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The 'Artist Educator' Dilemma: the position of teaching in relation to art practice

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Abstract

This dissertation has been a way for me to work through the dilemma I find myself in today as an Artist Educator. I have not set out to answer any questions or resolve the problem but to highlight and discuss possible ways the dilemma has come about and the impact it has on my career.

I have researched a historical context for the position of the artist educator, focussing on how political and economic climates have affected who can be an artist and the way this impacts artists' practice, labour and work.

By investigating the current position of education in contemporary art I was able to identify the 'educational turn', a growing trend of education practices being used as art practice today. I have considered why this shift may have come about, looked at relevant relational art practices and discussed impact it is having on galleries and museums.

My dilemma stems from finding myself straddling opposing perceptions and identities related to the position of an artist and a teacher. I have researched these different identities and considered how my experience relates to both stereotypes.

Art practice as well as theoretical research has helped me clarify and identify this dilemma, I have discussed how my practice and process has informed my research and describe how the artwork functions in the context of this research.

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Introduction

I have been working as a freelance artist educator for the past eight years and still find myself questioning my exact role. I chose the practice-based route for this dissertation after a lot of deliberation. This decision-making forced me to think about why I chose to do this Masters two years ago. I wanted the time, space and experience to discover the relationship between my art practice and education practice. I dread the question "what is it you do?" in social situations, as I am still not quite sure myself. Therefore, I want to begin with sharing my understanding of what an artist educator is. I design and facilitate education workshops for museums and galleries, I work in schools as part of museums outreach projects. The projects I work on are usually specialist projects around a specific collection, theme or exhibition. However, these jobs are reliant on my title and status as a working, living 'artist', it is this title that people are attracted to.

It used to be the job of the museum curators to show visitors around the collection and the focus was on the objects and the artworks displayed. However, as part of a continued project of access and inclusions as well as critical reflection upon the elitist and colonial relations of museums and galleries in their formative years there has been a shift in focus towards the audience and their experiences and interpretations of the collections. Lange, in *The Responsive Museum: Working with Audiences in the Twenty-First Century* discusses this shift of focus and how this has been motivated by local and central government funding streams, it also highlights the requirements to show public benefits. She states that museums are responding to the requirements of their audiences and access for audiences more than ever before. (2016: 29) In response to this outreach and focus on engagement,

trained artists often lead workshops and deliver memorable experiences to help audiences interpret collections creatively. Popular museums and galleries such as the *Tate*, *Serpentine Galleries* and *Camden Art Centre* offer expansive artist led education programmes. These may include school visits, gallery tours and workshops with artists in residence and education resources for teachers and students. Therefore, there is a relatively new job created exclusively for artists that requires a range of mixed responsibilities.

I believe it is a common perception that teachers are expected to plan, deliver and evaluate lessons and artists are expected to make artworks and organise exhibitions, these expectations constitute identities for both teachers and artists. However, as an artist educator I am planning and delivering workshops for most of my time, which makes me feel a lot like a teacher. However, I describe myself as an artist and furthermore, I am employed as an artist to deliver workshops. I am confused in the middle of these multiple identities, as with each job I work with different people and my position changes depending on the institution, the teachers and the project brief. I often ask myself if I should become a trained teacher but similarly I struggle with the identity and expectations of a teacher's role.

I have worked with many teachers in my career and during my time on the MA course, and I have been made aware of how much more freedom I have in relation to my education practice. Teachers are generally under more prescriptive pressures. However, I believe the artist educator is an unresolved and confused compromise but it is important here to point out that I enjoy the diversity of the job and the multiple identities involved. I love teaching and conversing with a range of different people, I get to learn about historical subjects and gain insight into new museum collections. I

thrive off the multiple jobs juggling and adapting to different environments and expectations. To summarise, I think that the relationship between artist and educator and artist educator is unclear as there are conflicting ideas and understandings about separate roles and expectations. The artist educator is a blurred, muddy area which needs attention. These conflicting ideas reveal existing perceptions, throughout this dissertation I will look at where these perceptions are rooted and how they might be challenged. I have used this dissertation research to identify threads, ideas and relationships around this dilemma that resonate with me and flag up important and meaningful questions and problems.

History plays a large part in helping to identify a context for my questions and dilemmas around defining the role of an artist educator. I will begin this dissertation by looking at how past and recent political climates have affected who can be artists and how their need to work has changed. I will also discuss here the implications of the recent economic shift from a goods to a service focus and how this has affected artistic labour and artistic practices as well as how museums and galleries function.

I will then proceed to discuss the 'educational turn', the term is used to describe a tendency in contemporary art where education methods and alternative pedagogic ideas appear as curatorial and art practice. (Lazar, E: 2012) I will look at some examples of art projects and relational artists that illustrate this tendency and consider possible reasons why it may have become a growing trend. At this point I will discuss my education practice in more detail in comparison to these education ideas as contemporary art forms.

I will scrutinise the identities associated with artists and teachers and consider different stereotypes and assumptions for each role, thinking about my own

experience as someone who is straddling the two separate positions. Furthermore, I will summarise what experts, such as Emily Pringle, think about artists leading education workshops in schools and discuss the benefits and draw backs of teachers and artists working together. I have also asked a selection of teachers, artists and artist educators to discuss their own experiences and identities within their professions as I have found that many others share this feeling of a mixed identity. I would argue that this is important to point out for the purpose of helping me to position myself within a context of supposed identities and varied realities. Furthermore, I will examine the work of emerging practitioners and movements, which I believe successfully, work between both artist and education.

Working through these feelings of uncertainty in my practice by using studio and art practice to reflect on these issues has been a way for me to understand my position as an artist educator and my practice as an artist in greater detail. The artwork itself reflects multiple positions and interests that are revealed through left over and usually ignored materials to bring attention to how I truthfully feel about my position in this role. I will discuss these ideas further with reference my process the artwork I created for the final exhibition.

Politics, Economics and Artistic Labour

This chapter aims to layout some of the key political and economic shifts, which have affected the labour demands of artists in recent years. I believe these key moments can help create a context for thinking about artists as educators and more generally why the role of an artist today is so versatile and possibly confused.

This is not a problem specific to London, however, it is where I have worked for most of my career and so will look at London as a point of reference. William Raban's film *72-82* looks at ACME Studios in London and shows how different the conditions were for artists in the UK during the 1970's; rent was cheap subsidised by the welfare state, free studios were allocated out and funding was easily available. (Raban, W: 2015)

However, these conditions have changed; today rent and housing prices have risen drastically, public funding in the arts has reduced hugely and the cost of living has increased. It is now very difficult to make art in the same way, there may well be more full time artists but more importantly the question is who can be this type of artist today.

