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in the art school*

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*Unruly principles: First year
experimental pedagogy, Glasgow
School of Art 1965-1975*

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ABSTRACT

Unknown Outcomes was a series of participatory workshops, first presented as part of the *Material Culture in Action Conference* (2015) and were formulated in response to archival research into the experimental practices emerging from Ted Odling's Section V of *First Year Studies* at Glasgow School of Art (1965–mid 1970s). The historical Section V challenged GSA's own position on what a creative education might necessitate, critiquing the institutionalised teaching norms of its time. Section V encouraged first year students to question fundamental assumptions about making by challenging the faculties of perception as a means of

understanding how this experience may be deconstructed, transposed, and communicated via other sensorial registers. This paper reflects on our restaging of Odling's teaching ideas and principles in the form of the Unknown Outcomes workshops to explore how the materiality of the archive can be used as a critical tool, a catalyst, and a point of departure from which to develop generative critical positions that relate to current educational contexts. We ask how might Odling's practice—through the archive—be given new material potency for current students to explore and identify the pedagogical norms rooted within their own learning contexts?

KEY WORDS

Pedagogy, Glasgow School of Art, workshops, Ted Odling

ARCHIVE AS APPARATUS

Unknown Outcomes began in September 2015 with the staging of the *Section V Visual Perception Workshop* at the Centre for Contemporary Art in Glasgow.¹ Initially instigated as one of the multiple outputs from the archival research project *New Wave: Materials, Methods and Media, Glasgow School of Art 1970-1986*,² our workshop was developed in response to the experimental practices emerging from Ted Odling's *Section V* of First Year Studies at Glasgow School of Art (GSA) from 1965 to the mid-1970s—practices which in themselves have long been superseded but were rediscovered during the New Wave research. This workshop precipitated a series of collaborative endeavours with the archival material which, at the time of writing, includes a series of further participatory workshops, articles, and texts. *Unknown Outcomes* evolved out of necessity in response to the requirements of the archival material itself—because pure archival research, even when supplemented by anecdotal recollections of past students—did not really capture the embodied nature of those experimental and experiential approaches to learning and teaching of the period.

We begin by tracing the origins and historical context of the 2015 New Wave project and the role that *Section V* played within this research—highlighting the various absences that this initial survey revealed and the interviews that were conducted to reconcile these omissions. We will reflect on how the generative qualities of these interviews then led to further exploration, namely our reinterpreting some of Odling's original exercises and teaching in the form of the *Unknown Outcomes* project.

1 – Please follow marked hyperlinks in the text for the online dissemination of material via GSA

2 – *The New Wave: Materials, Method and Media 1970-1986* research project ran from October 2014-September 2015 and culminated in an exhibition, workshop, and a series of podcasts (see Banerjee, 2015).

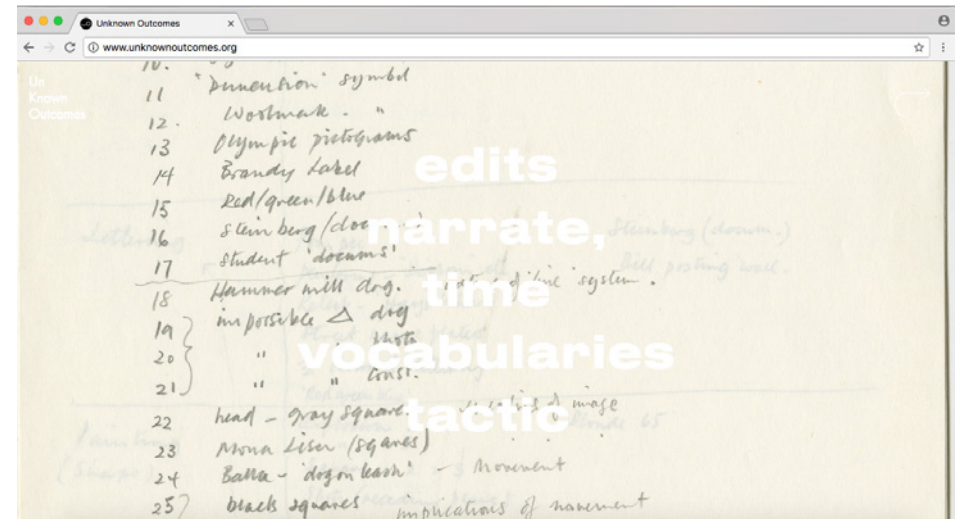


Figure 1: Unknown Outcomes, website screenshot, 2017

Through our reinterpretation, the workshops became active sites in which archival content and current perspectives were drawn into close proximity. The workshops became a performative meeting point for binary terms; education 'now' became inflected by education 'then'; the recollections of past participants met the reflections of contemporary participants; and the bureaucratic record was reconciled with its anecdotal counterpart. The workshops offered us specific instances from which to explore these seemingly opposing positions, a temporal disjuncture that serves as the narrative arc of this paper.

