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The art foundation course: laying the foundations for creative careers in a neo-liberal regime.

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

York St John University

School of Education, Language and Psychology

January 2023

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Acknowledgements

There are a number of people whose assistance and inspiration I need to acknowledge.

My family, who have all supported and encouraged what I have been doing, especially my wife Pat, who has kindly and patiently put up with the hours I have spent doing this research. And who also kindly and patiently complied with my many requests to read draft sections to see if I was making any sense. Thank you.

My grateful and sincere thanks go to my supervisors for their support, guidance, encouragement and their critical friendship: Dr. Tony Leach, principal supervisor for the first five years of my research and Dr. Margaret Wood who took over when Tony retired, Professor Matthew Clarke who stayed for most of the journey and Dr Yeji Han who took over when Matthew moved on, and Dr. Paul Smith and Dr. Rebekka Kill who both had briefer stints.

The participants in my research, who took the time and effort to produce the requested artwork and to give up their valuable time to be interviewed; as Denzin says, 'Doing interviews is a privilege granted to us, not a right we have' (2001, p.24). According to Bourdieu:

> Sociology and art do not make good bedfellows. That's the fault of art and artists, who are allergic to everything that offends the idea they have of themselves: the universe of art is a universe of belief, belief in gifts, in the uniqueness of the uncreated creator, and the intrusion of the sociologist, who seeks to understand, explain, account for what he finds, is a source of scandal. (1993, p.139)

Fortunately I did not come across anything resembling this attitude in the creative professionals I interviewed for this research.

The students and my colleagues on the joyous years I spent as a foundation course leader and the artists, designers, and lecturers I have worked with over the years, who got me wondering about the topic. In particular, Martin Wolverson, sculpture tutor on my pre-diploma course and Harry Seager, sculpture tutor on my DipAD course.

Lastly, Dr Ken Robinson, whose death in 2020 robbed creative education of one of its most vocal advocates, and whose vision for arts education, and education in general, is as relevant today (if not more so) as it was in his lifetime.

Abstract

There is a considerable body of literature which considers the history of art education and teaching and learning on art and design degree courses, but less on the foundation course stage. This research adds to this literature through a study examining students' experiences of their art foundation courses and how these influence their educational and career journeys within a neo-liberal economic regime. The study foregrounds Bourdieu's concept of illusio as the driver of the participants' agency and the transitions they make as their professional identities develop. It contrasts the playful, experimental ethos of the foundation course with the instrumental, performative discourse of neo-liberal education policies. Face to face and on-line interviews were used to co-construct narratives of the participants' experiences, which were enhanced by the participants' images visualising their identities.

The study found that their foundation courses prepared the foundations on which the participants built their careers through modifying their habitus, building their cultural capital, developing their identities and allowing them to invest their illusio as they journey into their chosen specific fields. Dealing with the challenges of building creative careers in a neo-liberal regime and reconciling the tensions between their habitus and their practices as creative individuals with the demands of the market and of their clients required considerable resilience as they tried to reconcile their individual creativity and authenticity with economic requirements and uncertainties.

These participants' stories demonstrate that their experiences on their art foundation courses have had a continuing positive impact on their perceptions of themselves as creative individuals. In contrast to the competitive approach fostered by neo-liberal policies the participants clearly benefitted from mutual support and shared identity with their peers, creating a sense of belonging to a community of practice that offers a challenge to instrumental conceptions of vocational education through developing creative practitioners with a strong entrepreneurial spirit.

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Abbreviations

ADAR	Art & Design Admissions Registry
ADF	Art and Design Foundation Course
APPG	All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CBET	Competence based education and training
CDT	Craft, Design & Technology
CNAA	Council for National Academic Awards
DES	Department for Education & Science
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
DFE	Department for Education
DipAD	Diploma in Art & Design
DLHE	Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education
EBacc	English Baccalaureate
FE	Further Education
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GLAD	Group for Learning in Art & Design
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
IER	Institute for Employment Research
NACAE	National Advisory Committee on Art Examinations (1949-1959), replaced by National Advisory Council on Art Education (the Coldstream Committee)
NCDAD	National Council for Diplomas in Art & Design
NDD	National Diploma in Art & Design
NME	New Musical Express
OFS	Office for Students
ONS	Office for National Statistics
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PreDip	Pre Diploma Course
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
UAL	University of the Arts London
UCAS	University and Colleges Admissions Service
UCCA	Universities Central Council on Admissions
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WJEC	Welsh Joint Education Committee

Prologue

This prologue takes the form of a brief introduction to the “I” in the research, the researcher’s voice, followed by extended quotations from Pierre Bourdieu and from Richard Hoggart. As part of a reflexive approach to narrative inquiry, Bourdieu (2003a) calls for participant objectivation, reflexive analysis of the researcher’s positionality through writing and considering a narrative of the researcher’s own history; a brief account of mine follows.

After being expelled from school early in the sixth form I was able to start a pre-diploma course (the precursor to the foundation course) at my local art college on the strength of my portfolio. Having only done painting at school, working in three-dimensions was a revelation and I went on to do a DipAD in sculpture, working for one of my tutors at weekends. After graduating I worked for a year as an occupational therapist and then did a post-graduate teaching course. I taught art in secondary schools (and art and archaeology in adult education) while trying to establish myself as an exhibiting sculptor. Promotion led to my own work declining as I become head of a school’s art department before moving to a sixth form college as a faculty head. I was promoted to an assistant principal post, and also worked with our local HEIs to set up progression links with the area’s most disadvantaged schools.

When the local polytechnic closed its foundation course, I managed to set one up at the college, and was course leader for three exciting and rewarding years. I also carried on working on widening participation and was seconded to one of the local universities to develop a scheme using early conditional offers to pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. I was eventually appointed to the university and the scheme expanded to 40 schools in five local authorities. After taking voluntary redundancy I worked as a freelance consultant before retiring (for the first time). Before long I went back to work as a local authority research officer working with young people in care, with most of my work commissioned by the young people themselves. I retired again and then completed a Masters by Research looking at art teachers’ professional identities before starting on this PhD. (A more complete version of my story is at Annex 1.)

Bourdieu on cultural production:

> [W]hat is currently happening to the universes of artistic production throughout the developed world is entirely novel and truly without precedent: the hard-won independence of cultural production and circulation from the necessities of the economy is being threatened, in its very principle, by the intrusion of commercial logic at every stage of the production and circulation of cultural goods. (Bourdieu, 2003, p.67)
>
> It took painters nearly five centuries to achieve the social conditions that made a Picasso possible. We know from reading their contracts that they had to struggle

> against their patrons to stop their work from being treated as a mere product whose worth is determined by the surface painted and the cost of the colours used. They had to struggle to win the right to sign their works, that is to say, the right to be treated as authors. They had to fight for the right to choose the colours they used, the manner in which those colours are used, and even, at the very end - particularly with abstract art - the subject itself, on which the power of patronage bore especially strongly. (Bourdieu, 2003, pp.71-72)

Hoggart on vocationalism:

> Vocationalism is one way of avoiding difficult choices of value, of looking seriously of the injustice which runs through the educational system. It provides a functional area for anyone ill at ease with every other kind of educational purpose. Its jargon reinforces the sense of disinfection, from 'market-oriented' through 'cost-effective' to all the rest. The almost single-minded stress on vocational education by the recent succession of Tory governments is therefore not simply a recognition that we must be better trained at all levels if we are to survive prosperously in an increasingly competitive world. Deeper down, it indicates a misfit of the free-ranging, speculative - not ‘function-oriented' - mind and imagination. (Hoggart, 1996, p.22)

The changing face of art education

Figure 1. National Diploma in Design students at Walthamstow College of Art in 1958

Figure 2. Pre-diploma students at Leeds College of Art in 1966

Chapter 1: Introduction

Figure 3. The Leicester Group, Tom Hudson's staff on the Pre-Diploma Course, 1963.