Frith and Horne discuss how traditionally during the 1950's and 60's art schools had loose entry requirements and were experimental places with minimal assessment, which attracted working and middle class school leavers with minimal qualifications. However, they argue that by the 1980's attitudes had begun to change and attracted fewer working class entrants. (1987:30)

A separate point, but one that is important to mention here, is gender. I have noticed that artist educators are predominantly females and I have considered why this happens. Furthermore, in the past the role of working artists has been dominated by males despite the amount of females that choose art as a subject to study. Linda Lee Alter in Cozzolino's book *The Female Gaze* discusses why she became a collector of women's art, describing how disturbed she was to find that there were relatively few female artists whilst she was at art school in the 50's and 60's. Even though over half of her class were women, she was aware of this imbalance and has collected women's art ever since as a way to directly address this issue. (2012: 17) I speculate that the

reason females dominate the position of artist educators is because it is still harder for females to become full time working artists.

As well as considering who may become an artist it is also important to think about how art is produced today. Steyerl suggests that traditional art production is a thing of the past except in a small minority of cases. Her ideas of what actual art production necessitates is artists 'trying their luck' at various creative professions which she describes as 'conceptual imposters'. (2011: 33)

I went to a prestigious art school and can only name a handful of people who have been able to work as a 'full time' artist. Artists are renowned for precarious labour, I worked as a waitress for five years while practicing as a full time artist so that I could afford my studio rent. Bennett in her article *Don't Give up the Day Job, How Artists Make a Living* describes the economic climate for artists as 'bleak' with no financial stability, no pensions and no governmental provisions for artists. (Bennett, L: 2010) Furthermore, Ross highlights the profile of a working artist as being comfortable with changing environments, working long and unsocial hours, working from project to project rather than having a steady flow of work production and the ability to exercise self management (2003 : 144) These attributes are also perpetuated in fine art education as it is advocated as a subject teaching multiple skill sets in preparation for a number of different professions. As a freelance artist this description of precarious labour resonates with how I have worked in the past. It could also be seen as exploitation, as it suggests labour has become affective and personalised. Bifo claims that both industrial labour and cognitive labour are both devalued and underpaid, as a casualised labour market has destroyed social solidarity. (2011:139)

There seems to be an overriding conception that artists will accept less money and rights for freedom of time and I would argue that this adds to the perception that artists' labour is being exploited. Chukhov looks at how creative industries exploit artists enthusiasm, desires, ideas and feelings and she argues that what is worse is that artists are led to believe that this is a normal and expected artistic service. (2011 : 109) The art industry has a vast amount of unpaid labour, many galleries sustain themselves on unpaid interns. I consider that this system takes advantage of the competitive nature we are all under in a neoliberal climate, where we are all personally responsible for our achievements, successes and failures.

For many years I would volunteer and work for free if the organisation was prestigious enough to add value to my work experience portfolio. Many arts organisations are trying to put a stop to this pattern of behaviour for example University of the Arts London (UAL) refuses to advertise unpaid internship opportunities and demands students are paid the minimum wage, this is to allow everyone equal opportunities. (UAL: 2016) However, I am also aware that UAL advocate their approach to professional practice as part of Central Saint Martins BA (Hons) in Fine Art, which is based on students organising a portfolio of internships, which amounts to high costs for the students, suggesting how common and acceptable this model has become. (Central Saint Martins: 2016) There is a certain kudos attached to being a freelance creative, yet there is a lot of evidence that suggests that it can be both difficult and demanding for many artists. It is also limited purely to those people who can afford to work for free. Banks in his research explains how internships have become a standard process and points out that these opportunities are restricted to social groups who can afford to work for free, therefore opportunities in prestigious industries are only dispersed among the already privileged classes. (Banks, M: 2014)

Let us now think back a little to 1997-2010 when New Labour entered office in the UK. They came to power on the basis of a social-democratic agenda and were keen advocates of using the arts to prevent 'social exclusion' and encourage 'social inclusion'. One of the big questions they asked was that of what the arts could do for society. They saw the arts as a way to teach creativity, which in turn they believed would promote employability, minimise crime and foster aspiration. (Bishop, C: 2012: 13) It was during this period that the title 'artist educator' was first introduced because New Labour's strategy funded public arts projects. However, their strategy has received some negative stigma, Claire Bishop for example does not see this plan as a way of repairing the social bond or a way to make more artists and free thinkers but a way to prepare society for a privatised world to fend for themselves minimising reliance on the welfare state, preventing a permanent workforce and promoting a myth of meritocracy. (2012 : 14) This critique suggests that this incentive was a tactic used to benefit business for a neo liberal climate of free markets and freelancers. Maybe this would explain why I know so many people who aspire to be freelance creatives despite the odds against them. I would argue that this could be a response to the current school system and the political climate.

I believe this idea relates to Pierre Bourdieu's thinking about cultural capital and prestige. Winkle-Wagner suggests that we are in a system of non-financial hierarchies of social assets including education, intellect, our style, speech and appearance which all impact on our position in society. (2010: 23) In relation to prestige, Van Laar and Diepeveen argue that prestige is accorded by others and that it cannot be decided that one is prestigious, it is granted to a person dependent on their associations. (2013:21) This suggests that the prestige accorded to being a 'creative' is dependant on the political and social climate.

Despite these ideas I am still aware that because of New Labour's push for creativity many schools benefitted from new arts initiatives. In 2006 I was working on some very exciting projects in schools, I did a lot of work with *Cubitt Arts Organisation* in London who were in a position to fund a number of projects around Islington. It felt like a very active period and the projects were valuable for the students, introducing them to new ideas around art and insights into what being a professional artist meant.

Not only did students and teachers in schools benefit from these agendas but artists like myself found themselves in demand as more specialist arts education projects were being funded. I believe this was the time when artists became useful as educators because there was a need for artists' expertise to put support mechanisms in place, such as local arts advisors and to help inform on projects and decisions. Museum and gallery education departments also changed dramatically during this period as New Labour's social inclusion policy not only targeted welfare but also the cultural sector. O'Brien looks at one of the most prominent examples of this when the Museums, Libraries and Archive Council merged with the Arts Council in 2010. Together they were able to create indicators that gathered data on learning outcomes and social engagement outcomes. (2014 : 47) This shows that there was a shift of attention to what people gained from a museum visit.