This paper maps the various voices that have emerged throughout the project onto wider discourse surrounding pedagogical strategies within Art and Design education. We shall trace the adoption of anecdote as research strategy and methodology,

3 – Throughout the course of this paper we will be drawing upon Mike Michael's interpretation as characterised in 'Anecdote' as a form of 'auto-ethnography' that explicitly encapsulates the 'performativity of research' (Michael, 2014, p. 26)

drawing parallels between the anecdote³ and workshop as active spaces of becoming present. Whilst the role of anecdote is critical to much of the New Wave project, it is within the staging of our *Unknown Outcomes* workshops that we are offered a position from which to reflect on its multifaceted qualities—not only as a resource for recouping lost accounts, but vitally, as a vehicle for the production and distribution of knowledge.

NEW WAVE: MATERIALS, METHODS AND MEDIA, GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART 1970-1986

The project *New Wave: Materials, Methods and Media, Glasgow School of Art 1970-1986* was based at GSA's institutional archive, which provides a comprehensive record of the school's activities over the last 167 years. As Research Assistant for the project, I (Debi Banerjee) set out to examine thirty-five boxes of uncatalogued papers dating from 1977,⁴ when the Fine Art School was first established as a distinct academic area within GSA. I was specifically looking for material relating to the development of an increasingly multidisciplinary curriculum in Fine Art—seeking to reveal the academic rationales advanced for the development of new courses and the theories of learning that guided their content and instructional method.

The boxes contained paper records, primarily correspondence between staff; minutes from meetings; course proposals; and the occasional newspaper clipping. Looking through this vast quantity of unordered material was overwhelming. Whilst the documents obliquely introduced me to some of the politics and tensions within the school and gave me an understanding of timeframes, course developments,

and a sense of the individuals on the teaching and administrative staff, it lacked information about personal experiences (staff and students), or of the teaching and course content. I recognised the 'historical silences' described by New York archivist Ben Alexander in this apparently compendious collection of papers (Alexander, 2006, p.3). In order to fill these 'historical silences' (ibid.) an alternative informal archive that supplemented the existing information had to be constructed, one that captured the private reflections and personal accounts of staff that developed these new pedagogical structures and the students who experienced them. As Hal Foster notes in his essay *An Archival Impulse*, archival practice 'not only draws on informal archives but produces them as well, and does so in a way that underscores the nature of all archival material as found yet constructed, factual yet fictive, public yet private' (Foster, 2004, p.4)

Archives are fragmentary and specific in their nature. Whilst much could be inferred from the existing GSA archive, forming a clear picture of this period of the institution's history was problematic. There was also the additional issue of the arbitrary periodisation of the source material to contend with. Although the boxes that were under investigation date from 1977, my initial research revealed small traces of evidence of pedagogical experimentation that predated the remit of the project.

I transgressed the original parameters of the New Wave research project.

4 – The Fine Art School was established in 1977 signalling a shift from awarding Diplomas to conferring Degrees—the last Diploma was awarded at GSA in 1978. This was in part due to the visits and recommendations made by CNA (Council for National Academic Awards) to the school from 1974 onwards. (National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design merged into CNA in 1974 and became responsible for awarding degrees.) This shift took place over a much longer period of time, which eventually lead to the new degree courses in Fine Art from 1983 onwards, namely: Fine Art Photography (1983); Environmental Art (1985) and the MFA programme (1988).

The research project became an exemplar of Foster's thesis whereby I developed a new anecdotal archive to complement the existing bureaucratic one through a series of recorded interviews with people who had studied or taught at the school between the 1960s and 1980s. Taking my cue from Alexander's methodology, I allowed 'extant archival evidence to shape oral recollection' so that 'oral and material evidence' was 'coordinated in ways which are effectively synergistic' (Alexander, 2006, p.3). The papers within the archive became probes for opening up discussions with previous students and staff—our conversations were recorded in response to these documents and images, or guided by specific questions. Through these informal conversations, I was able to elicit insights into how the information contained within the bureaucratic archive was actively experienced and felt by those present at the time, and reciprocally, how these experiences shaped and informed pedagogical developments within GSA. Fuelled by the potency of the informal archive that I was constructing through these discussions, I transgressed the original parameters of the New Wave research project; following anecdotal utterances combined with the traces in the formal archives, I moved further back beyond 1977 in the record of teaching; the *Section V* programme, which for the most part has been forgotten, thus came to light during the New Wave project. I was intrigued by *Section V* after finding a few references to it in the Directors' Annual Report from 1964 and 1965 (which notes that 'The Experimental Section continue[s] under the guidance of Mr Odling') and the 1970-71 prospectus which shows a map of the GSA campus and the location of the *Section V* building. These documents affirmed the course's experimental intentions (at odds with the

traditional character of the rest of the curriculum) and its physical and structural separation from the rest of the first year sections, which were housed in the Mackintosh Building.