The staff of Tom Hudson's innovative Pre-Diploma course lived together in an old rectory at Kibworth, near Leicester. As well as teaching together, they held an influential group exhibition, The Inner Image, at the Grabowski Gallery in London in 1964.

Left to right: Cristina Bertoni, Michael Chilton, Tom Hudson, Laurie Burt, Terry Setch, Michael Sandle, centre front, Victor Newsome.

(Mike Chilton, who had been taught by Tom Hudson and then taught with him, was interviewed for this study.)

1.1 Introduction and overview

The neo-liberal discourse which shapes current education policy, with its emphasis on marketable skills which contribute to economic welfare 'at the expense of more esoteric or aesthetic forms of learning' (Clarke, 2019, p.38), means that art and design occupies an increasingly liminal position in British education. Policies which emphasise literacy and numeracy in primary schools, such as the Primary National Strategy for Literacy and Numeracy in England introduced in the 1990s, leave limited time for creative subjects. In secondary the focus on GCSE results in a limited and specified range of subjects and an emphasis on STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) relegates arts and humanities to the margins. In tertiary and higher education, a relentless focus on vocational programmes which provide financial returns for graduates and for the country poses an existential threat to arts courses. This threat is despite the contribution of the creative industries to the economy. In 2017 the design sector alone produced almost £4 billion of the UK's Gross Value Added (Creative Industries Council, 2021). There were an estimated 2.29 million creative industry employees in 2021, with a further 663,000 self-employed, which represents 6.9% of all UK jobs (Creative Industries Council, 2022).

Whilst art and design education is becoming increasingly liminal, the art foundation course, a one year course taken between school and university, is even more so. It is an anomaly in UK education, in that other subject areas have no equivalent programmes. It does not fit into the National Qualifications Framework, so that for university admissions it is equivalent to A levels but taken by students who have already got A levels. There are no tuition fees for 18-year olds (although there may be a charge for materials) but regarded as expensive for institutions to run – to the extent that several institutions have withdrawn their courses. Its primary purpose is to prepare students to enter specialist art and design course in higher education, so does not fit into the current neo-liberal vocationalist discourse.

This study is concerned with how the participants' experiences of education (and the discourses which shape these), and particularly their art foundation courses, have impacted on their identities and their journeys of becoming as they begin to identify themselves as art students and eventually practicing, professional, artists or designers. It set out to determine whether the course has benefits for its students, and if these potential benefits prove to be sufficiently worthwhile to consider the course as a viable alternative to the credentialist, vocationalist education which dominates in a neoliberal regime. This is important in view of the threats to the future of art foundation courses arising from universities' expansion of four year degree courses with integrated foundation years, which require four years' fees and loans

as opposed to a free foundation course and a three year degree, with the associated implications for access and affordability.

This chapter explores the background to the research and my position in it, states the research questions and goes on to give an account of the development of tertiary art education in England, and the development of the art and design foundation course, the focus of this study. The following chapters examine the principal themes of the study: the foundation course and what it does; the impact of the participants' illusio and the fit between their habitus, capital, field and practice; neo-liberalism and its educational, economic and political impact on art and design education and careers; and the course as the foundation for the development of creative careers.

Chapter Two sets out the theoretical framework used in the study, and the political and educational context for the study. It reviews the elements of and the definitions of the creative industries and the sectors of fine art, design and craft, and then examines the issues faced by workers in the creative industries. Lastly it examines the threats currently impacting on tertiary education generally and on art education in particular.

Chapter Three describes the methodological framework and the methods used in the study. Within a qualitative, social constructionist epistemology it considers issues of the researcher's positioning and reflexivity, accounts for the methods used for sampling and data generation, and the ethical issues involved. It goes on to describe the approach to working with and analysing the data to discover and develop the themes arising from the participants' narratives.

Chapter Four presents the narratives of the nine participants, who reflect on their experiences on their foundation courses, their professional practices and their identities as artists and designers. Their accounts of their past and present experiences are presented as biographical stories which consciously foreground their voices, expressing their views in their own words. As well as verbal accounts, their visual representations of their identities then and now are included along with their own interpretations of the images.

Chapter Five uses the theoretical and thematic frameworks to discuss the participants' lived experiences of their early lives and schooling, their experiences on their courses and how these contributed to their journeys of becoming, their exploration and discovery of their identities as creative individuals.

Chapter Six employs the same frameworks to discuss the challenges and opportunities they faced in the development of their professional practices and their professional identities. The chapter ends by summarising their reflections on their journeys.

Chapter Seven restates the aims of the research and the research questions, establishes the contribution to knowledge and presents a set of conclusions leading to recommendations for art education and tertiary education more generally. It goes on to suggest directions for further research and ends with a personal reflection on the research journey.

1.2 Background to the research

The art and design foundation course (ADF) is usually a one year, full time course taken by school leavers with Level 3 qualifications in preparation for degree courses in art and design. (Level 3 qualifications on the Regulated Qualifications Framework are A levels and equivalent vocational qualifications.)

An art foundation course is more about the experience than the qualification. Whilst its primary purpose is to prepare students for transition into higher education in art and design through providing a broad education in the theory and practice of art & design, and through the development of increasing, informed specialisation, it also uses the disciplines of art & design as a vehicle for personal development. It aims to socialise students into full time art & design education, develop self-motivation, personal initiative, critical awareness, independence and reflection and so allow students to develop individual, enquiring approaches to their practices while building on and developing their practical skills. The course also provides students with contemporary and historical contextual backgrounds for their own work. These opportunities and experiences assist them in their self-diagnosis of abilities and interests leading to an informed choice of specialisation and allowing them to progress to appropriate sequel courses with conviction and confidence.

These introductory art foundation courses were developed in the late 1950s and 1960s out of the perception that school art was too limited for students to be able to identify which specialist areas were of most interest to them, and that the requirements of school examination courses led to art courses which were ‘formulaic in subject, style and concept’ (Steers, 2004, p.26). This critical view is taken further by Radley (2010, p.21), who describes school art as being ‘epitomised by the formulaic regurgitation of unchallenging solutions taught with the intention of guaranteeing examination success’. As a result, the art foundation course or 'foundation' as it is often referred to, has been seen as a process of ‘compulsory creative cleansing’ (Williams, 1998, p.ii), or as Robins (2003, p.40) expresses it; ‘a mandatory dip in the efficacious waters (baptismal or disinfectant) of a one year foundation course’, in which students have been told ‘We want you to forget everything you have done in school’ (Hollands, 2001, p.54). In the 1960s one course was even called Groundcourse, as it was seen as learning from the ground up (Pethick, 2006).