The Arts Council of England's Artists in Sites for Learning Scheme (AiSfL) supports visual artists working in a range of places and situations, which aims to promote access and enjoyment to learning. It is a good example of New Labour's efforts to support the arts. Pringle describes how artists were being asked to run education projects as they were seen to have the advantage of being a co-learner, were able to encourage experiential learning and had no restrictions from the curriculum. (Pringle, E : 2002)

These are all reasons why I enjoy being an artist educator and not a teacher, who currently work under the pressure and restrictions of a neo liberal policy with very little space for creative development. This project suggests that it was a very good period to be an artist educator.

Unfortunately, in today's political climate the arts are not valued to this same degree. Watt in his article demonstrates how Academic subjects are taking precedence in mainstream schools as the government proposals for the new English Baccalaureate (EBacc) qualifications view English, maths, science, history, geography and languages as the 'core subjects'. These qualifications are set to replace the current GCSE system by 2017. (Watt, N: 2012) Furthermore, National and local funding cuts continue to be made in the arts. Brown in his article informs us that there has been a 50% drop in GCSE numbers for art and design between 2003 and 2013 and the number of art teachers in schools has fallen by 11% since 2010. (Brown, M: 2015) These statistics would suggest a decrease in the number of artist educators in schools, however, there is still a demand for them in museums and galleries today.

I now want to discuss how new forms of labour have affected new forms of relational art practice. In *Relational Aesthetics* Nicolas Bourriaud asks us to think about how we can critique the work of artists without considering the situations they are responding to, (2002:11) suggesting that artworks change depending on the political, economical and cultural situations they were made in. Furthermore, in *Post Production* Bourriaud looks at how technology has changed art works that are being made. He argues that artists today programme forms out of what is already made more than they compose new forms, and suggests that they have moved away from transfiguring raw elements

such as blank canvas' and clay and instead they remix available forms and data we are surrounded by. (2002:17)

There has been a recent shift from goods to a service economy. Pine and Gilmore discuss this shift and point out that individuals not only desire but prefer services to commodities and that manufacturers are moving away from a goods mentality and becoming service providers. (2011:13) Bourriaud would therefore suggest that with this change in focus economically there would also be a change in the type of art works being made. Bishop in *Artificial Hells* cites artist Jeanne Van Heeswijk who argues that the reason artists are no longer interested in a passive process of presenter-spectator relationship is because the commercial world has introduced aesthetic experiences as a way to communicate. (2012:11) This suggests that more artists are creating artwork in response to a service economy existing in relational artworks or art that can be perceived as a service in itself. A later chapter discusses relational art practices in more detail.

This leads me on to discuss ideas around how useful art is or should be. The word 'use' has long been a contested word in relational art. Alistair Hudson the director at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA) speaks about a need to re think arts usefulness. In conversation about *Museum 3.0* he speaks about arts autonomy and the art world as being separate from society. He believes that there is more pressure today on how public money is spent and therefore the role of the museum and its functionality in society is being questioned. Hudson suggests that museums need re-programming and that what we do in society should dictate the programme with a main goal of social development. In this way the museum would become a civic building where the users create the values and content. (Mima : 2014)

The Educational Turn

I want to begin by attempting to outline what the 'educational turn' is and when it first started to appear in contemporary art. In order to do this successfully I will use a selection of artworks and common mediums as case studies that I believe demonstrate the ambiguous nature of this artistic tendency. From here I would like to focus on why this turn may have happened and the implications of its growth.

In the past education and contemporary art were two very separate disciplines, education was associated with schools and universities and galleries with art works. However, in recent years it is not unusual to find art theory books on education in gallery bookshops, for example *Education* by Felicity Allen and *Education for Socially Engaged Art* by Pablo Helguera. As well as publications it is common to find lectures, seminars, discussions and symposiums being held in art galleries today. I will go on to discuss a conference presented by *Hayward Gallery* and *Serpentine Gallery* called *Deschooling Society*. This new interest suggests that education has acquired a currency outside of its traditional setting, it has become 'trendy' and is pushing new boundaries in contemporary art. Lázár describes the educational turn as a tendency in contemporary art in which different modes of educational forms, structures and methods appear as curatorial and art practice in themselves. (Lázár, E : 2012)

This shift of attention has been prevalent since the second half of the 1990's however; in recent years there have been two events that I believe have led to the solidifying of the term. Firstly to mention is the release of Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson's book *Curating and the Education Turn*. The second landmark is *Deschooling Society* (2010), a lecture series held at the South Bank Centre, in London. The two day conference brought together international artists, curators and writers to discuss the changing

relationship between art and education. The event takes its name from Ivan Illich's book *Deschooling Society* (1971) which was a radical critique of the western education system. The *New Observer* review the main issues raised and describe how Illich sees compulsory, mass schooling as a way of introducing consumerism, packaged and institutionalised living as a normal way of life. (The New Observer: 2012) Many of these issues raised in this critique have been increasingly debated in the art world. This would suggest that change has come about in response to the current neoliberal agenda, which leaves little space for freedom and new ways of operating. Furthermore, this event demonstrates that artists, curators and collectives are exploring and re-imagining pedagogical models to address these issues. They are doing so by experimenting with diverse projects and implementing alternative models that incorporate temporary schools, participatory workshops and discursive platforms.

Another contributory factor to the 'educational turn' and thinking about learning in a contemporary art setting could be linked to a growth or development of relational art practice, which I spoke about in the last chapter. Education as an art practice is another example of a dematerialised medium, and one that interacts with people, which are both common tendencies in relational art practice. Irwin and O'Donoghue are interested in studying the interactions and connections that occur with relational art practice because they believe that relational art practices offer ways to rethink the language and practice of teaching. (2012:222) This suggests that the two practices compliment each other and therefore relational art could have helped education find its new place in contemporary art.

I want to now bring your attention to two key figures that I believe demonstrate a change in artists' practices from being simply traditional art maker to artists that use

other traditional disciplines in their art practice. Foster in his essay *The Artist as Ethnographer* introduces this idea that artists are not restricted to traditional art making but that they are researchers and cross-disciplinary thinkers. He proposes that the subject of association has changed and that recent art has tended towards the sociological and the anthropological, where ethnographic mappings have become a primary form of site specific art. (1996:185) I was introduced to new forms of art practice when leaving school during my foundation year and I remember realising the freedom an artist has over what they choose to research and how they use this research in their practice.