The development of the *Section V* programme occurred amidst a broader national paradigm shift in visual arts education initiated by the changes suggested in the Coldstream report in 1960. The Coldstream report instigated a nationwide period of major upheaval in approaches to art and design education, and charged institutions with producing

...courses conceived as a liberal education in art in which specialisation should be related to one of a small number of broader areas or, put it another way, that a subject which is principally emphasised should always be studied in a broader context. (Strand, 1987, p.11)

Following these recommendations, the National Diploma in Design (NDD) was replaced from 1963 by the new Diploma in Art and Design (Dip.AD) supplemented by foundation courses in England and Wales. This was the first step towards the eventual shift towards the three-year degree level BA course programmes in the mid 1970s. Scottish art education was separate to this system and, as such, the Diploma in Art continued at GSA until 1978 and was regarded in 'high esteem' in Scotland (Strand, 1987, p.165).⁵ Unlike the general courses in Scotland, the emergence of foundation courses in England became 'test beds for the innovation, experiment and idiosyncrasies of teachers' (Mason, 2008, p.47). Some truly radical programmes appeared, albeit only sporadically, in a number of different English art schools throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s. Such activity can

5 – Originally the Diploma was a four-year programme comprising of a two-year general course with projects in both design and fine art, followed by two years of specialised study. In 1971 the general course was condensed to a one year programme

6 – There were earlier iterations of groundbreaking courses such as the Basic Design Course in 1954, which was heavily influenced by Bauhaus principles and led by Victor Pasmore and Richard Hamilton at King's College, based in Newcastle Upon Tyne, as part of the University of Durham.

7 – We use the word 'regional' here in the most tentative of ways, acknowledging its often pejorative connotations. We used this in reference to its use as connoting geographic area and not as a means to undermine the importance of an art school's connection to, and acknowledgement of, its relationship to its local cultural and socio-economic context. Dean Kenning's Introduction to The Art School and the Culture Shed (2014) by John Beck and Matthew Cornford offers further insight into the socio-political role of the local art school.

be exemplified by the Groundcourse—a two-year foundation programme provided initially at Ealing College of Art (1961-1964) and then subsequently at Ipswich Civic College (1964-1967); and the A Course, home of the infamous locked room experiment, at Central St Martins (1969-1974).⁶

In comparison to these exemplars of experimental teaching, Odling's exercises and approach cannot be considered particularly radical. Whilst these famous experiments in teaching and learning are well documented, Odling's approach offered us a level of insight into how regional⁷ art schools across the UK were responding to the changes precipitated by the burning fuse of the Coldstream report in the 1960s. The sector at this time was a scene of gradual change dominated by two opposing philosophies—as described by Catherine Mason, these were the 'abstractionism, and industrial methods and apparent impersonality' of basic design 'versus an approach that allowed "powers of feeling to oppose powers of knowing", based on the (dominant) notion of art as romantic ideas' (Mason, 2008, p.50). In other words, new kinds of objective technical expertise were being sought at the same time as the development of new modes of subjective expression. In the 1950s, according to Mason (2008, p. 51), 'a system devoted to conformity, to a sense of belonging, to a classical tradition and a belief that art was essentially about technical skill, gave way to a general devotion to the principle of individual creative development.'

As we will go on to discuss, Odling's *Section V* is the first example of a radical departure from traditional pedagogy in Glasgow—an alternative to the rigid predominant ideologies of traditional painting, observational drawing, and sculpture. *Section V* presented an alternative model that looked towards

a modernist European tradition and marked a cautious, non-committal first step in a twenty-year evolution of teaching at Glasgow School of Art. A key figure in this transition was the then Director of the school, Sir Harry Barnes. Barnes joined the school in 1944 and was Deputy Director from 1946-64. He recognised the need for change and began a process of modernisation that ultimately led to GSA becoming the first Scottish art school to join the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) in 1978. These changes were often met with opposition from staff and 'a good deal of antagonism and mistrust had to be overcome' (Strand, 1987, p.171). *Section V* had been developed by Ted Odling under the guidance of Barnes based on Odling's interest in science, technology, photography, film, kinetics, music, and optics. *Section V* must be considered as progressive within the context of Glasgow School of Art and marks the institutional acknowledgement of the necessity of change and experimentation.

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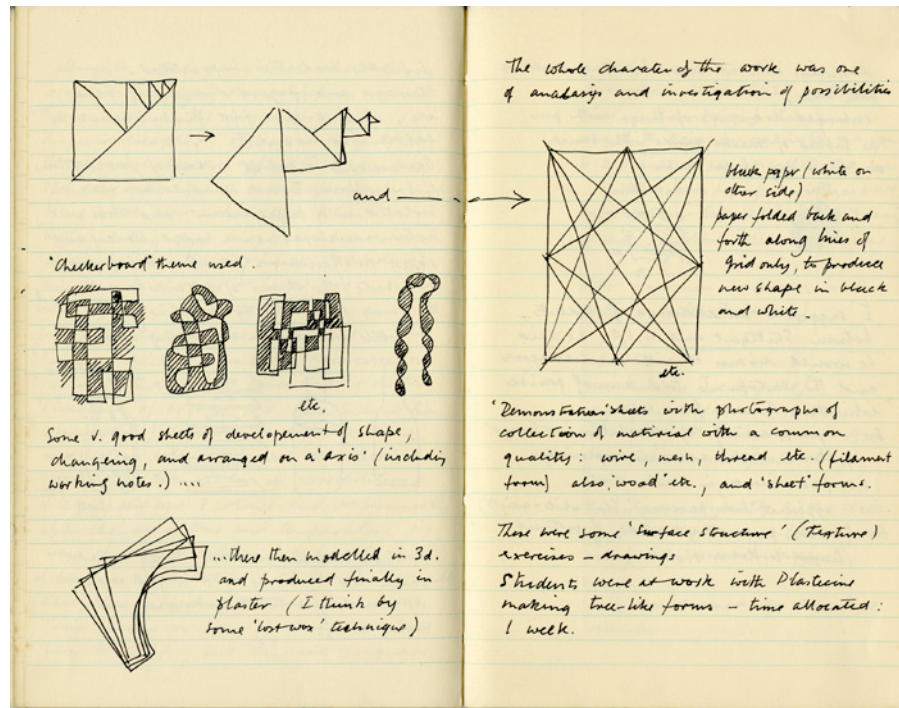


