributor in exchange for Evaluative Contributor's administrative and consultancy skills. This is an ongoing transactional proposition, an exchange of one skill for another or one skill for time, that does not happen in the normative institution. The Articulate Detective is facilitator/disrupter thereby able to spend a day in the TOMA Project Space. The Articulate Detective maps the space in detail, participates in TOMA exhibitions, and intervenes in the TOMA crits and workshops.

Vigilant Observer. Invited into the space of TOMA. This allows the other two protagonists to enter the field. The Vigilant Observer is watching from afar, documenting through drawing and sound recordings the TOMA conditions, the spatial dimensions, and artists modalities of engagement.

Figure 37. Diagram illustrating the three protagonist roles (Guest/Host/Guest) within TOMA. It indicates their engagement with TOMA's specific systems through participation in the crit, timebank exchange, and exhibition.

This section maps my activities, I reveal how TOMA spaces are defined and interpreted by participants and how each TOMA group has no singular form but sustains thoughtful re-organisational and decentralised practices. In prototyping an immersive performative research model, I entered the education programme, providing an account of the TOMA crit, the TOMA Project Space, and the TOMA exhibitions.

The TOMA Crits

Group Critique

‘Group critique’, ‘group criticism’, ‘studio critique’, or more usually just ‘the crit’ are some of the terms used to describe a dialogical process that is prominent especially, though not exclusively, within subject-specialist UK art institutions, as opposed to non-art specialist institutions. This is a mode of teaching and learning that emphasises the verbal within a group exchange. Historian Brendan D. Moran (2018) proposes, “the crit is a public revealing of a private activity, conferring a hybrid status on the closed space and intimate production of the individual studio”.²³⁵

The crit gives predominance to a spoken account of studio practice, a rationalisation for the materiality of that work, often in correlation with theoretical concerns and a justification of those concerns.²³⁶ Academic Helena Wong (2011) highlights the underlying requirements of the group crit: “the ability for students to be expert and so critique professionally yet conversely have a strong enough sense of self (“ego”) to defend their own work”. Curator and writer Elena Crippa provides a concise historical account of the UK crit in relation to the London art schools and its development after the publication of the Coldstream Report of 1960. Crippa (2015) suggests two significant markers in the emergence of the crit. Firstly, “the renewed perception of [the artist as] a thinker”, and secondly, “the shift from figuration to abstraction”.²³⁷ This ‘privileging of mind’ was reconceived by TOMA 1 artists in that they approached the crit

²³⁵ Moran, B. D., 2009. Aesthetic Platforms. In: Madoff, S. H., ed. *Art School: (Propositions for the 21st Century)*. Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2009, pp. 37.

²³⁶ Healy, J., 2016. The components of the “crit” in art and design education, *Irish Journal of Academic Practice*, 5 (1), article 7, pp. 1–17.

Wong, H. L. H., 2011. Critique: a communicative event in design education. *Visible Language*, 45 (3), pp. 221–247.

I have drawn upon Healy (2016) and Wong (2011), as well as my own experiences of group critique, to define the purpose of a group critique as helping students evaluate their technical, aesthetic, written, and verbal skills.

²³⁷ Llewellyn, N. 2015. *The London art schools: reforming the art world, 1960 to now*. London: Tate Publishing. Crippa provides a brief account of the emergence of the crit from the male-dominated space of St Martin’s School of Art’s Sculpture Department, p. 7.

Bjerg, J., 2020. *Metàfora: Why do students need “crits” at an art school?* [online]. Metàfora Studio Arts. Available at: <https://metafora-studio-arts.org/why-art-students-need-crits/> [Accessed 25 November 2021]. Jette Bjerg introduces the unequal power relationship between staff and students in the group critique, suggesting for some, the crit can sometimes become “a tool for the exact contrary of [what it should] be: a torture, a trauma and in no way a useful learning experience”.

through a feminist perspective, bringing a collective generosity and sensitivity not always prevalent within the institution.

I begin by introducing the Vigilant Observer within the TOMA 1 group critique In September 2016. The transitional or in-between state, the L-Space concept denotes a moment of spatial ambiguity, where one has left behind the familiar but has not yet fully arrived at the new or unknown. I had considered the L-Space as characterised by a sense of betweenness, of waiting, and then of movement where the normal rules and expectations may be suspended, allowing for exploration, transformation, and other rules to emerge.

In the L-Space: Table Critique with the Vigilant Observer

TOMA occupied the artist-in-residency room at Metal Culture. Located in the east side extension on the ground floor of the Georgian house that is Chalkwell Hall, the Vigilant Observer entered the TOMA 1 crit space for the first time on the evening of Thursday 22 September 2016. The Metal Culture artist was still in residence, their presence apparent in the easel and numerous piles of charcoal drawings that were pushed into one corner of the room. This was the TOMA 1 crit location, anticipating what would become a recurrent space for TOMA, positioned within the in-between and speculative, that is, the L-Space. I had identified from the first interviews undertaken by the Evaluative Contributor that the TOMA 1 artists worked in a variety of spaces, some located in their garden sheds and spare domestic rooms. Two participants had long-term rented studios in repurposed artist's spaces.²³⁸ Work was made in their studios and then brought to the crit space for discussion. This struck me as a similar procedure to the table or wall showing crit prevalent in many UK institutions. TOMA 1 had taken on the space and mode of instruction that was adopted in the 1960s as teaching moved, as Crippa (2015) indicates, "from the traditional easel-visit to the crit format".²³⁹ More recently, in UK art institutions, the critique often extends to discussions of the work's staging and curation, although this was not the case here.

The primary function of the TOMA crits was to support each artist in finding areas in which to develop an initial idea, to locate and develop meaning, a social context, and/or extend material forms. The Vigilant Observer had been invited into the table crit space by

²³⁸ Interviews are given in Box T and <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223292> within the Research Catalogue exposition.

²³⁹ Crippa, E., 2015. From crit to lecture performance. In: Llewellyn, N., ed. *The London art schools: reforming the art world, 1960 to now*. London: Tate Publishing, 2015, p. 135.

the Founder, Figure 38. The Vigilant Observer was conscious of maintaining the position of guest/participant during the first meeting with and of TOMA 1. Holding back from the role of the tutor was at first challenging. There was the opportunity for the Vigilant Observer to show work. A chalk drawing of one of my initial interventions into Anton Vidokle's list was selected, alongside the first mapping of alternative art schools that would eventually become one of the Genogram acetates, see again the research Catalogue exposition <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223289> or Box A.²⁴⁰ In hindsight, this was too conceptual for a first meeting, particularly as the Vigilant Observer was the last to show work, and the group was tired. However, this *Listing* did provoke a discussion around the proliferation and differences within other alternative art schools.

²⁴⁰ As explored in Chapter 1 and included in the Research Catalogue exposition and Box A.

An A4 piece of paper is stuck to the window, a printed notice from Metal's artist in residence, an invitation to come inside and view works in progress. There is an ornate dark wood display cabinet containing drawing materials, obscured by paintings shortly to be presented by one of the TOMA artists. The front area of the L-Space is predominately glass, windows of lightness reflecting and then casting evening shadows that move across onto the two white walls behind. Ten TOMA artists and the Vigilant Observer just about fit around the two trestle tables. This is the first TOMA crit.



Figure 38. The inaugural meeting of TOMA 1 and the start of the Thursday evening table crit were held on September 22, 2016. The crit session, lasting from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, was followed by thirty minutes for additional discussion. Rolled-up *Listing* drawings and prints of the Vigilant Observer are visible on the table.

TOMA 1 artists, (left to right) Anna B. Sexton, Ian A. Ryan and Tricia North.

Holding the Group

Groupness as a procedure of learning within the alternative art school is significant and brings with it mutual support and shared responsibility. The enacting space allowed for close observation of groupness and insights into the practice of nine very different visual artists and one sound artist. During the crit TOMA 1 accommodated my questions on forms of participation, expectations, making work, the potential for collaboration as a group, and the plans for the first TOMA exhibition. The artists talked about their apprehensions about showing work and knowing how to curate, and they described the palpable energy of encountering each other for the first time. The thoughtful way that the Founder held the group acknowledged their trepidation and encouraged the group to connect through the individual works they had brought was profound. It was at this point that I realised these experiences and observations would not have been gleaned through the research interviews. In this context, I found myself seated at a table during the inaugural session, marking the commencement of TOMA's first critique.

A table crit refers to a critique conducted around a table. TOMA 1 participants gathered around a table to present and discuss their projects, providing feedback, insights, and constructive criticism. While lacking the deliberate staging and curatorial intentions characteristic of a studio critique, this format proved accessible and practical for a weekly gathering within a borrowed space. There were positive aspects to the table crit format in that discursive emphasis allowed for different and sometimes contradictory opinions to be conveyed and talked through. The physical intimacy of the space and seating around the table did not provoke the combative posturing that I have sometimes seen in institutional crits, when the group is standing in front of the work. The informal seating arrangement allowed each TOMA 1 artist to speak and actively listen to others. The downside was that there was insufficient time to ruminate, fully explore a problem, follow a tangential discussion point, or have a conclusive summation. It was also slightly exhausting to meet the group for the first time, view consecutive presentations and observe a range of practices in close proximity. On a practical level, the application of table crit meant it was impossible to study the works for sufficient time and return after a few moments; it was difficult to see the entirety of the works and how one piece might relate to another or even how the groups work correlate with each other. The challenges of holding onto the institutional structures, systems, and procedures of what a group crit looks like whilst attempting to be open and transparent were significant. It occurred to me that another type of crit could be formulated. Academic John P. Healy provides a

useful starting point from which to analyse the art and design crit. Healy (2016) breaks down the crit into eight constituent parts: *timing, participants, formality, duration, audience, feedback, purpose, and location*.²⁴¹ I used these eight categories to examine the conditions of the TOMA 1 crit and as a way to structure and propose a group crit within another form of L-Space.

In the L-Space: Train Critique with the Articulate Detective

During 2016 and the initial year of TOMA, the Vigilant Observer made a notable observation regarding the often-empty carriages on the c2c train route from Chalkwell Park to London Fenchurch Street, particularly during late Thursday evenings. Contemplating the potential transformation of the traditional art school critique, the Vigilant Observer envisioned what it would entail if the critique occupied the space of a train carriage for a duration of sixty minutes. This idea served as the impetus to explore the feasibility of conducting a group critique during the train journey, specifically catering to TOMA artists returning to London. Following a year spent with TOMA 1, a new cohort of artists emerged, constituting TOMA 2. In response, the Vigilant Observer conceptualised a group critique tailored to the unique characteristics of a liminal space, a multifunctional and dynamic environment. Drawing inspiration from the pedagogical model of group critique, with Healy's structure (2016) serving as a foundational framework or Train Score (Figure 39), I sought to reassess its eight constituent parts.

The Vigilant Observer tested the existing paradigm of the group crit, one that is often teacher-led and adversarial, by transferring the crit to a space that was co-created and collectively determined, adapting Healey's components into a score for a train crit.²⁴² We situated the train crit within an L-Space of multiplicities of time, spontaneity, moments of physical acceleration and slowness of our gestural movements and stillness. There were moments of playfulness and improvisation required; the crit was conditioned by its liminal situation, and our not knowing how it would all work. Diverging significantly from the static attributes of the table critique, which exhibited a formal and rigid atmosphere, the train carriage environment facilitated the staging and testing of works within a dynamic, mobile space. This spatial context encouraged a creative platform,

²⁴¹ Healy, J., 2016. The components of the "crit" in art and design education," *Irish Journal of Academic Practice*, 5 (1), article 7, p. 12.

Healy conducted an analysis of the crit within design programmes at the Dublin Institute of Technology. Group critique was used to inform formative and summative assessments of students. Despite the specific context of Healy's study, I found it useful to refer to the eight headings as fundamental elements of group critique within artistic education more generally.