Fig.1. *Beuys and Class* (1974)

Joseph Bueys (*see Fig. 1*.) is the second example I want to discuss, he is commonly known as the first artist to use education as an art practice in the 1960's and his theoretical concepts concerned the social, cultural and political functions and potential of art. It is unsure if he was the first artist to do this however, he was certainly the one who acquired 'rock star' status because of it. Sonvilla-Weiss introduces Joseph Bueys'

'extended art concept' and his 'philosophy of art and life', which he describes as highly interdisciplinary and open to many subjects not just art. (2005:138) Beuys worked as a teacher in an art college and started up his own free international university for creativity and interdisciplinary research.

Today Bishop highlights the presence of education as art practice and shares her feelings of confusion in regards to these education projects as art works and says that she has no idea how to communicate the projects to others, but feels the dominant goal is the production of dynamic experiences for participants rather than the production of artistic form. (2012:246) She later on goes on to say that we need to devise new languages and criteria for communicating these transversal practices (ibid: 274) This suggests that educational practice is popular enough to deserve its own entity as an art practice.

Alternative art schools have become very prominent as part of the 'educational turn'. What is interesting is the use of the word 'school' in many of these projects for example; *Open School East*, *School of the Damned* and *Alternative School of Economics* the word is being used with artistic license and is almost an irrelevant use of the term as many of these projects are at odds with our instrumentalist perception of school and teacher. It can be hard to grasp what it is that many of these projects actually do and the word 'school' may confuse as it is hard to separate the term from the usual ideas about school. The *Alternative School of Economics* is part of a network of programmes that are part of a portfolio of projects; it is run by two artists and involves working with the community. It is described on its website as an artwork and a way of working. It uses the practice of self-education and artistic practice to study economics, creating a framework for investigating political, social and cultural issues. (The

Alternative School of Economics: 2014) This is a new concept which I find difficult to fully comprehend and this backs up Bishop's suggestion that a new language and criteria needs to be created for projects like this one. The more familiar people become to this style of artwork the more they will be understood.

Another project that presents prestige towards discourse-based artists is *The Centre For Possible Studies* which is the *Serpentine Gallery's Edgware Rd project*. It brings together people in the local community to collaborate with international artists its research aims to look at the diverse neighbourhood's history, cultures and experiences. (Centre for possible Studies: 2016) The research is achieved through working with people in workshops, classes, lectures and discussions. It is an open-ended, growing archive created by the community. In this sense the uncertainty of what might happen next or what might be discovered is similar to the experimental way artists are expected to work. Thinking about the project in this way allows me to see how it might be considered an artwork in itself.

Fig. 2. *Theaster Gates in his Grand Crossing warehouse and studio* (2013)

I want to now look at relational art practices particularly the work of artist educators whose work is considered an art practice in itself. Theaster Gates (*see Fig. 2.)* is an artist and urban planner; he is the founder and creative director of Rebuild Foundation and the director of Arts and Public Life at the University of Chicago. His practice includes sculpture, installation, performance and urban interventions. He describes his working method as a critique through collaboration and that the outcomes challenge traditional visual art forms. *The Dorchester Project* is a good example of this. In late 2006 Gates purchased a number of abandoned buildings in Chicago's south side and through collaborating with architects and designers he refurbished and reopened them to the public for cultural activity. They house books and records and have become a venue to hold dinners, performances and concerts. The renovations of the buildings are financed by the sale of artworks created from the materials salvaged from the buildings interiors. (White Cube: 2015) Although his education work is not his art practice specifically, his socially engaged practice creates spaces for people to experience and learn.

Another artist who in the past has used education itself as an art form is Pawel Althamer. He collaborates with groups of people and sees his education practice as an exchange of learning. His longest standing project is with Nowolopie Group, an organisation for adults with mental or physical disabilities. He teaches the group an art class on a Friday afternoon and as part of the project he has created a series of films where he has taken the group on trips, including a trip on a biplane (*see Fig. 3.*). In 2005 he was commissioned by a German Institution to make an artwork around Albert Einstein and developed a playful Einstein class to teach physics to a group of juvenile delinquents in Warsaw. The group was given classes in different locations before they

had to demonstrate these experiments to the local neighbourhood. This process was filmed and turned into a documentary. (Bishop, C: 2012 : 256)

Fig. 3. *Common Tasks* (2009)

Learning about these artists and their unusual art practices made me think about whether my own education practice is a form of art. Some projects fit these criteria more than others and I realised that I am not always the one to determine how much agency I have in my work as an artist educator. I am still restricted in my job by time, freedom, outcome and expectations.

Teacher, Artist and Artist Educator Identities

This chapter aims to critically consider in more detail the dilemma of the artist educator's identity. I find my position as an 'artist educator' in the middle of two conflicting identities and I often struggle defining my role to others. I believe it is a common understanding that teaching is inherently reproductive and a modernist notion of art is inherently innovative. It is these perceptions that I will go on to expand

and think about in relation to my experiences as an artist educator. There are artists that I believe have managed to successfully work between the two disciplines, art and education, I will discuss these practices and consider how they have affected my own interpretation of my position.

I have always been adamant in stating that I am not a teacher, however, recently I have begun to wonder why I am so against this association and what it is that makes my work so different to that of teachers. For the duration of this Masters course I have worked alongside teachers in both primary and secondary education, this has taught me a vast amount of what is required of teachers in general. There is a reason these teachers have chosen to undertake this Masters course and it seems to be because they are disillusioned with the current state of arts education and want the experience and knowledge to change their situations. Ball highlights the extent of the problem and suggests causes for them. He believes that business is an essential part of the delivery and policy processes of education today and that classroom decision making is driven by outcome and measurement, and that these pressures distort the learning and teaching that takes place. Ball goes on to suggest dismantling systems of assessment and engaging students in their own education decisions as a way to overcome these key problems. (Ball, S :2013)

Another argument to consider is that of Pierre Bourdieu's when thinking about education and social reproduction. In *Pierre Bourdieu* Jenkins outlines Bourdieu's ideas and discusses how pedagogic action can be a way to reproduce culture and power relations. This reproduction, he believes, is decided by dominant groups or classes, which he sees as an uneven distribution. (1992: 105) This viewpoint suggests that education's reproductive nature leaves little space for changes and innovation.

