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Round table presentation (20 + 20 + 20 min)

Topics: Contemporary artistic and art educational approaches to diversity and cultural changes

Keywords: Performative regimes, heterotopias, alternative pedagogies.

The disciplines and the liberties of art education

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It's not for the first time that art education has occupied a precarious place, but in the UK, from primary schools to universities, the arts have been subject to an unprecedented process of educational standardization and performance-based assessment, in which they have not fared well. Simultaneously the free-market economy has left little space for the social and unrealized democratic values once attached to the arts. It appears increasingly utopian that the art school in its university incarnation, or indeed the school, might forge a more critical, ethical and imaginative relationship between art and society. However, it's also not the first time that an imperative to circumvent the over-controlling hand finds arts educators seeking out heterotopias, those alternative mental and physical spaces of discursivity proposed by Foucault (1967) which promise intense, unpredictable, and transformational possibilities.

This panel will address the danger that the current interventions, alternative pedagogies and innovations burgeoning outside mainstream educational institutions are effectively creating a two-tier system. We will argue that new pedagogic approaches in arts education have much to learn much from the past but they must also be vigilant to the conditions of social, cultural and technological change. We will examine current performative regimes of assessment and ask whether it is possible to suspend judgment and mitigate the anxiety they produce by drawing on Foucault's notion of 'care of the self' (1984). Together we consider the legacies, conditions and possibilities for responding to diversity and change within, and in proximity to, public education.