The course was developed in the late 1950s to embrace a different educational paradigm of discovery, experimentation and playful open ended exploration of art and design, in stark contrast to the dominance of assessment led, tightly controlled art education, which was taking place both in schools with their focus on examinations and in tertiary education through the Ministry of Education's tightly constrained curriculum for its qualifications (Jewison, 2015). Art education in secondary schools, including GCSE and A level examination, is still constrained by the neoliberal focus on results and league tables, leading to schools teaching to a safe style which is more likely to achieve high grades than encouraging more personal, individual work. Even art and design education in higher education is subject to neoliberal demands in which:

> … design courses at HE level are framed as commodities. Rather than exploring new knowledge through design research, 'employability' indicates the necessity to fulfil a wholly vocational role in the service of an unstable economy (Gale, 2013, p.9).

Government policies which evaluate universities and their courses in terms of the financial return to graduates and their subsequent contribution to the national economy only serve to exacerbate this employability agenda.

This research develops out of my own experience both as a student on a pre-diploma (Pre-Dip) course (a precursor to the foundation course), and later as course leader of a foundation course. Although foundation courses have been open to mature students, the majority of the intake have come straight from schools, where the bulk of activity was painting and drawing, and the diagnostic phase of ADF can lead to "epiphanies" as students discovered other areas such as printmaking, ceramics, typography, and product design. These have often led to significant changes in students' intentions about what area to specialise in and hence their subsequent careers. Both as a student and as a tutor, I have first hand experience of these transformations.

In my own case I entered art college in 1965 wanting to be a painter, as that was all I had experience of at school. However, early in my PreDip I was introduced to working in three dimensions, using a variety of materials including clay, welded steel and cast aluminium. This was both a revelation and a liberating experience. At that time students could apply for three sequel courses and all my applications were for courses involving sculpture. I was accepted onto my second choice, which was glass, ceramics and sculpture, although the bulk of my work on that course was sculptural (see Annex 1 for an autobiography). Friends from school on the same PreDip course went on to study fine art, fashion, exhibition design and industrial design. As a tutor I have seen intentions shift from, for example, woven textiles to glass, from graphic design to interior design, fine art to theatre and TV design, and from photography to typography. For other students, ADF serves to endorse and reinforce their intentions through

allowing them to experience what it is like to study their chosen area as a full-time student and this sometimes enables them to refine their initial choice to a more specific area, such as from broad graphic design to illustration, or from fashion and textiles to printed surface design. (See Annex 2 for a list of art and design degree courses in the UK.)

1.3 Research questions

This research examined the experience of the art foundation course from the point of view of its students, rather than from that of tutors, institutions or external observers. It set out to investigate what benefits students may have gained from their art foundation courses, and what influences these courses may have had on their subsequent choices of degree level sequel courses, on their creative careers and on their identities as artists and designers.

The initial question for this research was:

> What are artists' and designers' experiences and views of their art foundation courses?

During the course of the research this was expanded to consider:

> Have their foundation courses had any lasting effect or influence on the participants, their professional lives, practices and identities.
>
> How does the course achieve this?
>
> Where and how does the art foundation course fit into the current educational landscape?
>
> How does it differ from the vocationalist, neo-liberal discourse in tertiary education, and what lessons can be learned from this difference?

The next section explores how post-school education in art and design has developed from the eighteenth century onwards and how the 1950s saw significant developments from the established formal curriculum to a more progressive approach. It goes on to introduce the foundation course, its curriculum and pedagogical approaches, and explores the key influences on the course from its inception to the 1990s. Lastly it offers an analysis of possible developments for the future of art foundation courses.

1.4 Contextualising the study: a brief history of tertiary art education

The earliest form of art education in Britain, as in the rest of Europe, was that of apprenticeship to a more or less established artist (the atelier system), or in the case of the crafts, through apprenticeship in a Guild. The Royal Academy Schools (RA), founded in 1769 (Royal Academy, n.d.) are the oldest school of art in Britain; they had an initial intake of 77 students, but now offer just 17 post-graduates places, usually only to those with substantial post-graduate practice. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, students spent

most of their time on highly detailed, laborious drawings of objects and casts of antique sculpture.

In 1835, in response to the perceived superiority of French design, the Government set up a Select Committee "On Extending a Knowledge of the Arts and Principles of Design among the Manufacturing Population", and "To inquire into the Constitution, Management and Effects of Institutions connected with the Arts" (Bird, 1992). The Committee's 1836 report recommended the establishment of a school focused on practical skills and competencies. The Board of Trade was tasked with setting up this new Government School of Design, which opened in 1837 in Somerset House, with a rigorous, academic curriculum, based largely (like the RA Schools) on the acquisition of technical skills through copying from antique and medieval ornamental art (Cornock, n.d.; Souleles, 2013). In 1851, following the Great Exhibition it was renamed the National Art Training School and moved to South Kensington, becoming the Royal College of Art in 1896. In 1963 the Robbins Report on higher education recommended that the Royal College of Art should become a free standing university with full degree awarding powers, finally achieved in 1967 (Royal College of Art, n.d.). Thereafter art schools spread throughout the country, with (e.g.) the Manchester School of Art opening in 1838 (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2016), the Birmingham Government School of Art in 1842, becoming the Municipal School of Art in 1885 (Birmingham City University, n.d.), Glasgow in 1845 (Glasgow School of Art, n.d.), Saint Martin's in 1854 and Brighton in 1859 (Fineart.ac.uk, n.d.). These institutions had to follow a centrally imposed curriculum and maintain a rigid separation between design and fine art, with design students having to declare that they did not intend to become painters or sculptors (Souleles, 2013). When the Hadow Report of 1926 set out subject guidelines for secondary education, there was still a clear distinction between 'drawing and applied art' on the one hand and 'handicrafts' on the other. The guidelines for drawing and applied art included object drawing, memory drawing and geometrical and mechanical drawing. (Hadow, 1926). In addition to the specialist art schools, a small number of universities also offered art courses, such as Newcastle from 1838 (originally as part of Durham) (Newcastle University, 2016), London's Slade School of Art and Oxford's Ruskin School, both founded in 1871 (University College London, 2016; University of Oxford, n.d.), and Leeds in 1874, originally specialising in textiles (University of Leeds, n.d.).

An examination system for tertiary art and design was developed by the Department of Science and Art in 1853, followed in 1913 by the Board of Education's Drawing Certificate, the Certificate for Painting, Modelling, Pictorial and Industrial Design, and the Certificate of Pedagogy for intending teachers of art. In 1946 the Ministry of Education organised higher education art and design into two levels; the Intermediate Certificate in Art and Crafts leading

to a National Diploma in Design (NDD), each taking two years. The Intermediate was based on compulsory elements of figure drawing, modelling, still life and pictorial composition, together with a specialist subject such as lettering. Entry to the NDD was dependent on satisfactory completion of the Intermediate Certificate, and students were able to specialise more and to take a more personal approach to their work, although the programme was still heavily vocational and prescriptive. Additionally, the need to meet the requirements of external examiners appointed by the National Advisory Committee on Art Examinations (established in 1949 to control standards in the NDD) severely limited originality. These continued as the main qualifications for art and design throughout the 1950s (Jewison, 2015). That the National Diploma in Design was 'a vocational qualification in the traditions of mastery of craft skills' (Durling, 2002, p.79), and had a nationally mandated curriculum, centrally administered and examined, with work set within specific media related areas, was seen as a concern by reformers that art education was 'still figurative in an age of abstraction' (Field, 1977, p.5).