One example where I have witnessed how a teacher may feel under these reproductive constraints is when a teacher thanked our course leaders for helping her to think about the students in her education practice, and for not always worrying or prioritising 'ticking the boxes' in what is expected from her as a teacher. This made me realise the pressures and demands teachers are under in a culture and system that demands reproduction and militates against other ways of working. Shephard in her article *Prescriptive National Curriculum Restricts Teachers* puts forward the argument that teachers can no longer respond to what students are learning because of the pressure they are under to follow the rigid national curriculum. She points out that this is at a time when teachers are also competing with new forms of media generally for pupils' attention. Allowing teachers the freedom to be more reactive to individual needs is one argument that is put forward to address the problem. (Shephard, J : 2009)

These accounts and stories do not encourage me to embark on a full time teaching career. However, I am aware that these expectations and strains vary between schools and to some degree teachers' interpretations. I know a number of teachers who are unhappy in the schools they are working in because of the restraints and measurement they face. However, on my course I have equally been exposed to teachers who are extremely happy in their schools and are able to be flexible with the curriculum. I have noticed that it seems to be teachers who have worked in schools for a longer period of time who feel confident experimenting with new ideas and adapting the curriculum to fit in with their own plans and intentions.

A modernist notion of the artist and an avant-garde perception would claim that art breaks rules and strives for innovation. Pollock and Orton describe the avant-garde as a phenomenon that is never predetermined and constitutes as being different from

any other cultural patterns seen before. This description references artists as being ultimately different. They also discuss how modernist art history uses the term to signify an idea about the way in which art develops and artists function in society, pointing out how it has become a definition for art and artist today. (1996:141)

I studied Fine Art as my Undergraduate degree at Goldsmiths University, the consensus was that one would graduate and be a professional artist, and this is how I saw my own future. I rented a studio for the first couple of years after graduating, because somehow having a studio solidified the identity of being an artist. However, I would be so exhausted after working long night shifts in order to afford the studio rent that I barely found the time to work in the studio. This experience was valuable and allowed me to understand one reality of working as a 'full time' practicing artist.

There are certain myths and fantasies associated with being an authentic artist such as; being prepared to suffer poverty for the devotion of art, working in isolation to create original artworks and generally being seen as unique or different socially. These myths have been thoroughly deconstructed over time yet still perpetuate today. Furthermore, these stereotypes have never resonated with me and therefore, I have always questioned what an artist should or should not be like.

In 1976 Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi conducted a study on art students to help give an impression of art students personality traits. They sum up their results by describing art students as reserved, amoral, introspective, imaginative, radical and self sufficient, as well as holding aesthetic values in high regard and neglecting economic and social values. (1976 : 45) However, this description is specifically about art students, not artists and is from an earlier period. Austerlitz et al. talk about the clarity and concrete expectations art students have when entering art school, which fundamentally goes

against an open-ness, uncertain, and creative process of learning that art and design education advocates. (Austerlitz et al: 2008) This point of view highlights the different values in the art world and art school education.

I would agree with the common perception that artists are experimental, embracing failure to discover new and innovative ways of working. Jones believes working without knowing where one is going is a necessary condition for new creations, which encourages differences rather than reproduction of the same. (2013 : 16). This opinion is opposed to the prescriptive descriptions of education mentioned above. Atkinson reiterates this point in his essay *Pedagogy of the Not Known* as he looks at the difficulties of accommodating a notion of risk-taking in a pedagogic framework. He believes real learning and problem solving can only be reached if students are exposed to the unknown, which he sees as events that rupture their everyday process. (2013 : 138) As a fine art student in Higher Education I was expected to demonstrate originality and produce work that derived from wonder, experimentation and unique thinking. I believe there is certain kudos attached to being an artist and these expectations are still apparent regardless of arts multi disciplinary nature today.

These conflicting identity associations I have discussed above for both teachers and artists lead me on nicely to consider the identity crisis I often experience as an artist educator. I often feel that my teaching practice is an abandonment of my artistic ambition, and a large pull for my decision not to become a full time trained teacher in mainstream education is based on a feeling of 'giving up' my artistic career. This is a very common feeling and one that I would argue points to failures in higher education for perpetuating this idea. These feelings and thoughts are validated by expressions such as the playwright George Bernard Shaw's famous idiom   "Those who can, do.

Those who can't, teach." Which strongly suggest that teaching is a profession associated with failure, and that if one is teaching a particular profession one is not good enough to work full time in that profession. This perception has become common currency and resonates with many teachers. However, it ignores the argument that many individuals enjoy the education and interaction element of teaching.

Adams investigates artists who become teachers and the expressions of this identity transformation. His findings indicate that for art graduates this identity transition from artist to art teacher is difficult and that this may be because of students' liberal expectations of art education based on their art school practice and value systems compared to schools' conservative schemes of work. (Adams, Jeff N. P:2007) This suggests that mainstream schools and art schools are very different in their approach.

I believe it is important to mention how people often comply with what they think is expected from them in specific roles of identity. Burke and Stets consider George McGall and J. L Simmon's ideas around identity theory who believed that ones view of oneself involves cultural expectations which are tied into social positions within a social structure, and that we are actors trying to play the presumed parts. (2009 : 39) Furthermore, Pierre Bourdieu's theory 'habitus and field' supports this outlook. Costa et al in *Bourdieu, Habitus and Social Research: The Art of Application* explain 'habitus' as a relation of social actions, an evolving process responsible for how individuals act, think, perceive and approach the world and their role in it. (2015: 98) These ideas of how we adhere to expectations and roles suggest that we have predisposed notions of how to behave in certain roles. I see this as a problem for artist educators because of their contradictory identity.

My experience, role and the expectations of me vary with each job and I enjoy this aspect to my work but it adds to the confusion of trying to label or define my exact function. I have often felt like a teacher and have been given full responsibility to lead activities. However, I have also been employed as an artist on education projects where I have been ignored, with no set role designated to me, this felt as if people were unsure of how to use my skill sets. There are times when I am asked to give presentations about my artwork and I feel like a fraudulent artist because I am presenting artworks that are not representative of what I consider my current practice to be. This is because I assume that clients want to see the work of a visual artist making artwork in mediums that they can comprehend and relate to. This is not to say that the 'educational turn' has had no affect, but that it is not yet a common movement or type of practice everyone is familiar with. I believe my current practice, which involves thinking about my position as an artist educator, is not what the teachers, students, galleries or museums want to see. This is an important point to mention and something I intend to use this dissertation to explore further and put into practice in the future.