Figure 2: Ted Odling notebook, 1965 (Source: GSA Archives and Collections).

SECTION V

Odling's research thus came at a fluid time within British Art Schools. In Scotland, the earlier emphasis, as described by Mason (2008), of understanding art as technical skill informed by 'classical tradition' was still alive and well in the mid-60s. The institutionalised teaching norms of GSA at the time were still inflected by an earlier nineteenth-century romantic tradition, synthesised with a parochial heritage. Indeed, in 1978-9 the drawing and painting department in Glasgow still

maintained a strong connection to 'West of Scotland' tradition, proudly proclaiming in the School prospectus:

The painting school in Glasgow School of Art has a long and distinguished history. It had considerable influence on the artists of 'The Glasgow School' who in turn have influenced succeeding generations of students. It has a distinct 'painterly' tradition, together with respect for fine drawing. (Donaldson, 1978-1979, p.24)

But despite this conservative stance of established fine art disciplines, Harry Barnes's fourteen-year programme of institutional restructuring culminated in 1978 with the first degree awards at GSA and a new, alternative, Mixed Media⁸ department under Roger Hoare.

In this lineage, *Section V* could be understood as the first move towards restructuring the teaching. In its original guise (1962-1964/5), the course was a third year specialist, but non-medium-specific, subject 'designed to work across the traditional disciplines', with an 'emphasis on imagination and creativity, lots of 3D work, time related exercises and experimentation' (Odling, 2011, p.24). The promotion of Odling when he returned from his 1965 research trip to art schools across Europe was clearly an attempt to instigate change, to expose the local context and 'painterly tradition' of GSA to external influences.

The New Wave research material now holds a record of conversation with Noelle Odling⁹ where she talked through the lecture notes, notebooks, correspondence, and teaching materials she had from her father's time at GSA. The notebook from Odling's research trip, alongside the letters written to Sir Harry Barnes during this time, contain detailed descriptions and diagrams of exercises that chart the influences he

8 – The Mixed Media department was led by Roger Hoare from 1977-1981 and was formed in response to recommendations made by CNAIA in 1976. A number of students from the drawing and painting department joined Mixed Media.

9 – Noelle Odling is Ted Odling's daughter.

had absorbed during his visits, and document how he was beginning to marry these findings with his own interests in systems theory and visual perception. It was through these materials I was able to map the significance of this course as GSA's first tentative attempt to break from tradition and engage with a contemporary European model of teaching visual art.

Odling's Leverhulme-funded research trip to visit art schools in London, Paris, Milan, Stuttgart, Ulm, Basel and Zurich had allowed him 'to gain experience and ideas prior to setting up the new general course at GSA' (Odling, 2011, p.25). Following this trip, he was appointed Head of First Year by Barnes and through *Section V* began to implement an experimental approach based on this research. Whilst the other four sections of the first year general course remained unchanged, focussing on traditional drawing (mainly still life and life drawing) leading into the composition of painting with some

...perception is not just the technical function of the eye...

design and craft projects, the *Section V* course covered the same subjects but had a distinctly different approach based on post-Bauhaus principles.

If, as stated by G. James Daichendt, one of the unifying pedagogical principles of the Bauhaus was the role of the 'artist-teacher' (Daichendt, 2010, p.157), then Odling's *Section V* indicates a distinctive pedagogical shift at GSA where we see the fruition of a curriculum driven by individual research as opposed to being governed by the aesthetic conventions and traditions of a given discipline. The meticulous notes

and sketches Odling kept during his trip demonstrate the teaching approach and exercises he observed in Europe were closely linked to the Bauhaus basic course. As explained by Daichendt, the basic course at the Bauhaus was approximately six months and 'divided into three topics including two and three dimensional instruction for the senses, emotions and the mind' (ibid.). After Odling returned, the projects he designed were heavily influenced and structured on these principles and involved sound, film, colour and experimentation with material, at the centre of which was a deconstruction of visual and aural perception.

Contemporaneous with Odling's *Section V*, Edward de Bono's *Lateral Thinking and Perception* offers us a wider context in which to position Odling's own pedagogic research. The purpose of 'lateral thinking' was to allow one to escape from fixed perceptions and concepts in order to move sideways to find new ones' (de Bono, 1973, p.74). Odling's preoccupation with perception, optics, and scientific method seem concurrent with de Bono's writing which positions and advocates for 'lateral thinking' as a way of rendering artistic thinking and perception that is not tied to the 'mystique of personal talent' (1973, p.73), emphasising that perception is not just the technical function of the eye but also a process of forming social and cultural judgements.