²⁴² By score, I mean a set of directions or invitations, as with the experimental art performances of 'Fluxus event scores'.

yielding presentations that were less premeditated, more collaborative, and more responsive. We navigated sonic disruptions, station announcements, the clatter of the train on the tracks and the wind over the carriage. These affective elements performed with the crit participants, enhancing rather than distracting from the discussion. I was both a spectator, a participant, and, of course, a guest. The situated nature of the train crit called for an adjustment on my part to a peculiar form of slowness and contemplation; it required me to improvise, interpret and respond to the group as they created a liminal space. Additionally, a suspension of existing ideas of transportation and train journeys was required to accommodate this new operative procedure. This train crit's situatedness required a re-imagining of the traditional crit and weaving of this art institutional form into a space of everyday life. In considering the L-Space in this context, I recalled *Non-Places*, a text by anthropologist Marc Augé. In discussing the spatial overabundance of our present condition, Augé (1995) urges us to consider our perceptions of time and the use we make of it. Augé (*passim*) would perhaps classify the commercial transportation of a train carriage as a non-place. The spatial overabundance of a traveller's space Augé might characterise as the 'supermodern'.²⁴³

<i>Proposed Score for a Train Critique</i>	
Timing	<i>Weekly, allowing for communal and focussed use of travel and time.</i>
Participants	<i>All are invited into the discursive space. Small groups of five or six, produce less anxiety, more opportunities for discussion, and less chance of being excluded from the conversation.</i>
Formality	<i>The informal space of the seated train carriage allows for everyone to be at the same level, it is less hierarchical spatially, and less formal than the table or wall crit. No singular person dominates. The hosting of the crit is communal.</i>
Audience	<i>There is an awareness that this is a public space and as such we are all guests in the moving space, bringing with it an alertness to this unknown. Being mindful of other passengers and ensuring that the crit does not disturb or inconvenience others.</i>
Purpose	<i>To test out actions and ideas or for artists to reveal work in a private/public space. The crit is not required as a formalised assessment tool. There is then an opportunity to further disrupt the single speaker presenting to an audience, format.</i>
Feedback	<i>Time, light, and movement add multiple modalities that can be considered within the feedback.</i>
Duration	<i>The time of the train journey dictates the length of the crit presentations. Giving two presenters thirty minutes each allows for considered discussion and participation. The total journey time required is sixty-five to seventy minutes.</i>
Location	<i>Disrupts the table and wall crit, moves outside the studio and gallery to other spaces. Encourages other imaginaries beyond the static studio space. Ego is kept in check; this is a dual-purpose space for commuting and a crit. The space is not necessarily the same each week, dependent on the train carriage and who else is present from TOMA. An open space that others may enter into.</i>

Figure 39. Alternative crit structure proposed by the Articulate Detective for application with TOMA 2.

²⁴³ Augé, M., 1995. *Non-places: introduction to an anthropology of supermodernity*. Translated by John Howe. London: Verso, p. 24.



The Articulate Detective created opportunities to work with TOMA artists and enter into other spaces of group critique. The Articulate Detective discussed the work in the moving space of the train carriage between Chalkwell and London Fenchurch Street. Firstly, sculptures were presented by TOMA 2 artist Gloria Sulli. The group spent time proposing how the paper structures could be developed, their reproducibility and scalability, and the luminosity and sense of movement they produced when placed against the changing light coming through the window. The informality and intimacy of the train carriage aided discussion, there wasn't the expectation of entering into the institutional crit space of the verbose and those who didn't ordinarily speak became active.

It was noticeable that the discussion engaged primarily with the visual language of the work and the material forms rather than the concepts of the work. The second work was a reading on the qualities of Luton by artist Dominic Allan. This was given added drama by the vibrations and changing pace of the train. The Articulate Detective and participating artists had claimed the L-Space for another function.

Figure 40. Above is an excerpt from the 'Train Crit' account with Gloria Sulli (TOMA 2) and artist Dominic from Luton. The complete text was published in the Alternative Art School Weekender TOMA catalogue; go to <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223284>.

Light
Seascape
Masts
Blur
Landscape
Blur
Gesture
Pylons
Lines
Green
Blur
Concrete

Figure 41. Right, Evaluative Contributor's Scholé Poem, 2.
See the Research Catalogue exposition at
<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223284>.

In the introduction to *Artificial Hells*, Claire Bishop (2012) states that participatory art values “what is invisible: a group dynamic, a social situation, a change of energy, a raised consciousness”.²⁴⁴ Bishop asserts that participation is social, not physical. In the context of the train crit, the artistic participation was social, sharing and partaking in discussion. The space of the train carriage created an informal physical space. The Articulate Detective perceived a sense of closeness and togetherness, and from this emerged a confidence that the L-Space had brought. Speaking, movement, gestures, actions, the body, language, and co-existence are heightened. It was possible to extend the crit beyond the studio and to make the TOMA space more flexible; an effective group critique was able to emerge on a train journey back to London. Bishop provides a useful distinction between performance and participation through an analysis of theatrical experiments that, as Bishop (2012) states, “erode the distinction between audience and performer”.²⁴⁵ In debating the work of Augusto Boal and social theatre and their potential as transformative spaces, Bishop suggests social theatre acts as a disrupter, challenging societal norms and prompting critical conversations. The public participatory act of a train crit created an informal space, a democratic space that allowed for the expression of diverse viewpoints and open dialogue. In this sense, the physical space of the train crit became a shared experience, a transformative environment that encouraged critical reflection, challenged conventions, and activated a sense of community. Within this compressed space, the performer also serves as the audience; I suggest that this site of participation brings a heightened degree of awareness, not only of others but of oneself in relation to others.

The train crit provided a space for alternative, spontaneous interactions that is left as a residue through my various forms of documentation. The formulation of this space was deliberately that of an ephemeral space, one that does not prioritise longevity. The train crit could be repeated but it will be different each time, as location, time, participants, art works, conversations etc. will be different. I am interested in these temporary spaces, these muted, fleeting moments, ones that often leave lasting impressions. In relation to policies of care, the train crit serves as an example of how alternative art schools can create intimate spaces within the everyday, places where care is embedded within the spontaneity and ease of participants' interaction. For Black, queer, disabled artists, the practice of incubating safe spaces is crucial in both resisting

²⁴⁴ Bishop, C., 2012. *Artificial hells: participatory art and the politics of spectatorship*. London: Verso, p. 6.

²⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 53.

the external/the normative and forming environments where identity, care, and creativity can proliferate, even if just for a moment.

The TOMA Project Space

The Royals

In March 2018, TOMA 2 relocated from Metal Culture, Chalkwell Park, into the TOMA Project Space, located at Unit 13, the Royals Shopping Centre, Southend-on-Sea. An empty retail space opposite a greeting card shop and adjacent to a frozen food store, Unit 13 was vacant and waiting, a 'meanwhile space'.²⁴⁶ The TOMA Project Space was thus constructed. It included a library (accessible to the public), meeting room, teaching space, gallery, and with the intention for artists' studios upstairs. This move was significant and led to a newfound stability and the expansion of TOMA beyond the education programme, which then extended to include public workshops, visiting artist exhibitions, the TOMA shop, and reading space; these initiatives all elicited a greater sense of community and permanency.

The ground floor Project Space was a receptacle of space, a space holder not quite devoid of detritus, imprints, or stains of what had been there before. It had large glass windows downstairs, allowing shoppers to look inwards and the TOMA participants outwards, a space within a shopping centre as opposed to the enclosed hidden interiority of the institution. This space was defined by small structural elements that referred to the language of visual merchandising, open window displays, metal shutters, threshold surfaces, and semi-interested customers walking past. To the right of the entrance was a large rectangular pillar; this vertical loadbearing pier was from 2018 sponsored by an artist supporting TOMA.²⁴⁷ Rather oddly located, the pillar should have acted as a boundary for the access route to the car park but is instead positioned inside Unit 13; its prominence as a support structure led it to become a signification feature and a uniquely distinctive exhibition space. The Articulate Detectives interventions with the TOMA pillar are presented at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223284> on the Research Catalogue exposition.

The Project Space in the Royals could be viewed as an extended event-based gallery and project room holding a particular form of spatiality. Within the ground floor

²⁴⁶ The term 'meanwhile space' is used in reference to the empty shops that are often urban, temporary, and cheap spaces offered to artists whilst awaiting occupancy by long-term retail tenants.

²⁴⁷ The sponsored Sarah Lucas pillar was a way for TOMA to raise additional funds. Lucas would provide a stipend to put on an exhibition using the pillar as the exhibition space.

space, there were two separate and distinctive areas, demarcated by portable wall screens. They were light and highly visible through the surrounding glass windows and offered a portal for those who know what this alternative space is or who are curious to enter. In gaining the repurposed space of Royals Unit 13, TOMA's intention was to use the upstairs as an artists' studio space. However, the upstairs was hidden away, with access only available at the back of the unit. The three protagonist roles encountered it variously as unused, as a sensory space for those seeking quiet, as a place for testing a large-scale work, as a storage room or simply as a void space.²⁴⁸ This was largely because it had no natural lighting and no heating (it was extremely cold due to the metal roofing materials, concrete walls and floor, and numerous air vents). Another reason for its underuse was perhaps the restricted access to the Royals, limited by the opening hours of the centre and the zealousness of the security personnel.

In programming the Project Space with exhibitions other than TOMA Education shows, public events and reading groups related to specific exhibitions such as 'Pets' (2019) and 'Southend's Twilight Worlds' (2022) created opportunities for listening, sharing, making, and engaging with other groups within South Essex. TOMA started to build significant long-term strategies and social capital into the site. This approach would assist with future funding bids and encourage the local authority and councillors to acknowledge that engaging with the community is not synonymous with relinquishing power.²⁴⁹ The alternative art schools face significant challenges in their relationship to funding since traditional funding models often prioritise individual achievements or a requirement to meet formal community and cultural targets.

The Founder had attempted a form of democratic redistribution of education with TOMA 1, offering an enquiry-based pedagogy formulated around self-initiated research, an informal peer support system and a social critical network, encouraging artists to establish and dictate their own journeys through TOMA. Yet it took until the end of TOMA 1 for these approaches to start to become manifest. From my interviews and anecdotal conversations with TOMA 1 artists, I recognised that the artists had felt particularly

²⁴⁸ In architecture a void is an area that is fully enclosed, trapped between other services, rooms, or walls within a building and that occupies a floor area.

²⁴⁹ The relationship between art education and funding, and in particular the relationship between funding as a reward for meeting formal educational targets in schools and colleges, can easily translate to penalising and excluding those experiencing poverty and those with higher support needs. A particular difficulty in gaining arts support in Southend-on-Sea (which obtained city status in March 2022) was the number of older, white, conventional, and Conservative councillors who were reluctant to see the benefits of TOMA. The council's arts page mentions Metal and Focal Point Gallery but does not include TOMA.

challenged by the forms of dialogical interaction and study of art practice through democratic processes rather than (tutor) directed approaches. An interview I conducted with a TOMA 1 artist in April 2017 (full interview text in Box T and the Research Catalogue exposition at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223292>), highlights this,²⁵⁰

*It's very self-generated, I didn't expect it...
I did think there would be more underlying agenda/structure,
Being asked, 'What do you want?' At first, there is sort of a look of, 'Oh, what do you want? I'm not sure.'
I think it's getting confidence in asking, 'Can we try this?'*

For TOMA 1, which had a slightly older age demographic than subsequent TOMA groups, a research-based approach to education led to a significant shift in their understanding of how art education could be. Certainly, the move to the Royals Shopping Centre and the creation of the TOMA Project Space accelerated this shift in understanding. The stability brought by having a *home* at the Royals led to the introduction of what would be the foundation of the TOMA language, a system of cooperation and educational modalities.

From TOMA's inception, the Founder was always open and transparent with TOMA participants regarding how fees were spent. As TOMA started to grow into its distinctive forms of education, exhibition, and Project Space, the Founder was committed to cogenerating as a mode of collaborative practice, bringing openness and transparency to TOMA's organisation and financial transactions.

*Funded by its participants, TOMA 2018/19 costs £75 per month (plus 5 days of invigilation and Timebanking in the TOMA Project Space) to attend, which goes directly and wholly towards paying for visiting artists, lecturers, practical workshops, personal tutors, offsite projects, a residency, exhibitions, a programme coordinator and bookable spaces to make work. These fees contribute to the educational programme, paying artists and visiting practitioners a fair wage.*²⁵¹

The Founder and TOMA team consulted with participants to develop the programme. The TOMA artists advised through feedback how they want the education programme to develop, and the TOMA team responded. As a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic and requests from TOMA artists for a longer programme duration, TOMA moved from a

²⁵⁰ North, T., 2017. TOMA 1: interview with Elle Reynolds, Westcliff-on-Sea, 13 April.