In 1959 the Minister for Education set up the National Advisory Council for Art Education (NACAE), chaired by William Coldstream, and in 1960 their first report recommended replacing the NDD with a new Diploma in Art and Design (DipAD) taking three years of study, preceded by a one year pre-diploma Course (PreDip). In 1965 the NACAE changed the title to Foundation Course to avoid the assumption that the course served no purpose other than to prepare students for the DipAD and to avoid any misunderstanding that completing the course would lead to automatic entry to a Diploma course. Entry to the DipAD would depend on candidates having five "O" levels - although it did allow for the admission of students of exceptional promise who did not have these minimum qualifications and of some 'gifted students who are […] temperamentally allergic to conventional education' (NACAE, 1960, para 8. In Ashwin, 1975, p.96) - and on satisfactorily completing a PreDip course. This would give them opportunities to develop skills in 'technical control through the study of line, form, colour and space relationships in two and three dimensions (NACAE 1960, cited in Ashwin, 1975, p. 96). The similarity of this to the elements of the Bauhaus basic course may be because Victor Pasmore, one of the main advocates of basic design, was a member of NACAE; indeed, Aspinall (2014) has called it the Pasmore Report. (The Bauhaus was a German school of design with a modernist approach to art education which integrated fine art, applied art and architecture.)

The Council established four areas of specialisation (fine art, graphic design, 3D design and fashion/textiles), and encouraged a more individual, exploratory and experimental approach than the NDD had allowed. In order to give the DipAD academic credibility comparable to a degree, it made the study of art history and 'complimentary studies' (which could include literature and the history of architecture or design) a compulsory and examined element of the

Diploma, and which took fifteen to twenty percent of the students' time. A particular change brought about through the Coldstream reforms was an increasing emphasis on students' creative potential and talent and an experimental approach to processes and materials as opposed to the previous concentration on the development of centrally prescribed craft skills. Although this deregulation was seen by some as creating a 'free-for-all situation' (Dennis, 2014, p.22), it was an important first step in encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning (Souleles, 2013). This ethos of the development of creative potential, experimentation and self-directed learning are themes which will recur throughout this study

Coldstream's intention was to establish a number of independent, specialist art schools, largely staffed by part-time artist-teachers, and which would determine their own curriculum within a generalised framework of studio practice supported by complimentary studies. This ambition was to be thwarted by the local education authorities, who controlled the colleges, by the body set up to validate these DipAD courses, and by the colleges' loss of independence through the gradual merging of these specialist colleges with other local institutions (such as colleges of education, architecture and commerce) to form colleges of higher education and eventually polytechnics (Thompson, 2005). It has been pointed out that in 1964 there were 180 recognised schools of art and design, but by 2011 there were just 11 remaining specialised institutions (Beck & Cornford, 2014).

In 1961 the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design (NCDAD) (chaired by John Summerson) was set up as an independent body to supervise and administer the new DipAD courses. Colleges could submit proposals for courses to the Council, whose panels would examine the proposals, visit the colleges and grant or refuse approval. Initially 73 colleges submitted 201 courses, but just 29 gained approval for 61 courses (Lord, n.d.); this led to the closure of many local and regional colleges, such as Walthamstow in north London, where Ian Dury was taught by Peter Blake (Beck & Cornford, 2014; McDonald, 2004). By 1967 the number of approved colleges had nearly doubled and almost 4,000 students were enrolled on PreDip courses, with just over half gaining places on DipAD programmes (Sonntag, 1969).

The student movements that evolved in the 1960s have their roots in the UK in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's Aldermarston marches, and in the USA in the Civil Rights Movement's campaigning against racial discrimination. University campuses, with large numbers of students with time to devote to a cause or protest, are fertile grounds for youth movements to develop. Students' opposition to racism and to the Vietnam War became radical movements on university campuses (Churney, 1979). 1968 saw students in Paris in open revolt against both their universities and their government. In Britain students and many teaching staff at a number of art colleges (with Hornsey being the first) also occupied their

colleges, in protest at what they saw as an outdated curriculum, a lack of student involvement in course design, lack of access to specialist equipment and the fragmentation and isolation of departments. Most art colleges had expanded from their original building and occupied additional premises, often redundant Victorian Board Schools, usually at some distance from the main building, with a whole department housed in each building. After attempts to evict the occupations failed (notably at Hornsey where the protestors pacified the police dogs with biscuits), the authorities usually reached some rather half-hearted agreements to appease the protestors, although normally these were quickly reneged on (Tickner, 2008).

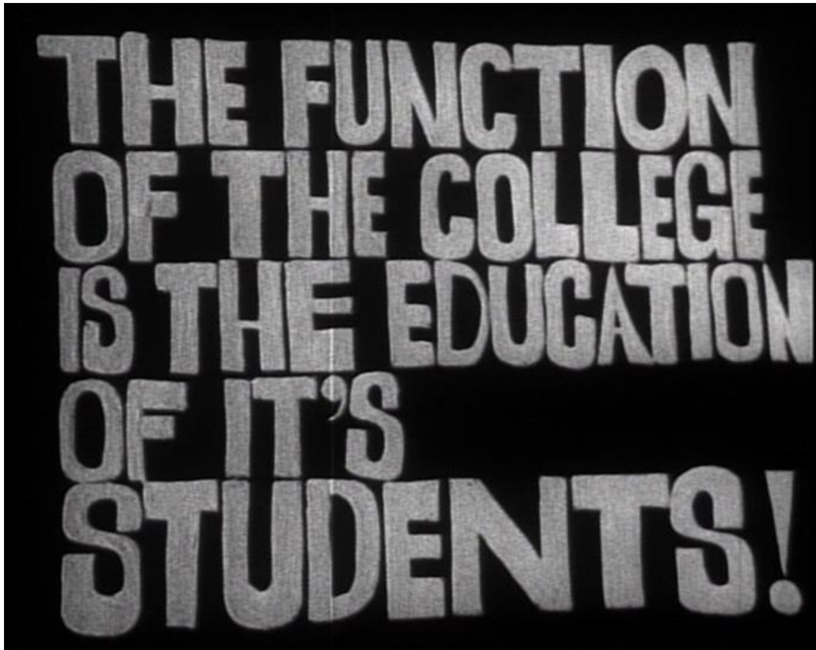

Figure 4. Still image from the Hornsey Film (Lewandowska, 2011)

In 1974 the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) took over responsibility for art and design qualifications from the NCDAD, and successful candidates were subsequently able to gain an honours degree in art and design subjects. Students who had recently graduated from DipAD courses could pay a nominal amount to have their qualification upgraded to a degree, but many refused in protest, since the new requirement for matriculation meant many talented young people would now be excluded from higher education in art and design. As a measure of the expansion of numbers studying art and design, there were 4,900 students studying on 45 fine art courses at degree level in 1981 and by 2000 there were some 75 fine art courses with over 14,000 students (Cornock, n.d.). Art and design became fully recognised as part of higher education with the first PhD in fine art being awarded in 1978. The stages in this history of art education have been described by Houghton (2008) as apprenticeship, traditional, formalist, romantic, conceptual and professional. The participants in this study were students just before the beginnings of Houghton's professional curriculum, which

becomes a theme in this study.