Odling's investment in 'visual perception' was not to reaffirm its primacy and authority but instead aimed to challenge the faculties of perception as a means of understanding how experience may be deconstructed, transposed, and communicated via other sensorial registers. De Bono's 'move sideways' encapsulates much of the intention of Odling's teaching, but can also be used analogously as a conceptual framework to explore the role of anecdote

within both the *New Wave* research project and the collaborative endeavours that followed in the form of our *Unknown Outcomes* project.

The interviews with former students who studied in *Section V* in 1968 and 1969 (once it became part of the two year general course) discuss Odling's teaching and the range of knowledge they, as first year students, were encouraged to develop. Many of these personal recollections carefully recite the various steps and stages of each exercise and the different material encounters these exercises necessitated. Other former students focused on the affective dimensions of these tasks. One student in particular remembers feeling so shocked by this approach—the exercise having completely challenged their preconceptions of what they would/should be taught at art school—that they were reduced to tears. Another remembers thinking it was 'bizarre' at the time but on reflection, recognised how this specific exercise became fundamental to their practice as a graphic designer (Banerjee, 2015, Episode 2). These interviews not only revealed what they could recall of their immediate responses to these specific tasks, but also demonstrate how the act of recollection prompted them to consider as to how these instructions and Odling's transdisciplinary approach impacted on their respective practices and personal development by introducing them to new ways of thinking, making, and doing.

VOICING THE ARCHIVE

If, according to Derrida, 'the archive' embodies and reifies the experiences of dominant narratives (Eichhorn, 2014, p.5), then the anecdotal could be interpreted as that which pushes at the boundaries

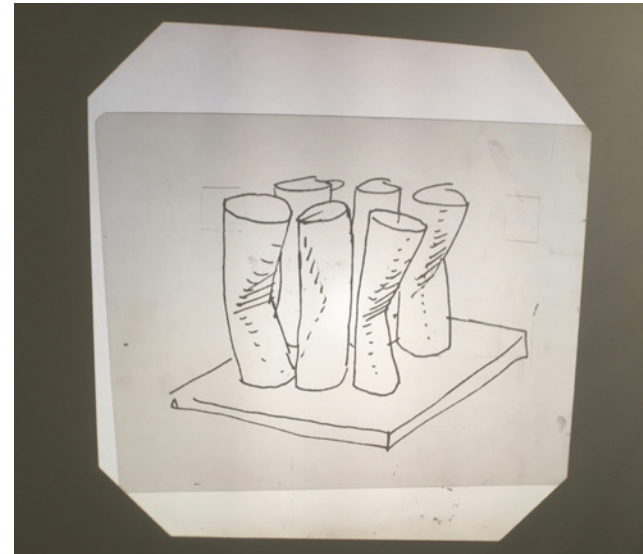


Figure 3: Scoring the Archive Workshop, Glasgow Sculpture Studios, 11 June 2016. Photograph by Kirsty Hendry.

of this official, authoritative space, challenging the positioning of 'the archive' as a fixed power structure. The plurality and idiosyncratic nature of the anecdote challenges the assumed validity of accounts authored by those with the power and agency to document and historicise their activities.

If the official archive could be seen to offer a fixed perspective, then the anecdote performs de Bono's 'move sideways'—introducing new perceptions focused on extra-informational qualities and experiential aspects, offering up new historical narratives that fall beyond the capture of the official record. As the anecdote served as a strategy for articulating archival silences, offering alternative perceptions on the accounts contained in the official record, the qualities of 'the anecdote' also became the defining characteristic of the *Unknown Outcomes* project—

finding a huge amount of overlap with the qualities of the anecdotal and the experiences garnered through the workshops we ran using the archival material. If we principally understand the anecdote as a linguistic act, then our workshops could be thought of as a multisensory iteration of these principles. Mike Michael's concept of anecdote offers us a useful way of articulating this: 'In terms of the topological, it brings together what might once have seemed distant and disconnected: past episodes that are marginal and trivial illuminate contemporary moments of critical reflection and reorientation' (Michael, 2014, p. 33).

The workshops staged as part of *Unknown Outcomes* became an embodied and performative articulation of Michael's anecdote. Providing an epistemological break from the discursive research, the workshops allowed us to connect the informal and the bureaucratic archival materials through thinking and doing, encouraging experiential forms of knowing to be developed and shared. In our interpretation of Odling's original teachings, the aim of our activity became twofold; not only were participants exploring ideas of notation, scoring, sound, and image, but through the temporal disjuncture of the archival material, via *redux*,¹⁰ participants were also exploring the conditions of the present moment in relation to these ideas.