²⁵¹ TOMA, 2018. *Education Programme* [online]. TOMA info. Available at: <https://www.toma-art.com/education-programme-info> [Accessed 11 April 2018].

proposed 12-month to an 18-month programme in 2021. Addressing feedback from the artists, this adjustment aimed to ensure a better learning-life balance for participants by allowing space between sessions. Additionally, in 2022, TOMA introduced a flexible fee option. This option was not means-tested but based on trust and aimed to maintain accessibility for those with lower incomes, with two free spaces allocated per year.

Timebanking: Alternative Economies

Timebanking was one such sharing infrastructure that was introduced, emphasising a transparent and decentralised decision-making process that the Founder was looking to cultivate. Timebanking is an alternative socio-economic practice that was introduced by the Founder during TOMA 2, from the onset of their programme.²⁵² Timebanking can be said to sit within artistic and feminist economies, as it was established initially to address social exclusion resulting from unequal and restricted access for many, especially women, to money. This inequality is manifest in the question of what kind of labour counts as valued labour through the continued undervaluing of both artists and the gendered nature of care work, childcare, and informal and voluntary work. The Founder was very much aware of the precarious conditions that many TOMA artists worked under and the additional time, often unacknowledged, that was required to support and maintain an art practice. Indeed, this question of care, time and sustaining oneself encompasses not only the broader framework of TOMA but also extends to the Founder's commitment, specifically in terms of the temporal investments dedicated to the administration, organisational facets, and fundraising vis-à-vis the resultant remuneration in the form of a living wage. In the inaugural year, the Founder addressed this conundrum by personally enrolling as a student in TOMA 1, thereby deriving some compensatory educational benefit.

The implementation of timebanking marked the beginning of reciprocal operational thinking that would define and generate sustainability in TOMA's organisational structures. In considering different conceptions of collectivity through the lens of labour, Timebanking allows for other imaginaries, such as *Timethinking* and *Spacethinking*, to

²⁵² Timebanking is a non-monetary economic practice of sharing time and learning with others. First recorded in the early nineteenth century in the United States, a twentieth-century creation is credited to Edgar S. Cahn in the 1980s. Timebanking resonates with cooperation and flexible working and navigates around some of the precarity associated with casualised employment. The first UK timebank was established in 1998 by the Fair Shares volunteer project in the town of Stonehouse, near Stroud, Gloucestershire.

encounter and inhabit space differently.²⁵³ Timebanking raised two fundamental questions: How can we value what we exchange? In what ways do we use time and the space of exchange? Drawing from the Train Crit example, re-evaluating our perception of time can expand spatial dimensions and create other temporal expanses.

In 2018, TOMA implemented Timebanking as a paradigm of peer-to-peer contribution, reimagining what time is, and applied the concept to eventually build a self-organised and transparent infrastructure to meet TOMA's own needs. Timebanking was a reciprocal system where individuals contributed their time and skills to assist others and, in return, received time in the TOMA studio spaces or assistance as a mutually beneficial arrangement. TOMA Timebanking included gifting skills, teaching one another, updating the TOMA social media presence, and producing online promotional material in return for the use of the TOMA upstairs space. This outward opening of space and time freed TOMA participants from certain pressures on time as a commodity. It challenged the 'value for money' approach that is prevalent within the normative art institution.²⁵⁴ The focus is on what you put into studying in terms of labour, thought and empathy rather than money, and thus this change shifts the role of TOMA participants from customers to students. One TOMA artist (TOMA 1, Imogen Welch, interviewed June 2017) stated, 'feeling guilty about spending time and money on my art is a big thing in my life'.²⁵⁵ Joining TOMA has led some to feel less guilty.

Imagining Space, the TOMA Way

In moving to the autonomous space at Royals, TOMA developed a distinctive architectural language. This was a transient visual language, using unpainted sheets of Oriented Standard Board (OSB), sandwiched and braced by pine timber lengths and positioned on industrial castors to engineer moveable display structures. The materials TOMA used to construct the exhibition spaces included fluorescent tape, neon papers, and steel dressmakers' pins. These display materials convey the temporary, and were appropriate to the shifting situation, contributing to a DIY/DIT language for imagining and establishing space, easily accessible and within the limited budget of the alternative art school. There

²⁵³ I proposed the terms *Timethinking* and *Spacethinking* after encountering Timebanking. What happens if we responded to the provocation to enter a familiar space differently each time we encountered it?

²⁵⁴ The Founder iteratively undertakes fundraising, seeking donations and making applications to Arts Council England. A concise definition of Value for Money is that *VfM* is based not only on the minimum purchase price (economy) but also on the maximum efficiency and effectiveness of the purchase. Initially, a nominal honorarium was extended to TOMA Board Members and individuals providing administrative support to the organisation; subsequently, this was replaced with compensation at an equitable rate aligned with the artists' living wage standards.

²⁵⁵ TOMA 1 artist interviews, Box T and <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223292> in the Research Catalogue.

was also something related to the contemporary condition of non-fixity and of retail and display about this use of fluorescent colours that informed the TOMA identity. At Metal, TOMA 1 was a mobile learning space without the physical situatedness of place; in the Royals Shopping Centre, TOMA created spaces for exhibitions, teaching, meetings, administration, storage, art sales, and a library. A strong sense of TOMA's identity was instead created by the architectural material language temporarily installed in the TOMA Project Space. Through the delineation of areas that could expand, overlap, or contract, temporary and flexible public and open or private and closed spaces were created. The physical space could be changed quickly, and in turn, this shifted the ideological space from the private and discursive (for tutorials, crits, and artist's visits) to the public gallery space for group shows, school visits, related talks and artists selling space. TOMA's ability to change so deftly showed little of the institutional rigidity that comes from the physical permanence of the normative institution. The alternative art school not only challenges models of itself but also the white cube as a static institutional space. Therefore, TOMA could promptly and organically address exhibition invitations and artist proposals, enabling the Project Space to exhibit works by TOMA participants alongside themed exhibitions by invited artists.

The introduction of TOMA Timebanking provided the first opportunity for the three protagonist roles to be deployed within the Royals Project Space over two weekends in May and July 2018. The Vigilant Observer would be a keyholder for the weekend, having access and permission to use the resources of a Project Space. The Vigilant Observer was the facilitator, conduit, and guest; invited into the space in the Royals, the Vigilant Observer allowed the other two protagonists to be activated.

Situating the Evaluative Contributor

On the 26th of July 2018, the Evaluative Contributor was nominated as a keyholder and was called upon to open the TOMA space for artist visitors and to welcome the general public and any TOMA artists or TOMAssociates. The Evaluative Contributor was instructed to sell the merchandise, bags, prints, and badges and introduce the education programme, which included TOMA talks and workshops. Seated behind the TOMA reception desk, the Evaluative Contributor documented, through a tally system, those who entered the Project Space, answered questions and directed visitors around the exhibition. Located in a space with unfamiliar displays that did not fit into the normative

retail category, the passer-by was not sure exactly what the space was.²⁵⁶ Sitting at this desk conferred upon the Evaluative Contributor role a certain level of authority. The Evaluative Contributor became the static, the constant, a recognisable figure; the presence of an individual seated behind a desk at an entrance was a familiar phenomenon, typically invoking the presumption that their role includes the act of greeting visitors. Yet simultaneously, the protagonist was an embodied disruptor, actively engaging in actions that challenged the established system, operating from within.²⁵⁷

The Evaluative Contributor noted that those navigating the shopping centre were influenced by the location of the open stores, moving quickly past the vacant retail fronts. There was very little browsing, more a directed form of shopping. The Project Space invited a pace that was slow and allowed for hesitation and deviation, permitting a different temporality than that of shopping. Younger groups entered the space to see what it was, slowing down considerably. The Evaluative Contributor would then ask questions about their interest in art. Older, individuals came in for a chat, to sit down and reminisce on Southend. The Evaluative Contributor would then direct their gaze to the artists' fridge magnets and landscape prints with the intention to sell them goods. Mothers came in with children for respite and talked to the Evaluative Contributor about the art exhibition and their own lost opportunities to study art whilst their children drew on the Evaluative Contributor's desk. Artists came to the space looking for TOMA artists and wondering who this Evaluative Contributor was. The Evaluative Contributor initiated and gave out feedback cards to those not familiar with the space; everyone was happy to complete these, and no one asked why. Perhaps they considered it a transaction for entering into the space. The feedback cards helped me understand how they, the visitors, perceived the Project Space: as a physical entity, a space of learning, or a space of the unknown, a form that would require negotiation.

One of the noteworthy advantages of TOMA Project Space was being open to the public in a central Southend location, which brought in a high level of visibility and, for

²⁵⁶ The demographics of Southend-on-Sea indicate a largely homogenous population of 87.5% white, which is just under 90% for Essex as a whole. There are 7-million-day visitors (2020), primarily from the South-East of England. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, 2020. *Destination Southend* [online]. Southend Tourism Partnership Available at: <https://democracy.southend.gov.uk/documents/s41564/8%20-%20Appendix%20-%20Destination%20Southend.pdf> [Accessed 30 April 2023]. Since this study was started, Southend-on-Sea has had a Conservative council and a sizeable Southend Independence Group formed from ex-UKIP councillors, notably 58.1% of the population voting to 'leave' during the 2016 EU Referendum. Since May 2023, there has been a Conservative minority administration.

²⁵⁷ The Evaluative Contributor has the keys to a glass-fronted unit in the Royals, now the TOMA Project Space. The space has double glass doors, metal shutters caked in soft yellow gloss paint, and concrete structural support (the Sarah Lucas pillar) to the right as you enter. The threshold of the Project Space has a hard, cold, polished rotary buffed surface, which gives way to a soft grey industrial-grade carpet. To the left, the front information desk and two plastic chairs. The Evaluative Contributor sits at this desk, welcoming, counting, directing, enlightening, and inviting donations. The Evaluative Contributor is both sentry and custodian, surveying, assessing, monitoring, measuring, and noting any possibilities for future interactions.

some, demystified the spaces of art education. Having visited the nearby Focal Point Gallery, individuals interested in art were also drawn to visit TOMA's Project Space, which now formed part of an art loop. Creative writing workshops, artist talks, and live performances were offered with local groups with whom TOMA had collaborated on projects or had established an ongoing relationship. Additionally, the inclusion of a shop selling artworks within the Project Space accommodated those seeking a retail experience. The concluding exhibition in the TOMA Project Space, titled 'Southend's Twilight Worlds,' featured TOMA artists showcasing visual and text-based works, along with artefacts sourced from the Southend Central Museum. The exhibition also incorporated listening spaces that incorporated interviews with various local community groups, such as the South Essex African and Caribbean Association and Southend Pride.²⁵⁸ This was a rare opportunity to collaborate and engage with other (local) groups. Although TOMA was intergenerational, it does, however, mirror the prevailing demographics of both normative and alternative art school spaces, which tend to be predominantly white unless actively engaging otherwise, as in BBZ and Black Blossoms.



Figure 42. The Evaluative Contributor at Unit 13, the Royals Shopping Centre. The Evaluative Contributor, as a guest, is positioned as a TOMA administrator facilitated through the TOMA Timebanking arrangement and hosted by the Vigilant Observer.

²⁵⁸ The show ran from 16 July to 8 October 2022 at the TOMA Project Space.

Situating the Articulate Detective

By using the TOMA system of *Timebanking*, the Vigilant Observer secured extended periods of exploration for the Articulate Detective, adapting the Timebanking system for their mode of investigations. In exchange for several banked hours of desk duties, the Articulate Detective could access the space. I took advantage of the time the Evaluative Contributor had banked the previous day and selected three locations as spaces for activating through mapping exercises. These locations included the pillar, the front and side glass windows, all positioned within the downstairs Project Space, as well as the rooftop car park. The Articulate Detective had planned to use vinyl text, yellow tape, and framing devices as enacting tools. While I had some preconceived ideas about how to use these tools in response to the pillar and the windows, I was also prepared to improvise and respond directly to other areas of the Project Space. The Articulate Detective was first able to view the TOMA Project Space by using the enacting tool of *framing device* to move outside the window space into the thoroughfare of shoppers, looking from the outside in to investigate the space from the position of an onlooker. Lefebvre (2009) provides a fitting account of the windows as “a transitional object it has two senses, two orientations: from inside to outside, and from outside to”.²⁵⁹

Mapping Through Text

Taking the framing device allowed the Articulate Detective to respond through a directed mechanism of a slow process of looking, noting down what it was to view the window and exhibition spaces whilst moving, walking from north to south and then back again. Returning to the position of inside and outside the window space, noting the shifts in light, the constant movement of passers-by and their reflections within the glass. The Articulate Detective mapped the space through the application of vinyl text to the pillar and windows, imitating the language of the retail environment. The orange self-adhesive vinyl lettering replicated the language of shop window information, sales, opening hours, etc. The Articulate Detective recorded the space through performative mapping and diagramming as processes of drawings as methods to engage what it was to view the pillar through the side and front windows. The windows and pillar were employed as curatorial structures to apply actively and re-apply words that attempted to designate the liminal, disruptive, and fivefold space until the text started to emerge as slightly absurdist and

²⁵⁹ Lefebvre, H., 1991. *The production of space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson Smith. London: Wiley-Blackwell, p. 209.

fictitious; view <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223284> the Research Catalogue exposition.

