

In Praise of an Art School Education or, the Impact of Drawing Out and Leading Forth.

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It's 3.11pm on Saturday 16th June 2018 and, as I sit down to write something of meaning about "how the nature of fine art as a discipline affects what makes for excellent teaching," fire continues to ravage the inside of the very place where my thoughts, experiences, and words on the subject were to emanate from. For me, the source for a response to this proposition was always going to come from my experience as a fine art student and, now, academic member of staff at Glasgow School of Art.

In light of the on-going emergency at 167 Renfrew Street, my focus must therefore be drawn to the one thing that does remain constant within art school education today. That is, the unique way in which this particular form of education is delivered and negotiated by staff and students alike. With this emphasis in mind, the titular phrase '*drawing out and leading forth*,' borrowed from Julie Ault and Martin Beck, is used to best describes the philosophy that lies at the heart of what we, as educators, do on a daily basis across the art school campus. The specifics of this approach are in essence determined through what can only be described as an extended and interconnected meaning-making system.

In art school education, the very particulars of this method are established over an extended period of time, in order for students to fully immerse themselves in their studies. All students are encouraged to engage in a broad spectrum of experiences, lectures, seminars, one-to-one tutorials, group critique, technical instruction, and critical and theoretical inquiry. Every corner of the art school campus is therefore an accessible site of learning; where full immersion is actively supported through the studio, the technical facilities, the lecture theatre, seminar rooms, workshops and the library. Digital technology is endemic, even if differences remain in usage between academic staff and students. It is during this range of learning and teaching activities that the individual students' knowledge and experiences are discussed in order for staff to better understand students' ideas, and their theoretical concerns. By actively listening, staff articulate their practical and theoretical knowledge back to the student in order to help better support their learning. As a result, reciprocity occurs.

Students are subsequently encouraged to seek additional information via their own research and making, enabling them to expand upon their ideas, skills and theoretical concerns. For most art student's this expansive understanding takes time to fully comprehend as it sits outside of their previous educational experiences. However, by engaging with this distinctive educational philosophy students gain insights that subsequently become a way of viewing and negotiating the world. Furthermore, what is unique about this form of awareness is that it pertains directly to them, individually; where a range of meanings and interpretations arise, and where infinite possibilities subsequently present themselves - there are no definitive boundaries.

Within the context of higher education today this specific form of individuated and situated learning is quite unique and is, undeniably, a key component in the process of *becoming* an artist. It is with an emphasis upon the far-reaching nature of this statement that I will end upon as I firmly believe this is one of the reason why we have been witness to such emotional outpourings since Friday evening. The depth of feeling expressed by people from around the globe is clear evidence of the powerful nature of the discipline, and those studying or teaching it, and how it continues to have meaning in a world of constant change.