From the 1970s a move towards neoliberal policies by governments on the right led to a ‘reworking of the relationship of education, in fundamental and intimate ways, to the needs of the economy’ (Ball, 2016, p.1047). In the UK this move was helped by a dissatisfaction about what was seen as poor quality service by the major players in the welfare state (including state schools and the local education authorities), typified by the controversy over radical teaching methods at the William Tyndale primary school in 1974-1976 (Davis, 2002). This dissatisfaction contributed to Margaret Thatcher’s election victory in 1979 with a government driven by neoliberal dogma. These market driven policies also become a theme in this study.

1.5 The development of the Art Foundation Course

> Foundation has been described as a cross between an art laboratory and an art and design assault course. (Leeds College of Art, 2015, p.5.)

This section demonstrates how these foundation courses represented a radical and modernist departure from the traditional approaches to art and design education of the National Diploma in Design and its predecessors. As well as drawing on the literature, this is illustrated by accounts from staff who taught on the early foundation courses, two of whom were interviewed for this study and their first hand accounts add context and background. Mike was a student at the start of this new approach and went on to teach on the seminal course at Leicester College of Art, Vladimir was a student on the second wave of courses (which were beginning to lose the initial impetus and enthusiasm of the early courses) and went on to become course leader of a course in a large polytechnic. As their interviews mainly focused on the development of the course their accounts are separate from the accounts of the main participants reported in chapter four.

The art and design foundation course originally developed from Victor Pasmore and Richard Hamilton’s programmes at Newcastle University (Pasmore and Hamilton had previously taught together at the Central School of Arts and Crafts) and Tom Hudson and Harry Thubron’s at Leeds College of Art in the 1950s, which can trace their origins to the “Vorlehre” or Preliminary Course at the Bauhaus and, to some extent, Herbert Read’s championing of contemporary art and modernism. Read (1893-1968) was a poet, a literary critic and an advocate and interpreter of contemporary art movements and artists including surrealism, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson. His 1943 book, *Education through Art, expressing his views on the* continuity of child and adult creativity, was an influence on the early foundation courses, along with ‘the premise of his educational theory that yearned for individual assertion and self-becoming’ (Adams, 2013, p.727).

Read's influence was strongest on Thubron, who encouraged students to take a more intuitive approach to their exercises than Pasmore or Hudson. The Bauhaus influence is evident in the concept that there are basic elements which can be learned and then applied in any branch of art and design; in Britain the term "basic design" came to be applied to these programmes. Hamilton's Foundation Course at Newcastle was not completely focused on formal analysis; what was more important was the experimental way students were encouraged to work in. This represented 'a distinct shift from technique-based courses, towards a more open-ended experimental approach which encouraged a critical attitude of mind' (Yeomans, 2005, p.209).

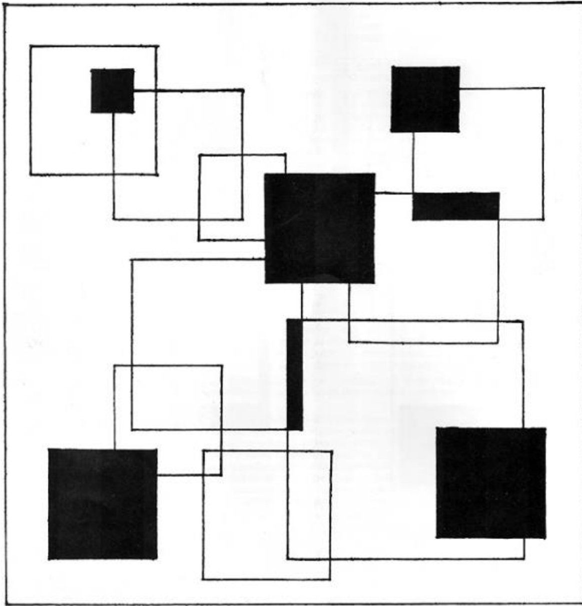

Figure 5. Z Stijl 1. A "Vorlehre" design by a Bauhaus student. (Graeff, 1921)

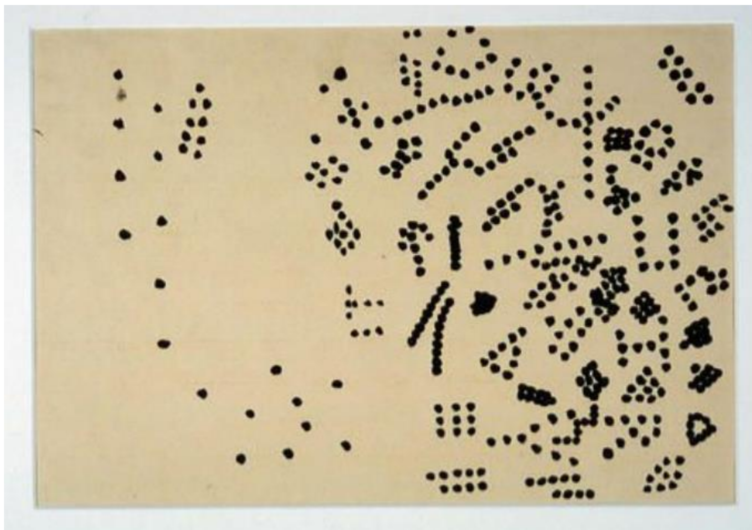

Figure 6. Basic Design. Point drawing by a student at Newcastle, 1965

From 1954, Hudson, Pasmore and Thubron led a series of summer schools for art teachers and art students to disseminate their basic design principles - involving exercises in line, form,

space and colour to break down the participants preconceived concepts of art and design (see Annex 3 for the programme for the 1956 Scarborough Summer School). In his obituary of Hudson, Thistlewood describes the basic design programme:

> This involved simple routines of aesthetic exercises, investigating the 'real' properties of media, using a vocabulary of basic marks to construct passages of meaning devoid of representational significance. It requires students to demonstrate 'control' of two-dimensional expression before expanding their repertoire into the third and (incorporating movement) the fourth dimensions. (Thistlewood, 1998, p. 116)

Figure 7. Session of group criticism, Scarborough Summer School. (Hudson, c.1956)

By 1956, at the 'Adolescent Expression in Art and Craft' conference at Bretton Hall, Harry Thubron's basic design influenced work with pupils at New Earswick Secondary Modern School near York was a direct and startling contrast with the emotive and expressive art work influenced by Marion Richardson's 1948 book, Art and The Child. Marion Richardson (1892-1946) was an art teacher and pioneer of the child art movement which, with its emphasis on free expression and creativity, was very different from the previous approach of copying and observational drawing and her child-centred methods dominated art education for many years. Thubron's approach, focusing on the formal language of art, experimenting with colour combinations and with the relationship of shapes and forms analytically with little or no emotional content, was very far removed from Richardson's influence.