The TOMA Project Space is removed from the hierarchical structure and the capitalist model of productivity to a model of exchange. In using the Vigilant Observer to gain entry for the other two protagonists, I staged my own internal exchange network within TOMA's Timebanking system. The interventions highlighted differing principles of time measurement, harnessing time, drawing on duration, and relocating time to other moments. This layering of positions, locating and relocating the roles enactment made it possible to maintain an ongoing interaction that extended beyond my two weekends spent in the Project Space. It had put me in a position to curate, exhibit, and run workshops, placing the three protagonist roles within an expansive dialogue with TOMA.

Mapping Through a Sound Walk

The Articulate Detective arranged and conducted a walk with TOMA 1 and 2 alumni to explore the void space, utilising a technique involving listing and mapping through sound to investigate the upper-level spaces. Up the metal staircase at the back of the downstairs space to the concrete chamber, our initial site of mapping. As a small group, we then undertook a close listening workshop. It was necessary to attune oneself to the environment and silence and become familiar with our internal soundscape as distractions. With heightened awareness, we started to isolate the sounds by focusing on individual frequencies, patterns, and timbres. By engaging the auditory landscape, we discerned the distinct sounds of Southend (seagulls, day-trippers) and a shopping centre (piped music and air circulation systems). An audio score, Void Space, exemplifies the soundscape; please visit <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223284> on the Research Catalogue.

TOMA Exhibition Spaces with the Articulate Detective

Away from the pre-defined spaces of Metal Culture, the TOMA Project Space evolved as a permeable space, one that encouraged different ways of working, and other ways of engaging with other TOMA artists and the public. Art exhibition as window display, art replacing visual merchandise, and artists enclosed and performing as an exhibition; it felt strange to be outside an art gallery, disrupting the space and disrupting the shopper's engagement with that space, causing friction in relation to how the space is used and by whom. Some of the public unfamiliar with art and art institutions may have found this

intervention difficult to comprehend, remaining oblivious to the actions or misinterpreting them as processes of cleaning and repair.

TOMA installed and curated several themed exhibitions within the Project Space featuring TOMA Education and TOMAssociate artists and, at other times, other artists invited through open calls. For each theme, there was an invitation to respond to a proposal, phrase, location, and, in the case of the 2021 Group Show, to bring one's own experience and stories.²⁶⁰ On one occasion, the Vigilant Observer was invited to exhibit work in the TOMA Project Space and, on a second occasion, at the former department store called Havens. The protagonists' reworking and performing in the Havens exhibition space are encountered at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223284> as a slideshow within the Research Catalogue.²⁶¹ These interventions facilitated my access to spaces, enabling participation with TOMA Education and TOMAssociates, observation of the development of TOMA artists, engagement in exhibition participation with the TOMA artists, and establishment of dialogue with space visitors.

The L-Space Void

The Articulate Detective explored the unusual architectural details within the Royal Project Space. Within this was the Void Space, the area between the activities of the Project Space and the murmuring undertone of shoppers downstairs, and the storage area for goods upstairs. The Articulate Detective separated the visual from the auditory, measured and recorded the space while undertaking a guided listening tour of the dark void, the darkness broken only by the slivers of daylight filtering through gaps left around a ventilation duct and the gap under the fire doors opening onto the car park roof. In the void, the Articulate Detective led the group to explore a space illuminated by the strip lighting and amplified sounds of air conditioners facing outside, the low continuous hum of some conductive system, the flapping ridges of the two air vents, the reverberation of

²⁶⁰ The show 'Tend to It' was an exhibition about making work in a crisis, responding to COVID-19 and the pandemic. It was a TOMA group show by the 2019–20 cohort, which ran from October 2021 to January 2022 at the Royals, Project Space.

²⁶¹ Work produced for the Project Space included the Articulate Detective's reproductions of found shopping lists. At Havens, the show 'Everyone Must Go' 2018 (a play on the closure of the store and phrase *Everything Must Go*) included a sound piece, 'Art Teachers', co-produced with the Founder, was presented. Havens had been a family-owned retailer, originally selling tableware in 1901, then later becoming a department store.

distant footsteps on the stained concrete floor, the breeze blocks holding stale air, the gurgling of the cistern in the partially walled toilet, and the rustling of the metal roofing materials echoing throughout the space. Air, air, air. Each part of the void was given attention for its unique qualities, volume, and duration. Attentive immersive listening and analysis, to understand the internal sonic rhythm of a space. Then an immensity of light, as the fire door was opened.

The group followed the Articulate Detective out across the rooftop, single file, following the contours of the car park and hemmed in by a yellow safety barrier. Down the painted green ramp toward Church Road.

An audio score of Void Space can be heard on the Research Catalogue at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223284>.

Operating Outside Any Pattern

The TOMA Way: A System of Tactics

From a place of embodied enacting, the polyfocal lens offered me a central experience and viewing that other approaches, such as the TOMA interviews, would not. I was able to see the developments of TOMA from the education programme at Metal Culture, Chalkwell Hall, to the expansive and ambitious schedule of TOMA at the Royals that included the public programme, exhibition schedule, workshops and reading groups in addition to the TOMA education programme. I was able to observe the wider context of establishing links with other arts organisations in Southend-on-Sea, such as Focal Point Gallery, where TOMA showed work on the big screen, TOMA mid-year and end-of-year shows at the Beecroft Gallery and Café Twenty-One, workshops at The Old Waterworks and collaborations with other regional alternative art schools. The polyfocal perspective offered a more comprehensive understanding of the shifting environment, culture, and social dynamics within which TOMA operates. I had participated within a highly considered organisational structure, that had seen TOMA evolve and embedded within the fabric of Southend-on-Sea. More importantly the polyfocal revealed the systems necessary for building resilience and resistance, and the unique tools iteratively developed by TOMA essential for TOMA to maintain autonomy. Yet the alternative art

schools are often operating at the margins of funding, and economically compromised. Often alternative art schools are presented with just two options to be sustainable: either be absorbed into and adopt the mainstream systems of the normative institution or do the work of community engagement and social adhesion.²⁶² TOMA resisted both options, choosing instead to develop and reconfigure each year in response to the TOMA participants and changing spatial circumstances.

Through the formation of its organisational structure, TOMA has emerged to challenge existing neoliberal trends within art education. The network that TOMA has created is significant. It operates with other alternative art schools collectively yet maintains a distinctive discourse around alternative education, pedagogy, and exhibition-making. I observed how TOMA was able to delink and disconnect from the normative institution, whether that be a funding body, another art platform, or a shopping centre, and reconnect with institutional systems in other ways. I identified how TOMA sought to build an autonomous organisational framework through a rigorous critique and methodology, develop a contemporary pedagogy and then work with this towards self-actualisation. TOMA can move location, re-focus a practice, make collaborative decisions, and implement these with great speed. TOMA renders the space of sharing, of the commons, so completely. Architect and activist Stavros Stavrides (2016) suggests that,

*Worlds of commoning are not simply worlds of shared beliefs and habits but are strongly connected to ways of sharing that open the circle of belonging and develop forms of active participation in the shaping of the rules that sustain them. Worlds of commoning are worlds in movement.*²⁶³

Alternative art schools embody many different forms and do not have the perceived stability of the normative institution; this is not necessarily a weakness because that stability can also lead to stasis and inflexibility. TOMA is a pocket of resistance and a unique moment of learning in the context of mass international education models in the arts. The quote from Stavrides above expresses the apparent contradictory open circle structures that I sketched out in the diagram Figure 43. These open circles illustrate the system of tactics that TOMA make manifest.

²⁶² One such example, perhaps, is Open School East (OSE). Following its move from Hackney, London to Margate, OSE became a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) in 2018 with funding from Arts Council England (ACE). This has changed the remit of OSE from being “a free study programme for 12 emerging artists” to now having to meet the NPO requirements “to reach communities that currently have little cultural provision”. Although it had previously received public funding from the Barbican through its community engagement education programme, there is now a more direct requirement for accountability to ACE.

²⁶³ Stavrides, S., 2016. *Commoning*, London: Zed Books, p. 32.

In Figure 43, the alternative art schools largely sit outside the N-Space of the institution. Two notable exceptions are firstly, Para-Site School discussed in Chapter 2, which actively works from within a normative spatiality and secondly, Alt MFA, which uses the normative institutional resource of a London art school to support its activities. Yet, how many can claim to be outside any normative pattern? The positioning of alternative art schools given within the diagram is relative to the collectivised community of the alternative art schools and their ability to come together to form new, albeit temporary, educational networks as a sharing economy. Other alternative art schools have structured themselves along traditional studio disciplines; these include Turps, Conditions, and TKE studios in Margate. Each has a pattern or organisational schematic, that would be recognisable to many normative art school institutions.

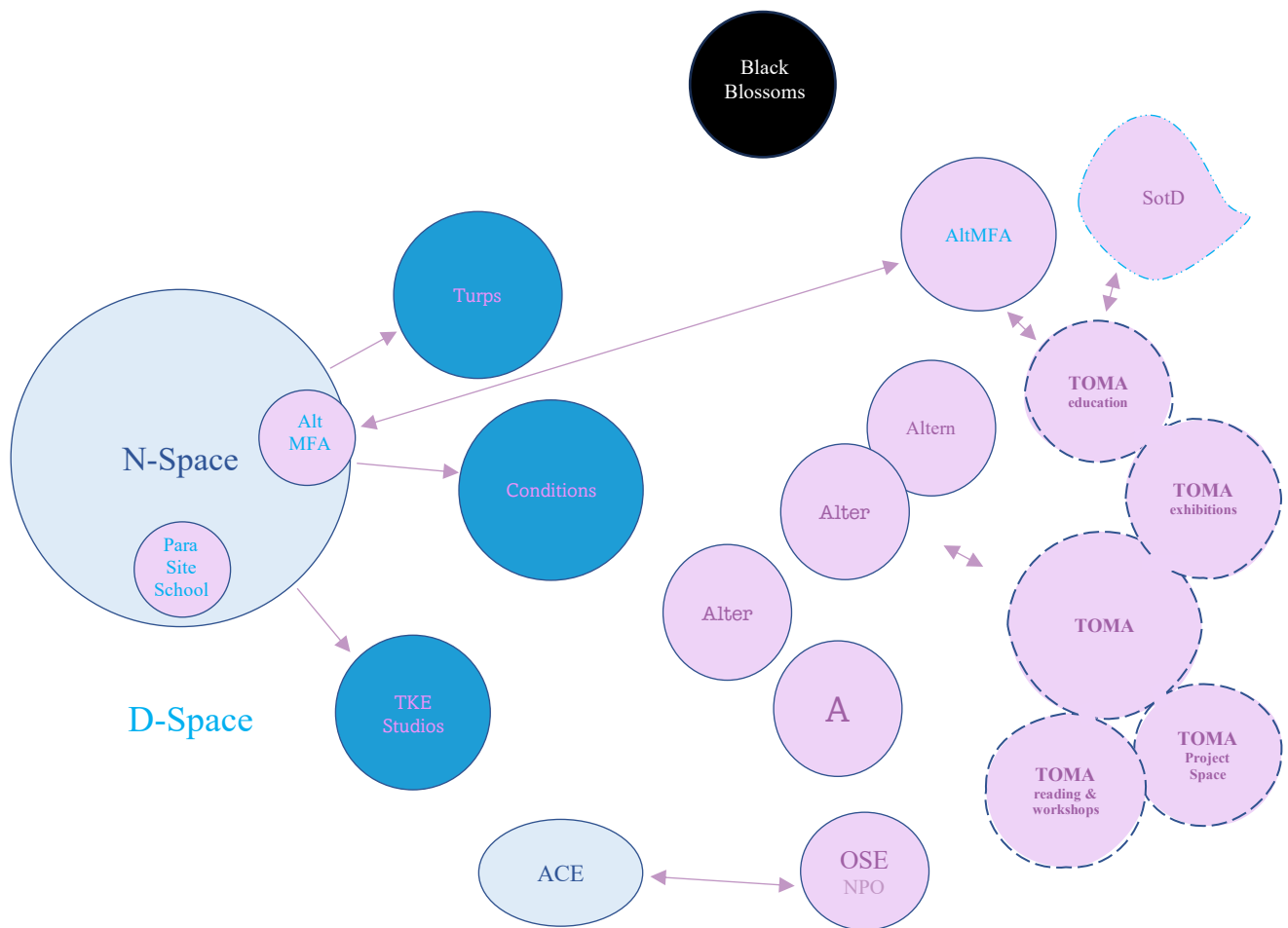


Figure 43. Diagram of the TOMA archipelago. This diagram visualises a TOMA Collective and the archipelago of TOMA, an intentional network cluster of alternative forms through different modes of connectivity, augmenting a local network into a regional one and building a system of tactics. This diagram is a development of the Genogram, an initial sketch that needs further consideration outside the PhD.²⁶⁴

²⁶⁴ As a key to the acronyms: ACE (Arts Council England), OSE (Open School East), SotD (School of the Damned), and TKE Studios (Tracey Karima Emin Studios). The A, Alter and Altern show other positions that alternative art schools can take, as adjacent to or overlapping.