As an educator I enjoy that I have more freedom and room to experiment with my teaching practice. I do not have to adhere to a marking system or create an assessment criteria for the students. I get the opportunity to work with a range of people in a variety of places which I feel helps me develop as an educator. Creating workshop plans and proposals takes up most of my time and therefore, I see this as a strand to my art practice. There are positives and draw backs to working alongside teachers in my position. I can sometimes feel like a fraud when leading sessions because I have no official qualifications entitling me to the position. However, I realise that my unusual status allows me to break the rules and work against the system,

which in itself has positive connotations and can make my place more desirable for students and teachers.

Kind et al. conducted research into the partnerships in learning between artists and teachers and how this affected professional development. They use artists in residence working in schools as a way to look at the impact of artists and teachers working together and suggest that both can influence each other and shape each others experiences creating a space for shared, reciprocal learning to take place. (Kind, S et al.: 2007) I experienced mixed responses as an artist educator working in a secondary school, many teachers envied my position and many did not understand why I was there. However, others also appreciated me for bringing new ideas and methods into school.

I have demonstrated reasons why I think the identity of artist educators is confused, and suggested that this is because the interests and values associated with those identities of artists and teachers are in conflict. Thornton in *Artist, Researcher, Teacher* scrutinises this issue, he looks at the identities attached to artists, researchers and teachers and the identity of the 'artist teacher' (artist educator), and suggests that although this profession exists, it has very little exposure in the UK, and that the notion is confused between artist and art teacher. However, he does point out that it is a common occurrence in Higher Education, as high profile artists are invited as teachers on art degrees (2013 : 49) He also proposes that 'artist teachers' can be understood as individuals who value artistic autonomy and creative freedom and feel these are important values to promote within the education system (ibid : 53). This analysis resonates with me and reminds me of why I have chosen not to be a teacher.

I asked a selection of teachers, artists and artist educators a series of questions about their roles and identities in their professions to get an idea of how others perceive what they do and if this feeling of misplacement and confusion is shared. Apart from one artist who only described himself as an artist all others ticked boxes for artist, teacher and artist educator. This in itself made me realise I am not alone in feeling like I belong in a number of pigeonholed boxes and the answers resonated with my feeling of displacement and turbulence as an artist educator. (See *Appendix* 1)

I want to finish this chapter by looking at an artist and educator who has given me confidence in my position as an artist educator as well as highlighting the issue of its confused identity. Pablo Helguera depicts the artist's expertise as being a non-expert but someone who is a provider of frameworks where new experiences and insights can form (2011 : 54). This summary helped me realise that my role is to create experiences for others to allow their own insights and ideas to form. I see my open-ended workshops as a way to create these experiences, and a way to collect and gather inspiration from other people's interpretations and ideas.

My Practice

Finally, this chapter is a chance for me to discuss how I have used art practice as a way to help inform my research on the subject of my identity as an artist educator. I will discuss the work created and the process of making and thinking through the artwork as a whole.

The studio allowed me the space and time to reflect on the issues associated with my dilemma of questioning which identity I fit into as an artist educator. It took me a long

time to take my ideas and notes off the wall as I had so many questions on reflection of my complex position as an artist educator. I started to think about the way in which I work between education and art and I realised that I role swap between an artist writing proposals and ideas for workshops which I consider to be potential educational experiences for others, to an educator who hands over this work to the people who take part in the experience and finally an artist again who collects stories and objects that are left behind after the process has taken place. For many years I have collected the remnants, scraps and traces from my workshops and always struggle with what to do with them. I see potential in parts of education that are usually overlooked.

This was a chance for me think about this tendency and experiment with these objects as I was primarily asked to reflect on how I usually work. I gathered my collections together and started to think about how I could put my mark on them, take ownership over the stories, objects and traces. I created casts of a series of paint palettes that I had collected from a school during my artist in residence placement in 2015 (*see Fig. 4 and Fig. 5*). As objects in themselves I had been drawn to the accidental and unintentional marks made by the students, once cast into separate objects that mirrored these marks they became something very different. I began to think about the process of casting as a representation of my reciprocal learning process in my education practice. The students create these palettes in a workshop, and the marks left behind are imprinted on me, therefore the palettes belong to the students and the casts are mine. There was something very poetic and subtle about the palettes, when presented in a straight line they started to convey a graveyard quality, a line of preserved memories each one unique, as if each workshop is different and each student an individual.

Fig. 4.*Cast of Paint Palette* (2016)

Fig. 5. *Casts of paint palettes, details* (2016)

(*See Appendix 2 for more detail*)

As well as the moulded casts of paint palettes, I also created large-scale (A1) prints of my workshop plans (see *Appendix* 3). These plans were edited displaying notes, stories and memories of things that had happened retrospectively and I allowed myself to get lost in the drama of this storytelling process. I used a selection of colours to add to the theatre of this performance and they became comical artworks that allowed an audience to see into my head. The exaggeration and retrospective attributed thoughts, erasures and comments to the workshop plans highlighted the complexity of my position. I felt the works became bold and the truthful aspect of the work conveyed a feeling of risk taking and rule breaking. These pieces were extremely useful to help me work out where and what my dilemma was as a base for this research into the conflicting multiple identity of the artist educator. The making process was integral for me to reflect and focus on my practice as an artist educator, and without trying or thinking I created artworks.

I was surprised that I found it difficult to be around my artwork when displayed to the public during the exhibition. I avoided the artwork, as I felt embarrassed by the honesty the plans shared. They displayed honesty, weaknesses and secrets with strangers and this expressed the dilemma I have with my position as an artist educator, which is something I have never discussed before this research.
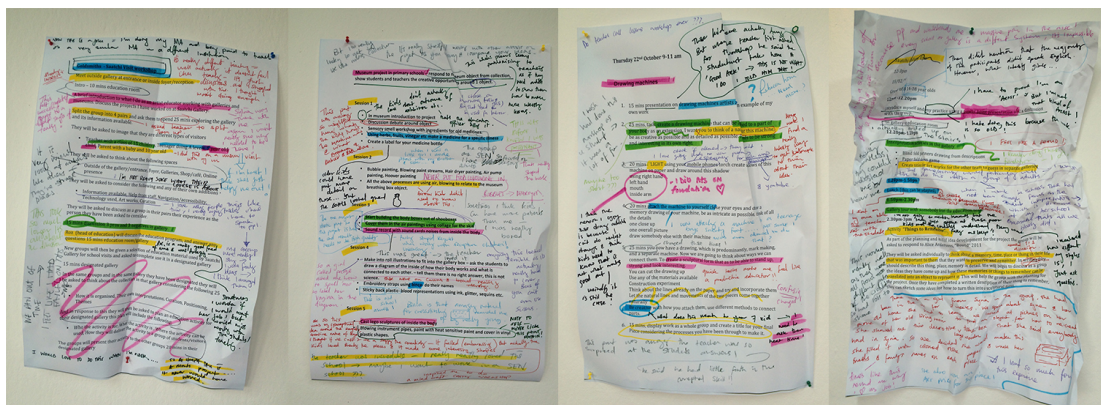
Fig.6. *Installation Shot* (2016)