In the catalogue for a retrospective exhibition about Hudson and his colleagues, Norman Toynton, a tutor who worked with Hudson at Leicester described teaching on the pre-diploma course.

> 'We'd all be teaching at once in a big room' recalls Toynton, 'with twenty or thirty students mixing colours and applying pigments to large sheets of paper, juxtaposing primary and secondary colours, or different secondary colours, to see how much they changed according to what colour they were next to, and to experience the discord of one colour against another. Tom's instruction was to have the students produce sheet after sheet of colours, for weeks - till it drove them mad. Self-expression didn't enter into it, it was all about physical engagement with pigment and the relationship between colours, it was a learning process for the teachers as well as the students.' (Hudson, 2011, p.10)

That this was a learning process for the staff as well as the students is due to the initial staff on the course having come through the traditionalist National Diploma course and so needing to adapt to these new approaches.

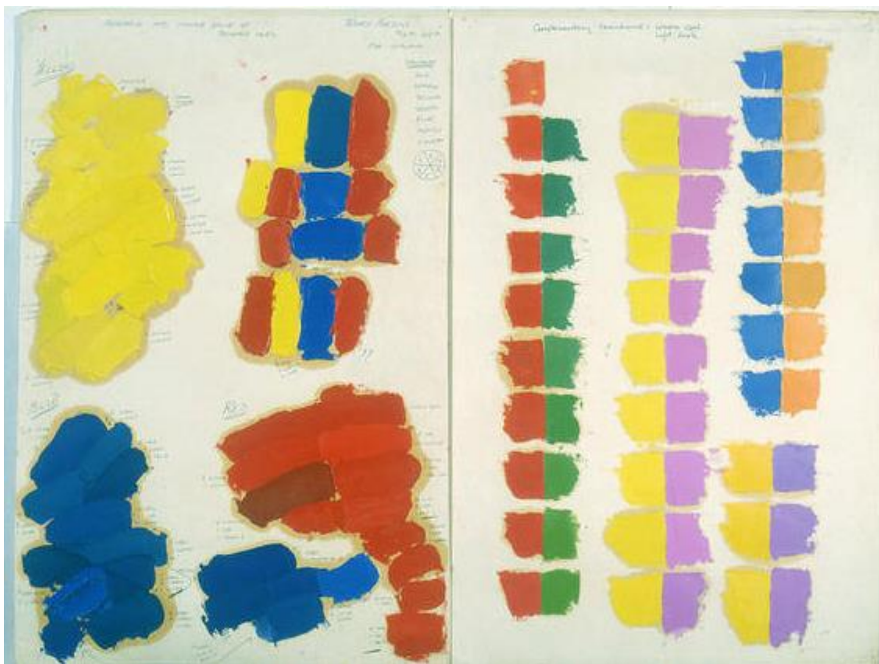

Figure 8. Cardiff Foundation work sheet. Colour exercise: complementary variations-warm-cool-light-dark. (Richards, 1964)

Basic design (or preliminary studies as it was sometimes known) aimed to provide students with the underlying grammar and vocabulary of visual expression, and an understanding of the fundamentals of design, using the elements of point, line, plane, light, shade, colour and material. (This thinking influenced the early National Curriculum in art and design, and the GCSEs which examined it, where the elements were given as line, shape, form, tone, texture, pattern and colour).

Mike Chilton, a painter who had been taught by Thubron and Hudson at Leeds, and went on to teach with Hudson on the foundation course at Leicester, also attended some of the Summer Schools and describes the atmosphere there:

> There was a real, a very strong sense amongst everyone that was doing it, post-graduates, teachers - it was full of young teachers, that it was a complete injection of

> new blood and fresh air, you know. Total faith that it's going to lead somewhere away from all this moribund teaching. (Interview, 22 March 2017)

Having completed his NDD at Leeds, he went on to study at the Slade School of Fine Art, where Hudson recruited him to work at Leicester, of which he says 'I still think Leicester was the best thing I've ever seen – you felt it was the revolution', but then talks about problems of the course becoming focused on specific outcomes to exercises, rather than the free exploration it was intended to produce; that it began:

> to run up against this prejudice that Tom had about deviation, as long as things were turning out like a good approximation to what his previous experience of what should be the result of this exercise (Interview, 22 March 2017)

they were acceptable. Although Chilton and the other younger staff managed to mitigate this, when Hudson went to Cardiff, many of them left too, and:

> The problem they had at Leicester, the problem was when Tom left they then had people coming in who were – who hadn't had first hand experience of what I saw as the real McCoy of Leicester and Leeds. So you had the inevitable dilution, because it did depend on the charismatic character of Tom. (Interview, 22 March 2017)

This dilution was also happening to many other courses across the country, as people without that intense experience tried to set up courses based on the initial philosophy. These often resulted in long sessions of what one artist has described as 'Simply scribbling and doodling with different types of pencil, chalk, ink and so on to see what happens' (Jones, 1969, p.157). Vladimir (interviewed for this research) who went on to become a foundation course leader, describes his experience as a pre-diploma student in 1962:

> When I first started, there were unexplained, lengthy introductory activities run by some staff which used ill-informed and garbled versions of ideas from, for instance Klee and the Bauhaus. The work produced in these sessions was often superficial and tended to operate only at the level of style. Staff retained control over what was deemed `successful` and with students not party to intentions and criteria, the outcome for many was often mystification rather than enlightenment. (Interview, 1 November 2016)

In a somewhat sweeping criticism of modern foundation courses, Sloan claims that the current ones could learn a great deal from the early foundation courses such as Groundcourse 'particularly given *the broad and sometimes perfunctory nature* of today's foundation courses' [my emphasis] (Sloan, 2014, p.384). However, as Vladimir and Mike point out, these initial courses quickly became watered down as they were replicated in other colleges and the original Pre-Diploma emphasis on basic design has been all but lost, having started to fall out of fashion from the late 1960s (Sonntag, 1969).

In the 1970s it was feared that art foundation's anomalous position between A levels and higher education would lead to its demise; DES Circular 7/71, issued under Margaret Thatcher,

then Secretary of State for Education, added to this by asking NCDAD to consider 'the role schools might play in the preparation of students' for DipAD courses. At a debate in the House of Lords in 1973, Lord Beaumont spoke of his concerns that school based preparatory courses would lead to 'what many regard as the worst feature of the recommendations, which is the foreseen erosion of foundation courses' (HL Deb, 1973a). Lord Strabolgi emphasised the importance of having the courses in 'the unique and inspiring atmosphere of an art school, as it enables the student, with his teachers, to discover his special interests and aptitudes (HL Deb, 1973b). Although the courses survived, this anomalous status as a one year bridging course has been raised frequently ever since.