According to Kate Eichhorn (2014, p.3), 'rather than a destination for knowledges produced or a place to recover histories and ideas placed under erasure, the making of archives is frequently where knowledge production begins.' In the spirit of this sentiment, we were interested to see what new insights and perspectives restaging these ways of thinking, making, and doing with a group of contemporary practitioners would generate. True to Eichhorn's conception of the archive not as receptacle, but as the catalyst for new

forms of knowledge to emerge, the full scope of the workshop itself as a generative site for the production and circulation of knowledge and critical reflection only became fully evident during the evaluative interviews we enacted with our participants—as we will go on to explore in more detail. Similar to the responses offered by the original *Section V* students, it was interesting to see how quickly our contemporary workshop participants were able to extrapolate their experiences of the workshop, recontextualising them in relation to their current experiences and disciplinary learning environments at GSA. The tangible material outputs from the workshop became conduits through which our participants were able to articulate and excavate the different knowledges at play within their experience of the exercise, a way of giving voice to tacit activity.

As we touched upon earlier, the bureaucratic record of the research period omitted any reference to staff and student experience, but how does this

*... the archive not as receptacle,
but as the catalyst for new forms
of knowledge to emerge...*

reconcile with the current context of higher education, which supposedly prioritises the 'student experience' and 'student voice'? The auto-distributive qualities of the anecdote shift the positioning of our participants from subjects of the archive to active agents within it. The process of gathering these anecdotal accounts from both former and current art school students offered

10 — *Redux* is typically understood as that which is brought back, revived, or restored. In reference to creative works, *redux* acquires a slightly more specific meaning that acknowledges how the new context and circumstances in which the original work is presented impacts on the meaning and interpretation of the work itself.

a critical moment of reflection on the educational practices of our current moment. How might the concept of the anecdote as embodied through the workshops offer a way of articulating these forces that invisibly condition the space of education?

PRACTICING THE ARCHIVE

The anecdotal recollections of past students provided us with information on their experiences, but only a glimpse of the forms of learning they actually underwent—forms of embodied, multisensory knowledge that can only be accrued through re-experiencing the exercises and projects of the period.

We decided that the format of a participatory workshop that channelled the teaching methods of *Section V* would provide an embodied and performative form of engagement with the archival material and its contents. The collaborative and participatory nature of the workshop model provided a lens through which to explore John Danvers's emphasis on the importance of learning through practice in Art and Design and the intrinsic relationships between learning, understanding, participation, and action. According to Danvers (2003, p. 51): 'Within Art and Design participation is axiomatic to the process of learning through practice. In this participatory view of learning engagement, involvement and action are prerequisites for the development of understanding'. Danvers's notion of learning through practice resonates with Jean Lave's assertion that 'knowledge always undergoes construction and transformation in use' (Lave, 2009, p.203). The notion of the transformative and generative potential of 'knowledge in use' offers not only another way of thinking about the archive as a space of



Figure 3: Workshop poster designed by Jessica Taylor, September 2015t

knowledge production, but also a strategy for thinking about the conditions of the forms of knowledge production embedded in Odling's pedagogic research.

In *Learning from Experience* (2004), Michael Biggs also offers a deeper excavation of the different knowledges embedded within this notion of practice-

based learning. Biggs constructs a triangulation between forms of knowledge that are explicit (expressed linguistically), tacit (has an experiential component that cannot be efficiently expressed linguistically), and ineffable (cannot be expressed linguistically). These principles of experiential learning become reified, exposed, and accentuated, not only by Odling's multisensory approach to pedagogy but also through the format of the workshop itself, which is governed and shaped by a series of 'exercises'—productive or focusing limitations, constraints, which are material, spatial, and temporal in nature.

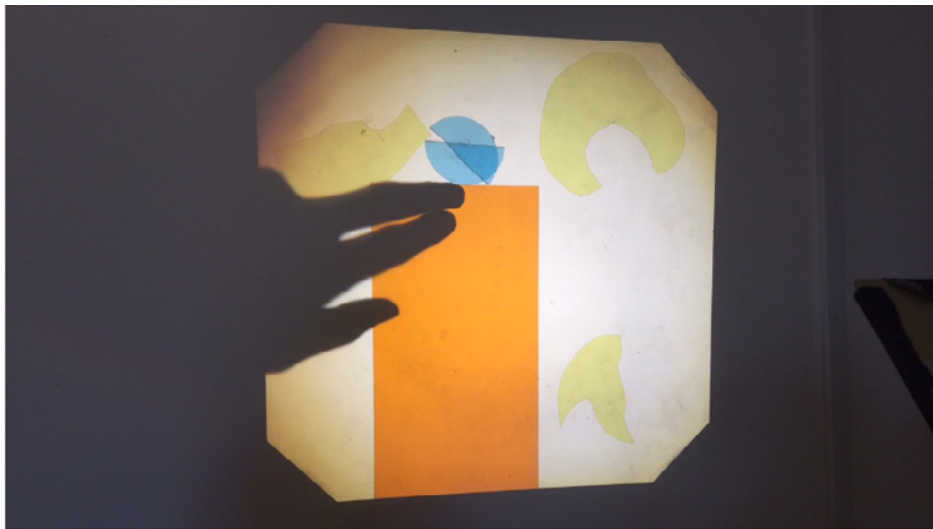


Figure 4: Still from Visual Perception Workshop, 8 September 2015. Photograph by Debi Banerjee.

