

# Learning Experiments; Learning Experimentally, Learning to Experiment

This course is a learning experiment, *of sorts*. It's partly based on research conducted by the course organiser Neil Mulholland over the past 15 years. This research takes the form of an art project (Shift/Work) and a series of peer-reviewed publications (most recently Neil's *Reimagining the Art School*). You can access all of these resources easily online should you wish to know more; but it's not essential that you do so.

Everything that you will do on this course emerges from experiments that have been play-tested within Shift/Work or has been play-tested as a component of other courses and performances that Neil Mulholland has ran at over 40 art schools and exhibition venues around the world over the past 10 years. The methods deployed were also part of a PhD (by the artist Dr. Jake Watts, who is teaching on this course). These various learning experiments and research projects have lead to educational hypothesis that have been further play-tested.

Jake brings his considerable expertise in the field of artistic workshops to bear upon the course design and content. We are also joined by artist Beth Dynowski, who is currently completing her PhD at ECA. Beth's research is pivotal to the learning style and paragogical ambitions of this course.

So, while the courses blended approach is *relatively* new, the way that the course is design has been carefully tested, reviewed and calibrated over a long period of time.

## **Art-as-Education or Education-as-Art?**

What the course is concerned with primarily is not education

*per se* but *learning*. The course encourages you to raise questions about learning.

How might people learn to become artists?

How might people learn *from* art?

How might art be considered to be a form of 'learning'?

How might we learn *about* art?

In this, you should be careful not to confuse learning with 'schooling' or 'education'. They are not (always) the same thing.

## **Art-as-Learning-as-Art-as-Learning-as-Art-as-Learning-as-Art...**

The course does not seek to answer these questions definitively; rather, it asks you to work in groups to engage with and develop new ways of learning that *you* think are important.

This is what we will call 'experimental learning'; learning about *and testing* different ways of learning. You will do this in an artistic context (of your own making).

As such, what you do will form a continuum that moves back and forth between two closely related domains: Art-as-Learning-as-Art-as-Learning-as-Art-as-Learning-as-Art...

### ***How? Not What?***

What you might learn, in a sense, will be up to you and your 'Basho' (group). Remember that this course is concerned with practice-as-research. *What* you learn (the specific focus of your group, or your 'Collective Inquiry') is, ultimately, of less importance than *how* you *approach* learning and *how* you *reflect* upon how you have learned.