Although ADF was traditionally run in schools of art and design, either within polytechnics, universities or specialist colleges of art and design, it became increasingly delivered in FE colleges, many of which had no sequel courses of their own. In the early years, there was no validation system for PreDip courses, other than the individual institutions' own quality procedures, but as FE colleges started to offer these courses, a system of peer validation through regional networks (such as the Yorkshire and Humberside Association for Further and Higher Education) began to be available, including meetings where staff from all the participating colleges would grade sample exhibitions of students' work to standardise assessment across the centres. There was no compulsion for colleges to take part in these schemes, and many continued to operate independently. However, as colleges left local authority control and came under the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) following incorporation in 1993, the requirement for courses to be approved by FEFC meant that many sought validation under the new BTEC Foundation Studies in Art and Design.

In recent years, foundation courses have been validated by four bodies, the University of the Arts London, Pearson Edexcel, ABC Awards and WJEC (formerly the Welsh Joint Education Committee). Awards are available at Level 3 of the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and at Level 4. Although both are intended for post "A" level/Level 3 Diploma students, the Level 3 version is UCAS tariff rated and usually offered by FE colleges, whereas the Level 4 is not tariff rated but includes the Level 3.

Programmes are all organised along similar lines with three main phases, and although the various awarding bodies describe these slightly differently the structure is relatively homogenous across all institutions offering the course. Following an induction, there is an introductory or diagnostic phase with broad sampling of techniques and areas of study, a preparatory phase, when students begin to move towards specialisation, make decisions about progression and prepare their interview portfolios, and a specialist phase including a final major project.

Phases	Activities	Pedagogies
Diagnostic phase	Students investigate visual language and explore a variety of creative practices, including contextual and historical knowledge. This allows students to sample and experiment with a wide range of specific creative disciplines	Staff-initiated but open briefs Studio activity Individual and group tutorials Peer group reviews of work (Crits) Contextual lectures and visits
Preparatory phase	Students build on the knowledge, skills and practices from the diagnostic phase, and begin to focus their creative ambitions on their chosen specialist practice. They begin to make decisions about progression and start to prepare their interview portfolios.	Early staff-initiated briefs moving to self-initiated briefs Studio activity Individual and group tutorials Self and peer group reviews of work (Crits) Contextual lectures and visits
Specialist phase	Students take control of their own learning and undertake an independently initiated project in their chosen specialist area before mounting their final exhibition.	Self-initiated major project Studio activity Individual tutorials Self and peer group reviews of work (Crits)

Table 1. The phases, activities and pedagogies of the course.

All phases are internally assessed, and the final project is also externally moderated. Students are required to pass all units of the course, but the final grade of the qualification is dependent on assessment of the final project and exhibition.

Although foundation has lost the basic design approach with its intense emphasis on exercises to develop visual language, it still keeps the concept of the Bauhaus “Vorlehre” or preliminary course with its broad sampling and experimental approach in the diagnostic phase before students begin to identify their areas of specialisation. In the following preparatory phase students build on their wider knowledge and understanding of the various specialisms and begin to focus in on their particular area. As their confidence grows staff encourage them to develop their own briefs for their studio work and to relate these contextually to historic and contemporary art and design. In the final specialist phase students work independently on their own individual project, building on their research skills, practical skills and specialist practices, culminating in the final exhibition of their work. (See Annex 4 for a selection of extracts from course descriptors from validating agencies and from course providers.)

1.6 Changing applications to degree courses

The implications of the change in 1996 to the applications process for art and design which had been in place for three decades are explored in this section, as well as why this was arguably a retrograde step. The chapter then closes with an examination of the consequences of subsequent changes from 2010.

From 1966 until 1996 students applied for higher education art courses through the Art & Design Admissions Registry (ADAR); this allowed students to apply to three courses in rank order (the traditional university art courses were outside this system and their applications went through the Universities Central Council on Admissions (UCCA). Applicants who were not placed in their first choice college had their forms passed on to the second choice and so on. Those still not placed after the third round could enter the pool of remaining places. The deadline for ADAR applications was at the end of March, which allowed foundation students time to complete the preparatory phase of their course, and to have reached decisions about specialisms and sequel institutions. In 1996 this specialist system merged with the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), which had a December deadline for applications, designed for second year "A" level students, and clearly unsuitable for ADF students. To allow for this UCAS developed a two-stage process, called Route A (with the December deadline) and Route B with a March deadline. Applicants could apply for six courses, with a maximum of three in Route B (Porch & Barclay, 2002). However, this also meant that "A" level and other L3 students could apply for six courses through Route A, and as a result:

> [T]he pattern of pre-entry qualifications to Art & Design has become wider, with, for example, a smaller year on year proportion of applicants from Foundation Diploma in Art and Design courses… (Vaughan & Yorke, 2009, p.6)

Although an increasing number of students gain direct entry from A levels, there is a mismatch between what A level students are encouraged to produce in order to pass their examination and what degree course selectors are seeking, and as a result:

> A-level art so often fairs badly in adequately preparing students for studying art subjects at university [because] school's final examination structures are looking for a form of closure in student's artwork, whereas selectors in higher education will be looking for emergent signs of potential. (Robins, 2016, p.350)

This created problems for both the more experienced students and for teaching staff. In 2012 Yorke and Vaughan carried out a survey of art and design students coming to the end of their first year in 20 HEIs; 778 students responded. They found that 'roughly two-thirds of the respondents had undertaken a preparatory course other than A-level, with foundation diplomas dominating' (p.10). Some students who had taken ADF complained about the mixture of prior experience on their programmes:

> Most people who take a degree course in art and design are told to do a year's foundation prior to starting their degree, as I was. There is very little that has been covered in the first year of my degree that wasn't covered during my foundation. (p.24)

The third who began degrees without that experience faced 'insecurity for many of our first year students who have expectations based on the concrete and the certain' (Vaughan et al.,

2008, p.1). As a result, Yorke and Vaughan found that:

> Some students had the experience of completing a foundation diploma in which there was relative freedom to experiment, whereas others had undertaken more formalised A-level studies. In broad terms, the needs of the two kinds of student are likely to be rather different, especially in the first year of higher education. It is a challenge to teachers to work optimally with a student group of such varied background. (2012, p.54)

This leads to students who have taken foundation courses covering much of the same ground at the start of their degree courses in order to bring direct entrants 'up to speed' or to the direct entrants having little understanding of what is expected and what is happening. One of the participants, teaching on the first year of a graphic design course, comments on this later.

1.7 The future for art foundation courses

In 2010 UCAS closed the Route B scheme, and now applications to art and design courses have to be made through the main scheme, intended for A level applicants, which closes in January, before ADF students have barely completed the diagnostic phase of the course, making its contribution to decision making about appropriate sequel courses considerably diminished. As direct entry from "A" level to degree programmes in art & design increases, the number of ADF courses will inevitably decrease. Norwich University of the Arts closed its foundation course in 2005 offering a Year Zero instead, Birmingham City University's course closed in 2014, and Falmouth University's In 2017 as it was too expensive to run (Dawood, 2017). Falmouth now offers four-year degrees with an integrated foundation, and students must pass all the foundation modules before they can progress to the specialist stage (Falmouth University, 2022). In March 2015 students at the University of the Arts London occupied part of Central Saint Martin's building in protest at plans to cut ADF courses (Grove, 2015).