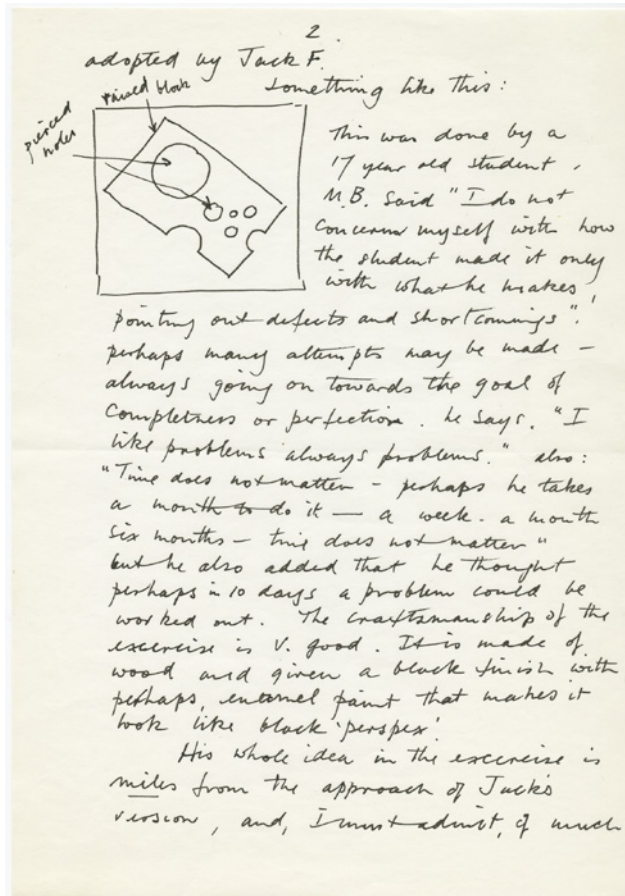
In the context of our interpretation of the archival *Section V* exercises, Biggs's conceptualisation of the different knowledges at play within practice-based learning echoed much of Odling's own

pedagogical research that deconstructed the supposed mechanical aspects of perception to expose the cognitive and affective dimensions that produce 'seeing' as an inherently subjective and value-laden act. Odling's focus on deconstruction as a strategy for learning seems as cogent for his former students as it did for our contemporary *Unknown Outcomes* participants. Both groups speak to how this practice of deconstruction led them to question the implicit and fundamental assumptions and value judgements they make within their own practices and approaches. The range of distinct and individualistic responses produced via the same task revealed and prompted discussion around the different ways of thinking present amongst the group, exposing and introducing participants to new ways of thinking that were not their own.

The 'exercise' is distinctly and immediately recognisable as a space of learning—where knowledge is transferred and generated, where the *sensation* of learning is keenly felt. The explicit 'makeup' of the exercise as teaching mechanism in the form of rules, constraints, process, reflection, sharing, discussion, and outcome emphasise and reify the conditions and experiences of practice-based learning that can be hard for students to define and articulate due to its on-going and iterative nature. In the immediacy of the situation, the 'exercise' offers a finite structure through which to understand one's practice, yet this structure also offers a way to identify and analyse the more ineffable qualities of learning in order to reclaim agency within them. The interviews also revealed that the participants in *Unknown Outcomes* located a particular value in the process-based nature of the exercises—that the workshops offered an exploratory space that focused on process rather than outcomes. They equated their experience of the collaborative

and participatory nature of the workshop to creating a sense of 'lack of pressure'. They identified the focus of the exercise as productive, and indeed atypical to much of their previous educational experiences as it was not about producing a singularly authored

Figure 6: 10 November 1965. Odling's correspondence with Harry Barnes, discussing a meeting with Swiss graphic designer Joseph Muller-Brockman on a visit to Zurich School of Arts and Crafts (Source: GSA Archives and Collections).



outcome, but instead involved negotiating as a group how to experiment within the limitations of the workshop. It was a structure that privileged questions over answers, process over outcomes.

It is ironic to note that the anti-foundational, self-reflective ideologies that permeate the later studio teaching at GSA began as experimentation on the two-year general course, a programme that was by definition foundational in intent. Our interviews with our contemporary participants emphasise that these interplays of perceptions of freedom and constraint, ambiguity and explicitness, are still prevalent discourses within contemporary approaches to Art and Design education:

It's funny that you say that in F&T [Fashion and Textiles] and in design in general there's 'a way of doing things'. It's the opposite in Fine Art. There's so much freedom—there's too many options. It was so nice all sitting down, this is what we're doing, these are the materials, this is the idea; now do it. (Participant 1, 2016).

Reflecting on the experience of our workshop, the student perspectives offer a very direct context through which to explore the nuance and intricacy implicated in the adoption of rules within creative practice. The structuring device of the workshop provoked the participants to reflect upon the different ways their education has been structured by both fine art and design pedagogical practices and both the implicit and explicit rules that govern and shape these experiences. The students' reflections indicate that, within their disciplinary contexts, they navigate experiences of ambiguity, structure, and intention in different ways. The fine art student perspective in

particular challenges assumptions that the freedom to do whatever you want as being inherently productive, articulating that so much freedom and seemingly unstructured open-endedness and ambiguity comes to form its own form of unproductive constraint. Not only are these endless possibilities an overwhelming prospect, but these supposed freedoms also become increasingly shaped by conditions and circumstances that are completely beyond the student's control.