Fig.7. *Edited Plan Prints* (2016)

(See Appendix 3 for more detail)

The two artworks began to symbolise the bookends of an action for me as I was focusing on the plans that are made at the beginning of my education process and the palettes, which are the remnants, collected at the end of the action. However both pieces were being interrogated and investigated with questions and deliberations as to why and what it is I am doing in my normal process. The middle part where I am working with people becomes irrelevant in this circumstance and belongs to the people I interact with. Both parts to the artwork had a strong feeling of potential and chance for me. They allowed room for peoples' interpretation and were both based on the things I cannot control in my practice.

One problem I faced during the instillation of the exhibition was choosing how to bring the two art works together. They are very different objects aesthetically and they both have their own individual meanings as well as what they say together. I was still dissatisfied with how they worked together as one piece once the exhibition was completed. However, I have thought deeply about this and come to realise that this

may be because a large part of the work and my research is based on the dilemma and problem of feeling confused by my identities. The unsettling feeling that I do not fit into either the expected role of an artist or an educator is reflected in the artworks being at odds with each other. Therefore, I see this misfit or failure of the artworks not working together as an important and positive aspect to the work.

This process of making art was very different to how I usually work, I have considered my practice as relational for a long time as it usually involves working with people and creating collaborative artworks. In one way I see both the casts and edited plans as collaborative, because neither could have been completed without the educational exchange that came beforehand. This was a chance for me to capture and concentrate on the parts of education that the people worked with determine. A plan never goes to plan because it is people one is working with, similarly one cannot predict what someone else's painting will look like.

This experience of working in a studio and creating artworks for a final exhibition was incredibly self-reflexive, and because of this I feel the nature of the work demonstrates this. The process of making demanded I look back over past plans and old objects left behind from past projects, thus allowing me time and space to think about what exactly happened in these educational exchanges. The work itself, I believe, casts light on my profession and the identities involved as well as the institutions and expectations on me.

Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation I have worked through strands of research and thinking related to the dilemma of defining the role of an artist educator. My research was guided by my own feelings of misplacement and confusion as an artist educator as I feel there are multiple identities at play and I am constantly negotiating my services and title. I do not feel as if I fit into either the perceptions and expectations related to teachers and equally I do not see myself as an authentic practicing artist, I have felt at loss with how to place myself.

I undertook this Masters course in order to work through my education and art practice and to find a balance between the two practices, which can commonly be viewed as opposing practices. This Masters has enabled me to work through the questions and problems I have confronted in my career. Through meeting and working alongside a range of educators and artists it has given me insight into different situations. I have been encouraged to interrogate the questions and uncertainties I experience through using art practice and theoretical research.

When I started this research I was looking for an answer to the problem and this approach in itself was a problem. I realised early on that it was more interesting to address the problem and make an argument for there being a lack of communication between teaching and art practice. I now feel certain and justified in my feelings of uncertainty as an artist educator who works between the two disciplines.

I believed it important to think about the artist educator within a historical context, as a way to understand where this role may have derived from. Especially thinking about

political and economic changes over times that have affected artists' labour and production and more generally who can be an artist in a neo liberal climate. I discussed how precarious labour, exploitation and competition have become associated with labour in the art world and furthermore, looked at how New Labour's incentives may have affected this. I finished this chapter by looking at how new forms of labour have affected more relational art forms being devised.

I then went on to discuss the 'educational turn', which is a new tendency in contemporary art, which has introduced education into art galleries in the form of literature, lectures and workshops. I demonstrated how education has becoming fashionable in the art world and suggest that this may have come about in response to the current neo liberal agenda and its impact on our education system. I looked at projects that use the name 'school' which I believe challenges our perception of what a school is. Furthermore, I have mentioned key figures that I believe have introduced new art forms and looked at relational art practice that I think uses education at its core.

I felt it was important to outline and discuss the conflicting identities, positions and expectations of artists and teachers in order to position myself. I have looked at reasons for the common notion and understanding that teaching is reproductive, and driven by outcome and measurement, as well as Bourdieu's theory that education is a way to reproduce power relations, which he sees as an uneven distribution. These examples of how teachers are forced to work under prescriptive guidelines have reminded my why I have not chosen to become a teacher. However, I have also scrutinised the modernist and avant-gardist viewpoint that sees art as inherently innovative and sees artists as creative experimentalists with certain personality traits

that include working in isolation, a devotion to their artwork and willingness to undergo poverty in the name of art. These myths and stereotypes do not resonate with me and so leave me feeling lost between the discipline of a teacher and an artist. I have highlighted how these separate disciplines do not feed into each other, as schools lack the experimental nature and aspects of failure that are crucial to art making. I have looked at identity theories that suggest we have predisposed notions of how to behave in certain roles, which can propose a problem when in the middle of very different roles. Furthermore, I have presented evidence to suggest that the identity transformation from artist to teacher has been associated with failure as well as not meeting expectations for artists who can feel disappointed by the lack of freedom in teaching compared to their art school experiences. However, I have also bought the reader's attention to the positives of working between the two disciplines, and looked at how reciprocal learning can take place between artists and teachers.

Finally I have discussed how I have used art practice to help inform my research and reflect on issues relating to my role and circumstance, highlighting the current dilemma I feel as an artist educator. I have looked at how my artwork and the process of making the artwork has allowed me to questions perceptions of myself and my role, thinking about how I work, what it is I do and why I do it. There are two parts to the artwork I made for the exhibition and I discuss in detail how they work together and independently. I discuss how this whole process has been a challenge as it has been a very different way of working to how I usually work and therefore has allowed me to reflect on my profession, the institutions I work with and the expectations of me.

I believe I have illustrated that the artist educator is currently in a confused position existing between two disciplines that have been pigeonholed as separate ideologies. I

have shown how this is changing with recent movements in both education and art. However, I would argue that there still needs to be better communication between these positions and practices and that this dissertation illustrates why this is necessary.