Open School East is shown as an alternative that is bounded by its position as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) and its relative interdependence on Art Council England funding.²⁶⁵ They diverge significantly from alternative art schools such as Black Blossoms, which espouses a collective refusal to engage with the Euro-centric systems, and School of the Damned (SotD), which defies a fixed state, instead developing physical proximity and interplay with other art spaces. Each element of TOMA is shown as an amorphous circle indicating the capacity to alter physical scale to adapt, expand, integrate, or join with some other learning or exhibiting space.²⁶⁶ TOMA actively works to maintain its distance from the N-Space of the Institution, working against the inherent systems, bureaucracies, and languages. As a result, TOMA operates with rigorous intelligence, carefully plotting its co-ordinates of time, scalability, care, and collaborations in relation to Southend-on-Sea and South Essex. Yet TOMA does not settle on a situation; instead, its un-fixity allows for strategic connections and semi-formal relationships. I encountered with TOMA the significance of creating a shared meaning within the alternative art school, emerging through collective activities such as walks, reciprocal alternative art school visits, exhibition exchanges, reading groups, cooking workshops, and joint residencies. Whilst not unique in terms of pedagogical practices it was the thoughtfulness in implementation that played a significant role in cultivating a sense of community, facilitating mutual understanding, and promoting a collaborative ethos among TOMA and other artists. TOMA unfolded the boundaries and agency of its operations by extending collaborations to work with museums and book publishers and disrupting archives, libraries, and special collections, creating new kinds of spaces for TOMA educational practices.

Expanding resources in this way and coming together with other alternative art schools when needed for mutual support and cooperation is a system of tactics, a considered and deliberate modality from which to organise. Building in these forms are acts of resistance and resilience, essential to the alternative as a way to maintain autonomy.

²⁶⁵ A National Portfolio Organisation is currently a group of nearly a thousand arts and cultural organisations that get regular funding from Arts Council England for a designated number of years. This status comes with mandatory accountability as required through the Arts Council England (ACE) South-East Relationship Framework.

²⁶⁶ TOMA's numerous threads spread outward, linking artists, galleries, workshops, artists' studios, publishers, curators, and educators within South Essex. TOMA orbits the Old Waterworks, Metal Culture, Havens', the Beecroft Art Gallery, Pluto Press, Café Twenty-One and Focal Point Gallery.

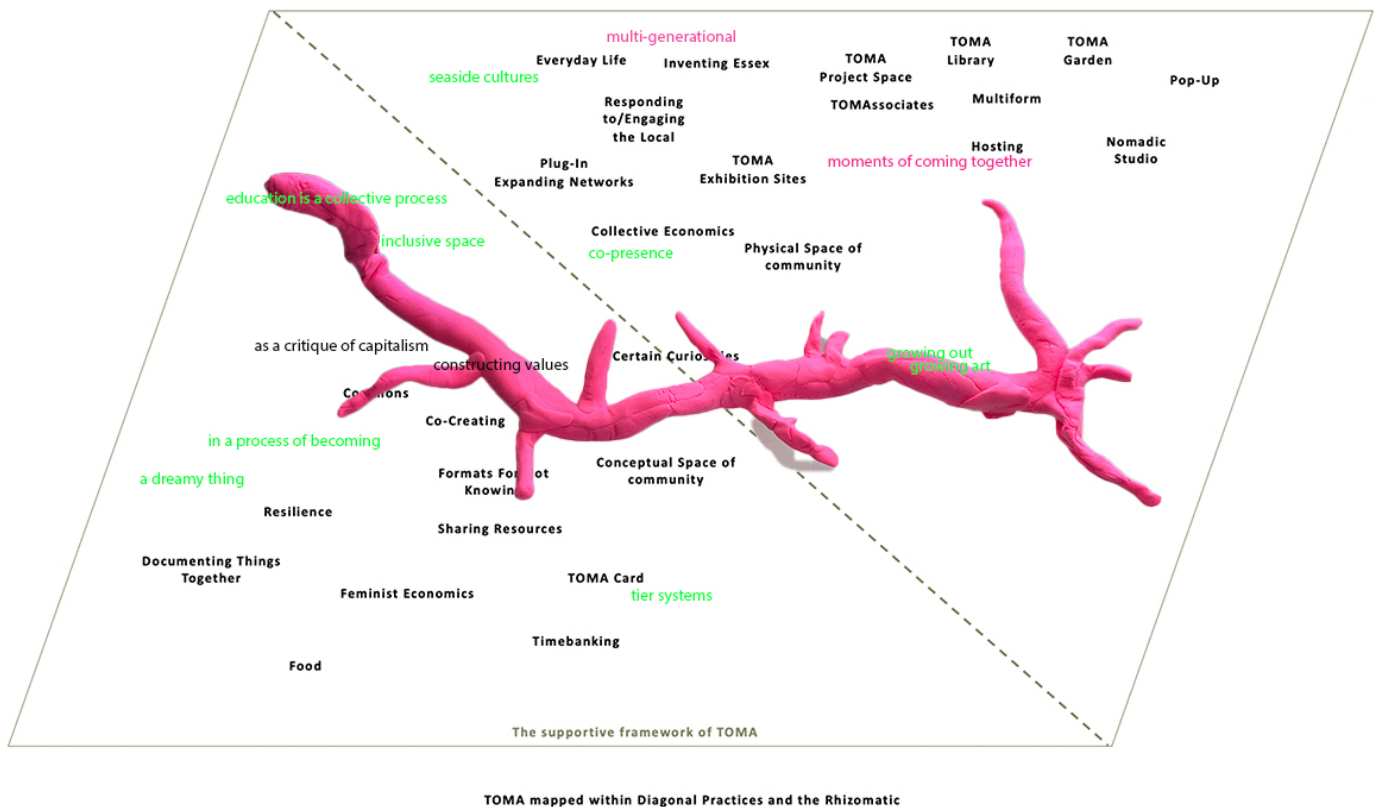


Figure 44. Rhizomatic Map, testing the capacity of the diagrammatic.
TOMA is mapped within the framework of Diagonal Practices.

TOMA mapped within D\P

The rhizomatic map Figure 44 is part of the Diagonal Practices Toolkit and conceptually references the diagonal, the space of cutting fabric on the bias at forty-five degrees across the grain line of the horizontal weft and vertical warp.²⁶⁷ Taking up this diagonal orientation as a concept calls for a slower ontology and one that accommodates an expanded geometrical space. Presented as a spatial proposition of extending space or simply making something more, cutting on the bias allows for the insertion of other knowledge, positionalities, and systems of resilience. It is a framework and a system of care and, as such, accommodates the practices and orientation that I found underpinned the TOMA way. Activating Diagonal Practices as a strategy precipitates considering the integration of these disruptive spatialities and practices, treating them not merely as outcomes but as integral elements shaping the entire process. It is not just the pedagogical practices or spaces of TOMA that are communicated in Figure 44. but the

²⁶⁷ Cutting fabric diagonally is a technique used in clothing construction and pattern cutting. Cutting across the bias or grain of the fabric adds versatility, stretch, and aesthetic interest to garments. It requires careful attention and proper handling to ensure the desired results.

rhizomatic map imparts the fundamental ethos and modes of care. It is also an invitation to consider art pedagogies within the context of traversing institutional bias and occupying institutional space; as Sara Ahmed (2018) states, “By inhabiting spaces in the same way, we fit in, fitting into the shape eases the passage”.²⁶⁸

As a toolkit for translating and interpreting the many facets of art education, I have tested it with individuals outside of the field of art education. I was invited to initiate a workshop for New Contemporaries, encouraging the group to reflect on their 75-year history and their current position within a challenging financial and structural environment. Through the workshop structures outlined below, we explored how they wish to position or reposition themselves, platform artists, and define whom they support and in what ways. The workshop began with reconfiguring the room to create close seating and collaboration, followed by the application of the D\P Toolkit. Firstly, the Articulative Detective’s performative analogue PowerPoint presentation introduces propositions and invitations for discussion (see Figure 45 below), followed by the use of the Evaluative Contributors’ Feedback Cards to explore key themes.

²⁶⁸ Ahmed, S. 2018. *Uses of use – diversity, utility and the university* [online]. [Lecture to CRASSH, University of Cambridge, Impact Lecture Series]. Lent Term 5 March, CRASSH Cambridge. Available via: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=avKJ2w1mhng&t=6s> [Accessed 11 August 2023]. Online lecture in 2018 at the Centre for Research in the Arts and Social Sciences and Humanities, Cambridge.

Welcome, everyone is welcome...gathering under the Palava tree
At the heart of this exploration is my interest in the idea of 'holding the spaces' of the [institution] {to account} spaces that are often loaded with systems and structures that exist outside of, or even against, our personal experiences. These spaces can challenge our sense of self, yet they also offer opportunities to reflect, resist, and reimagine.

We will consider how we create:

1. Spaces of dreaming, resilience, and resistance: places where new ways of thinking and being can flourish.
2. Nourishing, collective democracies that extend beyond moments, spaces where intersectional knowledges, experiences, and voices are not only welcomed but celebrated.
3. Tools for critical engagement; bringing ways [to work with the embodied, personal, and shared knowledges] into spaces.

Holding>hold> hold>held

Select and prepare the space

- Writing implements, exercise mats, paper doilies and tablecloths, coloured masking tape and protagonist feedback cards should be available.
- Arrange the staging with a floor or table and seating for all participants to work comfortably.

Invitation 1: Feedback loop

- Participants are invited to consider and write down what they feel is missing or what can be removed from the organisation or context under consideration.

Invitation 2: Feedback

- Form pairs or groups of three and combine individual considerations into a proposed change(s).

Invitation 3: A dream mapping

- As a dream propose how these changes might be activated.

Invitation 4: A fabulated mapping

- Fabricate a map to present your proposed changes. This could involve visual aids, sound, storytelling, embodied/ performative elements, or other sharing methods.

Invitation 5: Revealing

- Each smaller group presents their changes and ideas to the larger group. Opening the space for listening, asking, encouraging an exchange of insights and perspectives, noting these onto the tablecloth. Considerations on this way of working.

Figure 45: Evaluative Contributor's guidelines activated by the Articulate Detective in the first convening workshop.

Conforming

My overarching PhD project is, of course, about not ‘fitting in’ and not being complacent within the institution. The diagonal offers a way of confronting institutional bias; cutting across the institutional space and applying the diagonal enables a stretching, a softening, political agency of working within systems; there is a softness, a soft resistance within this confrontational gesture; this softening can be articulated.

By conceptualising the Diagonal Practices Toolkit as a way of thinking, educators and art practitioners are encouraged to envision and implement disruptive practices seamlessly throughout the educational journey. Diagonal Practices can be considered at an institutional level and be implemented in a single activity or workshop. This approach envisions a purposeful intervention where disruptive spatialities and practices are incorporated as teaching tools and ingrained in the educational experience’s very fabric. This application prompts an adjustment in attitude, evolving a continuous exploration of innovative spatial and practice-based strategies. Constructing and applying the Diagonal Practices toolkit brings an attentive tendency, diverging from the conventional monocular lens and inviting different insights. As with the construction of the Genograms, this brings a layered approach. It does not merely describe or report differences. Still, it reveals the subtleties within elements such as participation, spatiality, hierarchy, and the non-hierarchical whilst allowing room for the concept of *smuggling*, as discussed throughout this study.