I'm not sure about this idea of 'you'll just get on with it' I don't know who decided that and who decided it was productive. (Participant 1, 2016)

The students were quick to touch upon the problems associated with the perception that play, exploration, experimentation, were just supposed 'to happen' and that the freedom to do so is assumed a liberating enough catalyst for activity. In contrast, the opportunities for play and experimentation within the context of both our workshops and Odling's original teachings were not assumed to be implicit or incidental, but rather purposefully designed, structured, and supported.

According to Emma Cocker, '[s]ubmission to the logic of a rule or instruction can operate as a device for not knowing, as a way of surrendering responsibility, absolving oneself of agency or control within a practice in order to be surprised' (Cocker, 2013, p. 129). Cocker's *Tactics for Not Knowing: Preparing for the Unexpected*, offers an incredibly nuanced perspective on the role and potential of the rule. The rule is not about enforcing or prescribing a series of predetermined outcomes but rather can be embraced as strategy for moving beyond oneself. She writes that '[f]ollowing in the footsteps of another can also create the conditions

of *dépaysement*—a sense of being taken out of one's element, or of *égarement*—the errant practice of straying from oneself' (ibid.).

In education systems that tend to formally privilege and emphasise individual attainment, the intervention of these activities within learning environments is important as they hold open a space that students might not normally permit themselves. This space offers a means of countering the affective symptoms of increasingly insular and solipsistic approaches to developing one's practice; which Cocker describes as feelings of being lost, stuck, or of being unable to see away out or forward (2013, p.126). Here, different ways of thinking and making can be tested and adopted as readily as they can be exhausted and abandoned without the pressure to manifest it in material form or output to somehow merit it as productive. Cocker articulates the inherent paradox located in the desirability of this sensation of 'not knowing'—that whilst it feels prohibitive, paralyzing, and anxiety inducing, there is also a value to be placed on not knowing as being a generative position from which to produce new or previously unexplored forms of thinking, making, and doing.

The *Section V* curriculum was based on set rules and limitations designed to engender innovation and self directed experimentation within the constraints of the exercise. The exercises, from what we can tell from the accounts, were informed by systems thinking—their role to provide a space for a student led exploration of the potential of the set parameters and self-evaluation of the process. This seems potentially paradoxical; freedom and self-direction through restriction? However, when viewed with the knowledge of later developments it can be seen as a bridge between the studio as a classroom and the studio as a

free space where everything was permissible, a pivotal moment in the deconstruction of the pre-existing teacher/student roles. The teacher is no longer there to lead the student to a correct position, but to create a territory where the student can explore all possible positions. Cocker's contemporary emphasis on the teaching of thinking as a skill (again to counter the sensations of feeling stuck, lost, or unable to move forward) draws parallels with de Bono's writing dealing with these same sensations which he defines as the need to escape from conditioned patterns and concept prisons. He continues that 'the escape is not to wallow in formless and self-indulgent chaos but to find new and better perceptions and then in time to move on from these again' (de Bono, 1973, p.84).

The forms of engagement with the research and archival material that our workshops facilitated thus became a way of avoiding our own 'conditioned patterns' and 'concept prisons' in relation to the archival research we were undertaking. The participatory, performative aspects of the workshops elicited a space for more open-ended discussion, offering up other pathways, perceptions, and responses that we could never have anticipated or predicted. Not only did the workshops perform a pivotal role in project as a vehicle for sharing, activating, distributing and disseminating the archival material, they also became a way of sharing and distributing the creative, critical, and reflective responses to the material. Our participants were not merely responding to our archival research, but were actively authoring and contributing to it. These activities have generated, and continue to generate, more material relating to Odling and his research and teaching. True to Jacques Derrida's notion that 'archivization produces as much as it records the event' (Derrida, 1995, p.17), the

activities of *Unknown Outcomes* instigated by the New Wave research project has developed into an archive in its own right. At the time of writing, the collection of fragments amassed over the course of our project includes research materials, YouTube videos, original archival documents, writing, failed experiments, and the outcomes produced during the workshops.

The *Unknown Outcomes* website (at <http://www.unknownoutcomes.org/>) was developed as a means to house this newly amassed collection of fragments in a way that wouldn't falsely impose a singular or authoritative narrative, but would instead embody the fragmentary nature of our material, and the processes of working with archival material itself. We aimed to reflect the content of the archival material and embody the premise of Odling's teaching. The *Section V* material required that we acknowledge our means of questioning, searching, and finding as highly subjective value laden acts. In acknowledgement of this, the content of *Unknown Outcomes* is not tagged in any useful way—our taxonomy eschews the efficiency of descriptions that 'best' reflect our content in favour of descriptions that speak to the associative and lateral connections we make when attempting to make meaning, a literal and metaphorical 'move sideways' from the official archival material, not a singular account but a constellation of contingent readings.

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