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Appendix 1 – artist/teachers and artist educator's answers to questions

Participant 1

1. Please circle/highlight the role you identify with.

Teacher*

Artist*

Artist educator*

2. Describe or define your identity in this role.

I've started freelancing as a museum and artist educator, it's been a mix of explaining factual/ historical information and of helping children express themselves creatively, usually around a given subject. I've also made art work that explores/ critiques what a museum is. This is educational (hopefully) but more about provoking questions in observers rather than me leading a session. So I guess I identify as all three above but it changes depending on the task at hand.

3. With what title, roles, practices, knowledge, values and vocations do others identify your role?

On my email signature I say I am an 'artist/ museum learning facilitator.' I think facilitating learning is closer to what an artist can offer in roles like the ones above. I don't want to be didactic, I want to get those I work with to grow in their own ideas and make their own minds up.

4. Are you confused with the identities in your role?

I try not to be! At this moment when I'm building new relationships with museums and galleries and potentially schools, I feel I have to be clear about what I'm offering, and I guess that is the potential for interesting ideas and creative projects. I'm still going to have to be flexible though. I also think that part of being an artist is to feel unsure of yourself, because you have to push boundaries and try unknown territory because otherwise you wouldn't be innovating. I do think that educational work is a legitimate form of art practice. It gets people thinking and seeing the world in new ways. Perhaps it's idealistic but that's what I see as the reason d'être for art... Or at least one of the main ones!!

Participant 2

1. Please circle/highlight the role you identify with.

Teacher

Artist /

Artist educator /

2. Describe or define your identity in this role.

For 95% of my career I've identified totally with artist educator as my work for the past twenty years has been solely working with schools and communities with organisation Cloth Of Gold / now Social Fabric. I've been project manager, creative director,

director within the organisation, roles which need skills such as people liaison, management, fundraising, organisation, budgeting, filing, IT, marketing - when you are immersed in these sort of tasks it's hard to describe yourself as an 'artist' with the image that can evoke. Though being an artist is who I am.

Recently since I've had a bit more time since my son has left home I've begun to develop my private practise in directions away from collaborative work - just for me- then I feel like I'm an artist not an artist educator. I feel better for wearing both hats as they feed of each other.

I've obviously loved continuing to develop my creative skills for the past twenty years, but I've often been reactive to commissions & expectations rather than making work in different mediums just because I wanted to. I'm happy I've got a strong textile based practise now because of that but am also enjoying exploring new mediums.

Despite teaching & lecturing a lot I never describe myself as a teacher as artist educator describes my role much better.

3. With what title, roles, practices, knowledge, values and vocations do others identify your role?

I have different roles within different jobs, lecturer, creative facilitator, lead artist, mentor etc.

4. Are you confused with the identities in your role?

No because I've thought about it. I used to get annoyed when I was directing Cloth Of Gold & people described me as an 'artist' maybe because I'd have liked to be just that but my collaborative practise & livelihood depended on my skills which ran parallel with my creative ones. In those days 'artist educator' wasn't a thing - it is more widely recognised now.

Participant 3

1) Artist

2) I make works of art using a variety of media. My identity comes down to a number of physically administrative roles:

Producer

Editor

Designer

Director

Painter

Sculptor

And the identity grows from my knowledge that these are the skills by which I can express my ideas.

3) I think people historically think of artists as:

- Visionaries

- Leaders

- Trailblazers

- Fearlessness

- Confidence

- People who give hope

4) Only insofar as there are lots of different hats to wear depending on the day and the ability to juggle and toggle between those roles can be overwhelming sometimes, but I think people of my generation are increasingly used to this blurring of roles.

Appendix 2 – Detail image of a Paint Palette Cast

Appendix 3 – Detail image of an Edited Plan

Museum project in primary schools – respond to museum object from collection, show students and teachers the creative opportunities around 1 object.

Session 1
- In museum introduction to project
- Discussion debate around object
- Sensory smell workshop with ingredients for old medicines:
- Using herbs, fruits, vinegar etc make a medicine for a specific illness
- Create a label for your medicine bottle

Session 2
- Bubble painting, Blowing paint streams, Hair dryer painting, Air pump painting, Hoover painting
- All the above processes are using air, blowing to relate to the museum breathing box object.

Session 3
- Start building the body boxes out of shoeboxes
- Cover them in the air paintings using collage for the skin
- Sound record with sound cards noises from inside the body

Session 4
- Make into roll illustrations to fit into the gallery box – ask the students to draw a diagram of the inside of how their body works and what is connected to each other. – tell them there is no right answer, this is not science.
- Embroidery straps using binca- do their names
- Sticky back plastic- blood representations using ink, glitter, sequins etc.

Session 5
- Cast lego sculptures of inside the body
- Blowing instrument pipes, paint with heat sensitive paint and cover in vinyl plastic shapes.

Handwritten annotations:

But I'm really lucky to get to work with the artists collective

It's really stressful the project as you work & compare your ideas

This whole plan's seeming to promising to teachers as if they need artists to show them how to make more interesting lessons.

The kids don't actually care about outcome of exhibitor etc.

chose a breathing hair & gas box that used to be used in labour

This part was anything so insightful hearing what the kids thought the machine was & what pregnancy & babies & Birth was.

hats the education officer silly it.

THIS WAS BEFORE I KNEW I WAS PREGNANT

The group are SEN so focused on sensory activities That really shaped the work

when I was a little girl I made potions with my brother & sister...

older kids could have put more detail on those... but the bottles looked great

NEVER PUT FOOD COLOURING IN

Again kids didn't need to know about this.

BUBBLES → DESTROYED

Sometimes I think kids can have more patience then me — I was really bored.

The one major idiotic part to this project is that the end result needs to be high quality

fucky stupid request what would with reception children! Unnecessary

This was great → the teacher loved it

anyway this looked terrible as it actually really hard to cover box's if you can't even use scissors.

So a girl called paige asked me how to spell 'moo' to label her vagina in the diagram.

these were on canvas & looked really interesting.

This is old school aswell!

Binca is that amazing material for crossstitch reminded me of being really young

NOTE TO SELF — NEVER LICK THIS PAINT AGAIN!

ok so this was my conceptual idea around the shape creative name of lego I thought if we cast it we a stopped the creativity Kids loved breaking the pieces & it made more interesting shapes

It failed (embarassing) But actually the

the teacher was incredible — I really really loved this school → maybe I want to work in a SEN school ???

inspired me to do a mind craft casting workshop