Étienne Wenger (2000) suggests that “a community of practice...is at once both a community and an economy of meaning”, suggesting that meaning is to be collaboratively determined by the participants.²⁶⁹ Wenger asks, “What if we adopted a different perspective, one that placed learning in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world?” This position is very much one that TOMA encourages. Each artist participant is placed centrally within TOMA to meet the artist’s pedagogical and spatial requirements. I noted the relationship between art and non-art time and space, making time and space for TOMA artists and their lives. The alternative art school and, more specifically, TOMA, become networked with not just other alternative educational models but with alternative art systems and cultural spaces more widely. That they grow as nodal extensions whether temporary or more substantial, that resources of experiences, skills, technologies and spaces are shared. Working over an extended period

²⁶⁹ Wenger, É., 2000. *Communities of practice: learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 209.

with and in TOMA has provided me with a comprehensive understanding of the adaptable educational spaces that alternative art schools can occupy, resulting in highly contrasting positions and distinct spatial identities of each alternative art school. Through the three protagonist roles, I have observed the agency that artist participants have within their own learning spaces, revealing how alternative art schools significantly shift and build their pedagogies from their artist participants. My longitudinal positioning in TOMA's community, adopting the polyfocal vantage points, has provided insights into the peer networking group of TOMA Associates and the flexibility of TOMA in extending its duration and pedagogical form in moving from a 12-month to 18-month education programme. Through critical questioning and the deep mapping of TOMA, I have revealed how an alternative art school functions, the collective processes that are applied and how alternative pedagogies are formed, taken from different sources, and informed by different urgencies than the institutional N-Space. The research has shown the alternative art schools as distinctive and not homogenous, that their identities are actively developed as they look to operate in different ways, outside of the N-Space. There are, of course, a small number that replicate many of the studio-based approaches found within the institution. Yet, most have attempted to evolve spaces that are committed to collective and conscious development. However, amongst the alternative art schools, TOMA is unique in that the Founder has iteratively evolved 'the TOMA way' of doing things within the nomenclature of alternative art schools. The Founder has done this through coordinated organisational development that considers the structural conditions of being an artist, addressing the financial and caregiving responsibilities and time and through a consistent exchange with the participants and alumni of TOMA education.

The next and concluding chapter, Chapter 5, articulates my contributions and draws together conclusions from the overarching toolkit of Diagonal Practices. I provide a summary of emerging results and contemplations on my position of simultaneously being both outside and inside the research. I then reflect on the forms of educational spaces as articulated in my five spatialities and the pedagogies that are activated therein. Through the lens of the polyfocal, I consider the implications of my findings for the wider discourses surrounding art education and its transformative potential. In synthesising my insights, I invite others to consider the conscious and collective imperatives required to navigate the problematics of contemporary artistic pedagogy to conceive (of) alternative futures for learning communities.

Chapter 5

Contribution and Conclusions

The Enquiry and Research Journey

This PhD has taken as the focus of its investigation the alternative art school and the spaces and forms of participation to locate the structures that define the edges of the Alternative Art School and determine what makes the *alternative*. The extended enquiry has enabled a deep mapping of Alternative Art Schools as a new way of sharing and allows for mapping to be extended beyond a visual representation to an embodied research tool.

The research journey, spanning seven years (2016–2024), has undergone a transformative evolution. In Part 1: *Defining*, I offered distinct contributions through listing, mapping, and countermapping of alternative art schools' locations, durations, and presences within a global landscape. This stage included the development of the revised chronologies through interventions within Anton Vidokle's list and the four Genograms. Through these modes of deep mapping, various spaces of art education became visible, leading to the conceptualisation of five spatialities: Normative the institutional N-Space, Liminal temporary L-Space, Disruptive provoking the institutional D-Space, Fivefold multiple-use location of the F-Space, and the Virtual online V-Space. This led to a realisation of the necessity to inhabit and actively scrutinise each of these locations; subsequently, the focus shifted in Part 2: *Enacting* towards a more embodied and performative exploration of alternative art schools. This adjustment manifested an experiential and iterative relationship to the spatial through the three protagonist roles of the invited guest Vigilant Observer, the active participant interventionist Articulate Detective, and the reflective documenting persona of the Evaluative Contributor. These embodied protagonist roles allowed the research subject and responses to become material, physical and conscious rather than just theoretical and intellectual.

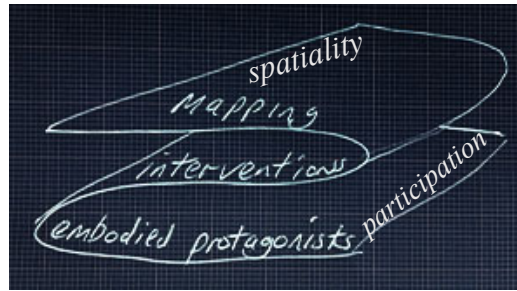


Figure 46. Sketch depicting the evolution of the research trajectory. The visual of the folded paper indicates the development, from mapping to interventions to embodied protagonists, yet shows that each is folded back into the other, with spatiality and participation consistent throughout.

The uniqueness of the PhD lies in its dual emphasis on spatiality and participation as a focus for investigation, bringing an original enquiry. Figure 46 shows the three distinct phases, indicating how each phase is interconnected, with overlaps and reciprocal influences. It is important to emphasise that this research has been intentionally dynamic; it has deliberately avoided adopting a single orientation of centring characterised by petrification, fixity, or stasis. This decentring approach mirrors the adaptable and fluid characteristics inherent in the case studies of alternative art schools.

I have been aware of how a fixed hegemony can uphold the existing status quo. Therefore, within the alternative art school and, by extension, the PhD research, new spaces with other kinds of value systems are constructed, and different modes of interaction outside of the economy are conceived, emphasising a commitment to a methodology that exists beyond conventional capitalist conceptions of labour. This highlights the potential for art pedagogy, both in a general sense and within specific contexts, to provide a space conducive to collaborative ideas, exploration, and speculation. The spaces of the alternative art school have emerged as resilient spaces, constructed and developed internally. They adapt and respond collectively and effectively to financial challenges and the spatial disruptions of unfixity whilst ensuring the continuity of access to art pedagogy. The alternative art schools build a sense of community from within, and this unfolds outwards, extending resources to those who wish to access them.

Outline of Contributions

Through processes of assembling, layering, intervening and a unique form of embodied cartography, this PhD claims three significant contributions; each one defines the edges of the Alternative Art School and determines what makes the *alternative* in art pedagogy. In summary, these are:

- **Contribution 1: Deep Mapping of Alternative Art Schools**

An extensive deep mapping and diagramming of the Alternative Art School as a topology, comprising a redacting listing and four Genograms.

- **Contribution 2: TOMA and Participatory Voices**

An in-depth longitudinal examination of an Alternative Art School, TOMA, from inception in 2016 to 2023. Comprising an archive, interviews, and enacting the three protagonist roles, with an original focus on spatiality and participation.

- **Contribution 3: The Diagonal Practices Toolkit**

A unique methodological contribution is presented as a toolkit which enables a specific focus on spatiality and participation within the Alternative Art School. The toolkit helps translate theory and thinking into practice, encouraging research paradigms outside of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Findings from the Contributions

Contribution 1: Deep Mapping of Alternative Art Schools

This empirical research presents a significant development and expansion of previous models that have attempted to map this field of practice. Both the listing and the Genograms invite others to extend the mapping, to interact and intervene, to speculate what could be there and to create new narratives.

As a comprehensive mapping of Alternative Art Schools within the forms of listing, spatial diagrammatic and Genograms add empirical value to advancing the field's understanding, offering accessible and informative documentation. This field has historically received limited attention; however, it is poised to attract increased scholarly interest in the near future. My multiple processes of mapping and diagramming speak to many things: building connections, timeframes, histories, evolutions, disciplines, shifting politics, geographies, nomenclatures, proposals, and ruptures. This form of extensive multi-layered social, historical, and graphical narrative has not been done before. The deep mapping initiates an engagement with these 'things', yet there is an invitation to draw

inward to look in detail at the models presented within the listing space, the Genograms and the five spatialities. All these areas require further research.

This mapping contribution offered a comprehensive overview of the spatial distribution and developmental trajectories of alternative art schools, shedding light on their historical evolution. However, it also revealed gaps in existing narratives, which prompted further investigation. Having started with an existing list, namely Anton Vidokle's (2006) *An Incomplete Chronology of Experimental Art Schools* and taking two tools from the toolkit of intervention and redaction, I reorientated the historical. Operating these two tools enabled me to disrupt existing normative structures of the alphabetical and chronological and reconstruct and reformulate to build a new archive. The interventions in Anton Vidokle's list are presented as a strategy for reconceiving the historical art school archive. As an example, the selection and positioning of Highlander Folk School and Àsikò Art School was a mode of mapping or counter-mapping, deploying fabulation to include past and future-time thinking; the listing emphasised the importance of the established geographical location of Highlander in Tennessee and the nomadic principles which are the premise of Àsikò. My system of listing brings attention to what is being overlooked and why this may be the case. Here, I acknowledged and built connections between two alternative pedagogical models that are located in different timeframes and geographical registers. Yet both are underpinned by critical methodologies formed through grassroots workshops that expand historical legacies. When applying the listing tools, there is the possibility to represent history as not a fixed event but a place that moves in time and makes new associations. This system of redacting and intervening, of making and then finding connections, is essential when forms and histories of art education are not being preserved or recorded, get overlooked and absorbed into the mechanisms of the institution. Engaging with Vidokle's list in this way is a critique of Vidokle's list, revealing what is not there but should be there. Others are invited to activate this intervening and redacting to institute new histories and critical associations.

There were limitations in that this chronological mapping did not encompass the spatial aspects I considered within the research. This led me to develop five spatialities, contributing another resource to this emerging educational space mapping. The five spatialities offer a valuable framework for understanding and contextualising alternative art education's different spatial dimensions. Scholars and educators are invited to use this spatial structuring as a provocation for reimagining art education. By exploring how the

five spatialities shape the landscape, we can generate innovative conversations and uncover new forms for artistic learning.

In 2016 I started the process of gathering diverse sources and first-hand primary research to undertake an expansive and extensive deep mapping of Alternative Art Schools and influential art pedagogies from 1900–2023. I realised there was a gap in the depiction of art school; I sought to establish a diagrammatic that would reveal provenance, a relationship to experimental education and show alternative art schools' geographies and duration. Very much aware I was taking a global view from a Western perspective and thus iteratively worked to locate alternative art schools outside the Western canon and those with a transformative focus. The outcome of this process was the development of the Genogram. The four Genograms offer a new examination of alternative art schools; they relate to each other historically and reveal developments in relation to significant political and social moments. Most notably, a proliferation of experimental models can be viewed after the economic crash of 2008. The Genograms show configurations closest to an extended learning experience in art and thus similar in level to a master's qualification, through to short-lived experimental pedagogies. This system of mapping reveals geographical relationalities and distinguishes between nomadic, peer-led, self-organised, artist-initiated, institution-supported, and those models with a foundational commitment to social justice or transformative principles. This differentiation is crucial as it highlights the unique factors shaping alternative education, distinct from institutional practices.

Specifically found within the four Genograms is a historical overview of the art schools that have been influential in the development of TOMA, notably Byam Shaw, which sits alongside experimental educational models outside and within the institution, and alternative art schools that have emerged during the time of this study.²⁷⁰ The mapping exercise was instrumental in situating TOMA within the broader landscape, placing TOMA within the canon is a previously unexplored context.

Deep mapping performs in two ways: first, it enacts the function of mapping of presenting and revealing, and second, it is a mapping that others can add to. Each deep mapping procedure of listing, Genograms, and Five Spatialities carries comments and reflections on normative institutions with the aim of cultivating awareness and attentiveness, facilitating a paradigm shift in understanding the normative. This shift is

²⁷⁰ Byam Shaw was an independent art school in north London. After running into financial difficulties, it was incorporated into the newly formed University of the Arts London in 2003, becoming a satellite campus of Central Saint Martins. The Founder and I had been at Byam Shaw and experienced the significant impact that occurred during this merger.

essential for recognising the potential existence of diverse art educational spaces beyond conventional and increasingly homogenised singular approaches within art institutions.

Contribution 2: TOMA and Participatory Voices

This contribution presents a unique view from inside the alternative art school TOMA, offering the first longitudinal study of an alternative art school and one that focuses on spatiality and participation. My documentation and analysis of TOMA's spatial dynamics are systematically conducted through artistic research methodologies. By employing three protagonist roles, I introduce experimental pedagogies broadly before moving to a specific focus on TOMA. Additionally, this is one of the first studies to analyse those on an alternative art programme equivalent to a master's level and their perceptions, motivations, and experiences over an extended period; I have not found others.²⁷¹ These immersive approaches reveal TOMA's unique ethos and supportive systems, offering valuable insights for those interested in establishing their own experimental schools.

The development of the three protagonist roles as an interventionist methodology enabled my association with TOMA beyond that of the observer to observer/participant. Thus, I have shown how research can be embedded within the subject and how TOMA becomes a site of experiments and space for my interruptive pedagogical enquiry. This immersive approach allowed me to physically inhabit the spaces where TOMA operated, providing first-hand experience of how its diverse environments, from co-inhabiting at Metal Culture to a more stable and expansive space at the Royals Shopping Centre, shaped the education programme. Without conducting an immersive extended study, it would have been difficult to observe the comparative shifts and understand how TOMA's education programme was influenced by its physical environment and how inhabiting a space supports a different level of ambition. Having one's own site, even in a 'meanwhile space', allowed autonomy and a distinctive identity to be fashioned, leading to an expansive and ambitious artist's programme beyond education. This research has contributed to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of educational spaces and their

²⁷¹ I consulted with Susannah Haslam and Sarah Scarsbrook to avoid replicating their methodologies and ensure a distinctiveness within my study. Haslam, S., 2018. *After the Educational Turn—Alternatives to the alternative art school*. PhD thesis, Royal College of Art, provides in-depth case studies on alternative education but maintains a focus on models of artist and peer-led education, and organisational frameworks rather than spatialities or participation. Whilst Scarsbrook, S., 2021. *Experiences and Perspectives of Fine Art Education and Professional Pedagogies in London Art Schools from 1986 to 2016*. PhD thesis, Birkbeck, University of London, is a qualitative PhD that examines the relationship between artists' professional identity and their undergraduate experience of art school.

influence on artistic practices, specifically the role of TOMA in public spaces and engagement with the wider community and art practitioners.

Through the voices of TOMA 1 (2016) and TOMA 2 (2017) participants, this study employs interviews to explore their journey and motivation in joining an art school. The interviews present a unique record and chronicle of pivotal points in the emergence of a UK-based alternative art school. Gathering participants' voices is significant for others in setting up an alternative art school. It reveals discernible insights into the increasing demand for community engagement, collaborative modes of working, mutual support and a focus on regional considerations when shaping contemporary art practices. This evolving landscape is shown in my discussions of collective organisation and systems of reciprocity such as *Timebanking*. Responses from my questionnaire reveal shifts in societal dynamics among artists and critique traditional funding models, particularly for UK students. The emphasis on collaborative art-making, non-hierarchical language, and the establishment of structures within TOMA underscores the demand for a more progressive and inclusive approach to art education, which alternative art schools currently support. While the insights are specific to TOMA, the repository of voices is useful to researchers as a collective pool of research questions and answers that can be built upon and refined by the research community. It exemplifies a study utilising a phenomenographical qualitative approach, from which themes or *nodes of meaning* have been identified and analysed.

A supplementary contribution is a collection of TOMA materials compiled during the time of the PhD and presented as an archive in Box T and the Research Catalogue exposition <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2521939>. This provides a novel visual record mapping the evolution of TOMA spaces, democratic organisational systems, and embeddedness within South Essex through the assembled documentation of Open Calls, end-of-year exhibition catalogues, and TOMA artefacts. The collection forms the first archive of TOMA and provides unique insights into identity, organisation, community building, societal and collaborative values.

Overall, these ephemeral materials contribute to a broader understanding of TOMA's public image, community involvement, and the various spaces it has operated within. The TOMA research also contributes to TOMA's visibility beyond the moments of participation and ensures TOMA is not forgotten.²⁷²

²⁷² The issue with many alternative art schools is that they are invisible. This, of course, is both an advantage and a disadvantage. Remaining invisible allows their continued disrupter status by operating under the radar and avoiding scrutiny. On the other hand, being visible would enable acknowledgement, recognition, and, in the case of TOMA, potential financial stability.

Contribution 3: The Diagonal Practices Toolkit

The third contribution is a unique methodological approach presented in the form of a toolkit that enables a specific focus on spatiality and participation within the Alternative Art School. The toolkit facilitates performative research by offering practical guidance and a tested and adaptable collection of approaches, methods and resources to use. The overarching conceptual methodology known as Diagonal Practices (D\P) serves as the guiding approach for the operation of the three protagonist roles. It forms the theoretical basis for the activation of any tools within the toolkit. Instigated through performative modes, the toolkit applies a novel method of agnostic intervention as a critique of care to locate the edges of Alternative Art Schools and alternative pedagogies. The toolkit serves as a valuable resource for art educators and practitioners seeking to comprehend and engage with the dynamics of artistic research or alternative art education. Additionally, its elements can be utilised by individuals interested in establishing alternative art schools or for those interested in exploring, researching, or developing alternative approaches within the N-Space.

Within the toolkit are a variety of artistic techniques, resources, and instruments that encourage intervening as a form of knowledge-making; these include:

- An overarching methodological position of the Diagonal Practices (D\P) framework
- A conceptual framework of The Five Spatialities
- A unique triocular viewing provided by the three protagonists' roles
- Gyroscopic Device (selection tool)
- Triangular Prism (nameplate)
- Viewfinder
- A Glossary (including vinyl text provocations)
- Mouthpieces
- A Lecture in Reverse
- Silent Questions
- Scholé Poem

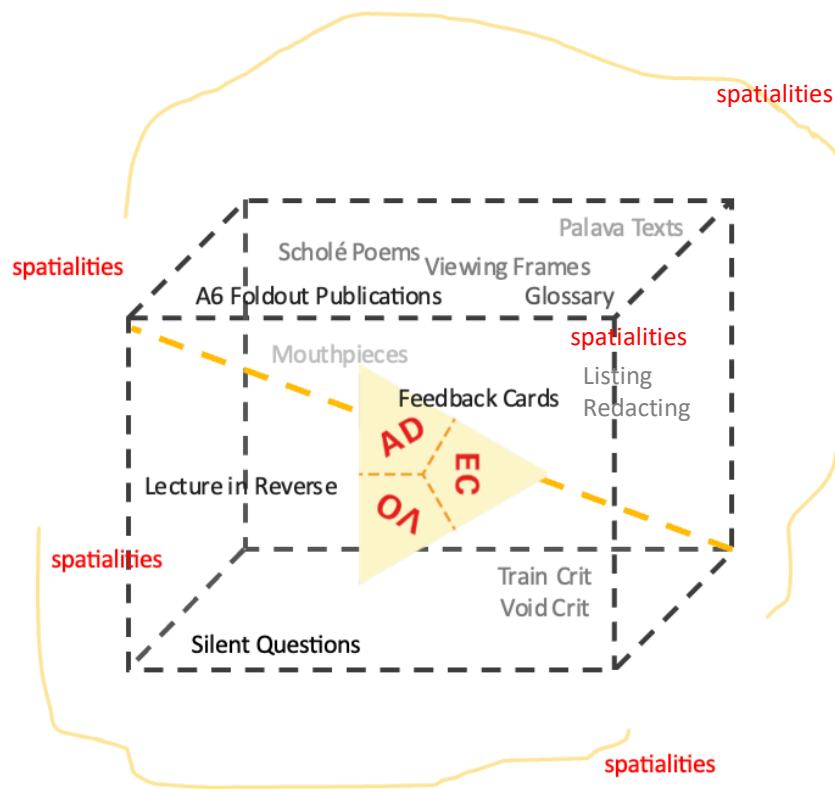


Figure 47. Diagrammatic representation of the Diagonal Practices Toolkit.

The Toolkit is significant as it alters the researcher's approach to engaging with the research topic, evolving a disruptive or agonistic stance from a position within. The user is encouraged to adopt one of the three protagonist roles and utilise tools from the toolkit to trouble a space within a given situation. Each tool is deliberately placed to encourage collective thinking, making and disruption. If individual artists use the tools, there remains collaboration, an interaction between the artist and one of the three protagonist roles.

Implementation and Potential of the Toolkit

Overall, the research has explored alternative approaches to art education, examined specific case studies, particularly through the lens of TOMA and the broader landscape of alternative art schools, and offered practical tools and insights for educators and practitioners in the field of art pedagogy and alternative art education. Underlying this research is a personal commitment to resuscitating the art school by reinstating its experimental and critical essence to engage with contemporary social issues no matter how daunting these currently are, to consider activism as a form of protest or critique, to explore ideas and concepts collaboratively and democratically, to build diversity, culture,

society and critical thinking from within the art school, to be attentive and establish resilience in order to operate within not just the present but also future challenges. The research has been about possibilities of transformation, identifying and addressing what is missing, and being courageous and speculative.

Throughout the PhD are tangible applications, a recontextualisation and reframing of artistic pedagogy for future practitioners and scholars. Others have already utilised the Diagonal Practices Toolkit to reimagine spatialities, indicating its applicability and potential impact beyond this study. The toolkit has been applied within ZHdK Dance, Zürich, Switzerland, bringing collective responsiveness through improvised thinking into choreography. The Glossary is embedded within the Rose Choreographic School, London, as actions for translation, and part of the Genograms and rhizomatic framework will be published in an upcoming TOMA Arts Council-funded publication, *How to Set up an Art School*. Further institutional policy implications can be taken from my research and considered more broadly within art education.

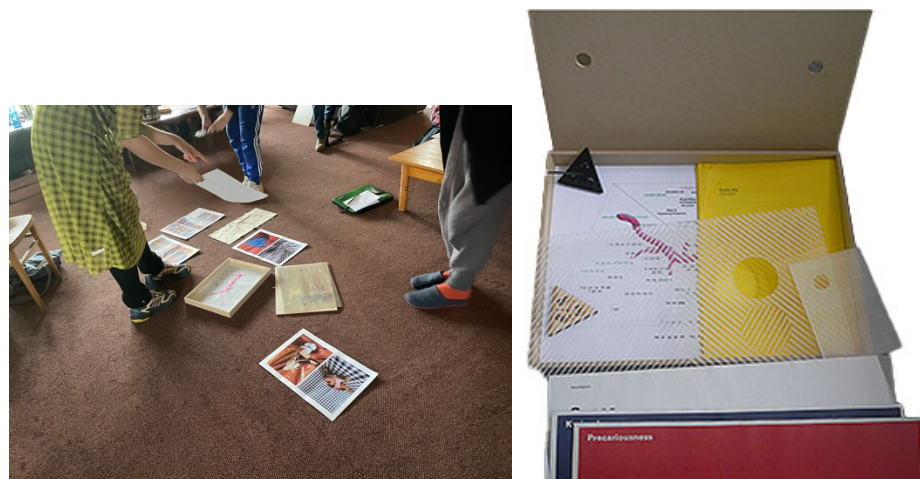


Figure 48. Diagonal Practices Toolkit. Left is the toolkit used at a TOMA succession workshop, and right is the complete Diagonal Practices Toolkit.²⁷³

Conclusions: Desire Lines and Boundaries

The originality of this investigation lies in its methodological innovation, which offers a new approach to research. Through the PhD process, I have adopted activist positions to uncover the defining characteristics of alternative art schools. This has involved applying innovative methods, including performative interventions rooted in theories by Brad

²⁷³ The succession workshop in January 2024 focused on planning for the following stages of TOMA's development in anticipation of the Founder's eventual departure.

Haseman, Chantal Mouffe, and Michel Serres. The strategies, tools, and systems presented here contribute to our understanding of UK alternative art schools, alternative art education, and TOMA specifically. Implicitly woven throughout are strategies for critiquing and caring for artistic education, marking a significant contribution to a new research field.

The PhD has revealed several restrictions both in the modes of intervening and some of the theories and positions I originally undertook. Initially, my intention was to remain inconspicuous within the study, preferring to remain in the background. As the PhD progressed, I recognised the need for more active investigations and performative approaches to engage with the diverse array of sites and spaces directly. However, this active investigation has been uncomfortable at times, as it continues to underscore the persistent lack of diversity within both traditional art schools and some alternative art spaces. Additionally, I acknowledge the ambitious nature of the research study, which endeavours to integrate several rhizomatic elements to provide a comprehensive view of the alternative art school space and participation within it. This opens numerous opportunities for further research. Finally, the speculative aspect of the PhD facilitated an examination of spatial concepts beyond immediate or tangible manifestations, yet the positions and theories may now require reflection on their limitations.

Taking Care/Taking Stock: Limitations of the Agonistic Model

Agonism is an inspiring concept that I considered during the initial phases of the research. However, agonism has limitations given the current conditions of the ongoing, interconnected crises of the environment, economy, and geopolitics. The democratic spaces that are required, as Mouffe (2007) suggests, to accommodate “the agonistic model” appear less democratic now as opportunities for reasoned debate are becoming substantially reduced.²⁷⁴ A more nuanced system is now required to work alongside the agonistic space, one that is less adversarial. A model that can direct us to operate critically, a system that has flex and elasticity and can operate across different spatialities with care. Philosopher Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2011) indicates a concept of care as “material doing”, suggesting “understanding caring as something we do extends a vision of care as an ethically and politically charged practice”.²⁷⁵ Informed by Puig de la Bellacasa's concept

²⁷⁴ Mouffe, C., 2007. Artistic activism and agonistic spaces. *Art and Research: Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*, 1 (2), pp. 1–5.

²⁷⁵ Puig de la Bellacasa, M., 2011. Matters of care in technoscience: assembling neglected things. *Social Studies of Science*, 41 (1), p. 90.

of “material doing” my understanding of care extends to *caring for*; this moves beyond mere intention. Instead, *caring for* is conceived as an active and dynamic practice, intricately intertwined with the material world. For art education to assert its relevance and viability within the current conditions necessitates conscientious stewardship. My underlying premise of ‘caring for’, or rather more precisely, caring for art education, has supported the development of the Diagonal Practices toolkit as a resource that aids in nurturing and supporting the field.

Scope

Conceiving a study from an internal vantage point raises inherent challenges and questions of authenticity. Can an insider provide an objective and authentic portrayal of the institution, or does it risk being impacted by personal affiliations? I have a prevailing relationship with the TOMA founder, which could have added complexity to the study. Despite these challenges, I maintain a critical distance through an alterity politic and a heightened awareness of my position within the spaces I enter. As an older Black woman, I experience an inherent sense of detachment from institutional spaces, allowing a greater awareness of the oppressive systems, including the normative aspects within the institution. It is necessary to acknowledge that the study would have looked very different from a white male perspective. Other views could have been sought, a qualitative study conducting interviews with Southend Councillors or customers at the Royals Shopping Centre would have yielded very different responses on their perspectives of TOMA.

Future Explorations

Subsequent studies could interrogate the impact on TOMA participants after their engagement, elucidating the enduring effects of this particular educational experience. Additionally, an investigation into the influence and outcomes of TOMA alumni ‘post-graduation’ or as TOMA Associates would offer valuable insights into the broader implications of the TOMA model. The networks of support that TOMA has cultivated with The Old Waterworks, Metal Culture, and Focal Point Gallery, alongside succession planning aimed at preserving the TOMA ethos, could also serve as viable study areas.

Exploring the Black Arts Movement School Modality or Black Blossoms or examining alternative graduate shows such as BBZ could further enrich our understanding of diverse educational frameworks. Notably, a substantial majority of recently established alternative art schools are initiated by women, presenting yet another compelling aspect

for further scholarly investigation. Focusing on the social impact of alternative art schools and the networks of support the alternatives engage in would contribute to a holistic understanding of their broader implications on society. These suggested areas of enquiry offer a promising direction for future scholarly investigations on alternative art education. Of particular personal interest are the ongoing interventions that can be made into the processes of mapping and the clandestine dynamics within the N-Space through the practice of *smuggling*.

Implications for the Field

The overarching concern within the PhD has been one of defining the edges of the Alternative Art School and what makes the *alternative* in art pedagogy. All three of the contributions support this attempt to locate the space and participation that form the normative pattern. Yet, in a broader context, the PhD conveys the implications for the field of artistic research to challenge traditional research paradigms, advocate for diversity and inclusion, address power dynamics within institutions, promote contextual sensitivity, and explore alternative research approaches.

This research serves as a foundation for investigating, encountering and comprehending the historical and contemporary alternative art schools. By employing its conceptual and rhizomatic methodology, this research has facilitated a convergence of diverse perspectives, ones that have elicited an overarching critical lexicon. Encountered within the written exegesis, Research Catalogue, and archival boxes are strategies, tools and systems, probing themes that contributed knowledge and histories within UK alternative art schools and alternative education, as a relatively new research field. The transcribed specialist interviews found in Box T, alongside the interviews with TOMA alternative art school participants, have yielded valuable insights that are a starting point for future research. The research has produced more questions and generated new nodes for further investigation. Overall, this body of research is the toolkit, a starting point to work from, modify, and disrupt. This PhD project has proposed decentralised, flexible models for art education, autonomous structures and ways to activate value systems that are alternatives to the neoliberal models. My project has also been about formulating and understanding a unique research methodology. As such the thesis offers a spatial grounding in the alternative art school that others may use to their benefit in further studies of alternative art education in the future.

Image List

All photographs, images, diagrams and maps by Elle Reynolds, unless noted otherwise.

Methodology

- 19 Figure 1. Assembling a bricolage methodology. The table shows the research methods employed throughout the investigation.
- 26 Figure 2. Rhizomatic Map, first version.

Part 1

Chapter 1 Mapping

- 33 Figure 3. The Listing Space. A facsimile of Anton Vidokle's list.
- 36 Figure 4. The Redacting List: reclassified and rechoreographed to redefine the centre and offer another frame of reference.
- 42 Figure 5. Detail from Genograms 01 and 02.
- 45 Figure 6. Detail from Genogram 03, the parasitical models, University of the Underground, can be viewed to the right.
- 50 Figure 7. Table showing distinguishing features of art education pooled into typologies.
- 52 Figure 8. The diagram illustrates the positioning of the alternative and the development of a form that is outside any pattern.

Chapter 2 Spatiality

- 57 Figure 9. A first sketch identifies spatial characteristics and patterns of an alternative art school in relation to the normative space and models that have the potential to sit outside of the alternative framework.
- 57 Figure 10. Map of Spatiality 1: The Five Spatialities.
- 72 Figure 11. Map of Spatiality 2: The Five Spatialities.
- 74 Figure 12. Serres's diagram shows the elementary link of the parasitic chain.
- 74 Figure 13. Serres's diagram shows the three interchangeable positions as equal.
- 79 Figure 14. Positioning the five spatialities and Serres in dialogue.
- 81 Figure 15. Thinking through a site as a choreographed performative space.

Part 2

Chapter 3 Enacting

- 87 Figure 16. The diagram indicates the conceptual characteristics of the three protagonist roles, applying Serres's parasitical definitions. The schematic shows the three protagonist roles of Vigilant Observer (VO), Articulate Detective (AD), and Evaluative Contributor (EC) placed within the frames of Serres's and Mouffe's theories. Placing the protagonists within this conceptual framework aided me in determining which characterisations to activate and the tools I intended to test, predicated by the specific spatial context I was entering.
- 93 Figure 17. Image of the Gyroscopic Device.
- 97 Figure 18. Table showing spatialities as sites of the protagonist's enacting interventions and investigations.
- 100 Figure 19. Still images of Silent Questions performance in Venice, 2019. For moving image documentation, refer to the Evaluative Contributor area of the Research. Catalogue <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223853>.
- 101 Figure 20. A Lecture in Reverse performed at Theorem. The Articulate Detective in the N-Space, holding a viewing lens.

- 101 Figure 21. Theorem exhibition space: comprising two exhibition tables showing documentation, Genograms and moving image works, curated by the Vigilant Observer, situated in the N-Space.
- 105 Figure 22. Pace Studio 1 at CtEO, the Articulate Detective had been allocated a large windowless practice room, usually used for performing arts.
- 105 Figure 23. Pace Studio 1 at CtEO, the Articulate Detective's props.
- 106 Figure 24. Entrance to Pace Studio 1, at CtEO. A3 red *Mouthpiece* definition.
- 108 Figure 25. A black *Feedback Card* as used by the Articulate Detective. Interestingly none of the audience attempted to write on the black card.
- 109 Figure 26. The white *Feedback Cards* were completed by participants. Both black and white versions had 'feedback' hand-printed on one side. Examples from CtEO.
- 110 Figure 27. Lecture in Reverse at the Alternative Art School Weekender. Articulate Detective in the F-Space.
- 111 Figure 28. Badges made by the Evaluative Contributor and placed on the reception desk at Alternative Art School Weekender.
- 112 Figure 29. Scholé Poem for the TOMA train crit placed alongside other reading materials on the reception desk at Alternative Art School Weekender. The reception desk was one of the Evaluative Contributor's assembly spaces.
- 114 Figure 30. TOMA and SotD at the Sauerkraut Weekender.
- 115 Figure 31. Evaluative Contributor's Chalkboard at the Sauerkraut Weekender.
- 116 Figure 32. Evaluative Contributor's jar of sauerkraut at the Sauerkraut Weekender.
- 116 Figure 33. TOMA and SotD artists at the Sauerkraut Weekender.
- 119 Figure 34. Choreographic Questions, a variation of Silent Questions in the V-Space. Tested and performed with artist Niamh Hannaford in July 2022.
- 122 Figure 35. Diagonal Practices (D\P) Spatial Sketch. Visual depiction of the toolkit, considering permeability and portability.

Chapter 4 TOMA

- 126 Figure 36. Display board at the entrance to The Other MA, The Royals Shopping Centre, Southend-on-Sea, June 2018.
- 139 Figure 37. Diagram illustrating the three protagonist roles (Guest/Host/Guest) within TOMA. It indicates their engagement with TOMA's specific systems through participation in the crit, timebank exchange, and exhibition.
- 139 Figure 38. The inaugural meeting of TOMA 1 and the start of the Thursday evening table crit were held on September 22, 2016. The crit session, lasting from 6:30 to 8:30 pm, was followed by thirty minutes for additional discussion. Rolled-up *Listing* drawings and prints of the Vigilant Observer are visible on the table. TOMA 1 artists, (left to right) Anna B. Sexton, Ian A. Ryan and Tricia North.
- 142 Figure 39. Alternative crit structure proposed by the Articulate Detective for application with TOMA 2.
- 143 Figure 40. Above is an excerpt from the 'Train Crit' account with Gloria Sulli (TOMA 2) and artist Dominic from Luton. The complete text was published in the Alternative Art School Weekender TOMA catalogue; go to Box T of the TOMA archive or the Research Catalogue <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223284>.
- 143 Figure 41. Right, Evaluative Contributor's Scholé Poem, 2. See the Research Catalogue exposition at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2223280/2223284>.
- 152 Figure 42. The Evaluative Contributor at Unit 13, the Royals Shopping Centre. The Evaluative Contributor, as a guest, is positioned as a TOMA administrator facilitated through the TOMA Timebanking arrangement and hosted by the Vigilant Observer.
- 158 Figure 43. Diagram of the TOMA archipelago. This diagram visualises a TOMA Collective and the archipelago of TOMA, an intentional network cluster of alternative forms through different modes of connectivity, augmenting a local network into a regional one and building a system of tactics. This diagram is a development of the Genogram, an initial sketch that needs further consideration outside the PhD.
- 160 Figure 44. Rhizomatic Map, testing the capacity of the diagrammatic. TOMA mapped within Diagonal Practices.

Chapter 5 Contribution and Conclusions

- 162 Figure 45. Evaluative Contributor's guidelines activated by the Articulate Detective in the first convening workshop.
- 166 Figure 46. Sketch depicting the evolution of the research trajectory. The visual of the folded paper indicates the development, from mapping to interventions to embodied protagonists, yet shows that each is folded back into the other, with spatiality and participation consistent throughout.
- 173 Figure 47. Diagrammatic representation of the Diagonal Practices Toolkit.
- 174 Figure 48. Diagonal Practices Toolkit. Left is the toolkit used at a TOMA succession workshop, and right is the complete Diagonal Practices Toolkit.

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