In the USA, where four-year degrees are common, the first year in an art course is called Foundations with students progressing onto more or less specialist degree programmes. In the case of large specialist institutions there can be many options (the School of the Arts Institute of Chicago has 18 possibilities), but smaller institutions cannot offer the same range. (Studio Angelico at Sienna Heights University, for example, has only three.) If ADF were to be replaced by Year 0 programmes, these would effectively limit students' choice of sequel courses to those on offer in the HEI where they are studying (as well as requiring four years of student loans), indeed, a number of universities now offer four-year BA art and design courses with an 'integrated foundation course' offering progression only onto the particular institution's sequel courses thereby limiting choice. Others take this further by offering, for example, BA Graphic Design with an integrated foundation year, requiring students to decide on their specialism without the broader experience of a free-standing foundation course.

These changes have considerable significance, and potential ramifications, for the future of art and design in higher education. The need for four years of student loans rather than three is likely to reduce the number of applicants, especially those from lower income backgrounds who are already under-represented in the arts, where 'the chances of getting into creative work are profoundly unequal in class terms' (Brook, Miles, O'Brien & Taylor, 2022, p.14). As integrated foundation years increase not only will stand alone foundation courses come under increasing threat of closure, but within the integrated year the diagnostic element of the course will be reduced to what is available in the particular institution or even to one specific course, providing a limited experience for students.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has set out the principal themes and background for the research and the questions arising from this. It has given an account of the development of the art foundation course and its place in the history of art education, and how its experimental ethos and principles of basic design represented a complete break from the prescribed formal curriculum which preceded it. It has also described the issues facing the courses arising from a change in the applications process for sequel courses and from the introduction of Year Zero courses and from four year degree courses with integrated foundation years. The thesis will go on to show how the ethos of the course and its phased, developmental structure has been particularly significant for the participants in this study, and that the potential loss of these courses due to neo-liberal education policies, which expect tertiary education to be vocationalist, producing employment-ready graduates who will gain significant financial returns from their studies, is a particular cause for concern.

The next chapter explores the literature to establish the context for the research, situating the study in relation to knowledge in the field.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Figure 9. Harry Thubron and Tom Hudson at the Scarborough Summer School, c.1965.

Thubron and Hudson were two of the principal initiators of the basic design approach to art education in Britain. They taught together at Leeds College of Art from 1956 to 1960 and also helped run the Scarborough Summer Schools to disseminate their approach to art teachers and art students.

2.1. Introduction

This chapter examines literature related to the key questions in this study, whether the art foundation course has any lasting influence on its graduates and their professional practices, and how the course differs from the neo-liberal discourse influencing tertiary education. The literature considered here is not confined to the review chapter but forms an on-going dialogue with the research and its data throughout the study.

In reviewing the literature, six specific areas have been considered. Firstly, literature relating to the foundation course, its history and its practices. Secondly, literature related to the theoretical and conceptual framing for the study is examined with reference to identity transitions and provisional selves, and how Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, field, practice and illusio are applied to the participant's stories. This theoretical framework describes the sociological concepts which impact on the participants' development in order to develop understandings of their experiences. The third section examines the political and educational context for the study and how the current dominant discourse of neo-liberalism has impacted on education and the resultant focus on vocationalism in higher education. Following this the fourth section considers the creative industries and the sectors of fine art, design and craft. The fifth section examines the issues faced by workers in the creative industries created by 'the neoliberal relationship between the individual and the state in which insecurity is promoted as freedom' (Chadderton, 2020, p.173). Finally, the sixth section considers the threats currently impacting on art education.

2.2 Literature relating to the art and design foundation course

There are a number of texts which consider the pre-diploma course and the foundation course historically, some which include the course within a more general history of art education (Ashwin, 1975; Aspinall, 2014; Robins, 2018; Souleles, 2013; Thompson, 2005), some which focus on the key figures in the early courses, such as Forrest's accounts of Harry Thubron at Leeds College of Art (Forrest, 1983, 1985) and Tibbets' work on Tom Hudson (2014). The philosophy and early influences on the course are described by De Sausmarez (1983), Thistlewood (1992), Hudson (2011) and Crippa and Williamson (2013). Other accounts examine courses at particular institutions such as Sloan's study of Hornsey College of Art (2014) and Owen's of Leeds College of Art (1999). In a much criticised (in both arts journals and sociological journals) study published in 1973, Madge and Weinberger interviewed pre-diploma students about their intentions for sequel study, and fine art and graphics students about their views of their DipAD. courses; they also interviewed A level art students. There was, however, no longitudinal link between the school students, the pre-dip or the DipAD. students.

There are a few research outputs that explore students' understandings of their experiences on their foundation courses, although several of these were written some time ago such as Ashwin's work with DipAD students looking back at their foundation courses (1972) and Wayte's study of the socialisation of art students (1989); more recently Yorke and Vaughan (2012) examined the experiences and expectations of students on the first year of their courses, including their reflections on their foundation courses. Although there are many publications which examine teaching and learning in degree stage art education there are fewer which consider issues of teaching and learning on foundation courses (Robins, 2003; Pye Tate, 2007; Yorke & Vaughan, 2012; Briggs, 2013), along with older ones such as Sonntag (1969) and Walker (1981).

Interest in the historical development of the course and its potential for influencing current courses has seen a number of recent conferences and exhibitions including the 2011 "Transition or the Inner Image Revisited" exhibition in London, the Tate Modern's 2013 "Basic Design" exhibition and "Art School Educated" conference in 2014, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park's 2013 exhibition and conference "Tom Hudson: Transitions", their "The Process Continues" exhibition in 2015, and the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art's "Foundations of a Creative Curriculum" conference in 2017.

2.3 Theoretical framework

As this study examines how the participants have been shaped by their educational and professional experiences, the following section considers the nature of identity and how identity develops and changes with agency and with investment in, in this case, the field of art and design.

2.3.1 Identity, social context and provisional selves

Individuals derive part of their sense of self, their identity, from their work, through the activities they carry out, through what they produce, from the prestige associated with their occupations, through the social contexts of their work, from the priority they ascribe to their working lives and from their workplace culture (Bain, 2005). As Bain goes on to point out, in terms of the social contact of the workplace, 'many artists do not share this privilege' (p.27) as they work primarily alone.

In a study of junior professionals navigating a transition into different or more senior roles, in which they must present a credible image before they have time to develop their new professional identities, Ibarra (1999) uses the term 'provisional selves' to describe how people develop into new roles by trying out self-images that simulate potential but not yet fully realised professional identities, and are used to bridge between the current self-conceptions

and the images they hold of what would be expected in a new role. These transitions 'provide opportunities for renegotiating both private and public views of the self' (1999, p.766). In describing how individuals use their personal and social identities to develop their professional identities, Roberts (2005, p.685) defines this professional image construction as 'the process of assessing and shaping perceptions of one's own competence and character'. People who construct these viable professional images are seen to be capable of meeting both the technical and the social requirements of their new roles (Ibarra, 1999). These provisional selves can be seen as steps on the way to the individuals they would like to become (Markus & Nurius, 1986), as they try on aspects of their professional identities and the 'styles, skills, attitudes, and routines available to the person for constructing those identities' (Ibarra, 1999, p.764). Whilst these imagined futures are based on past social experiences, they also link the current state to the future (Dunkel, 2000). These 'conceptions of potential, possibility, or "what might be"' (Cross & Markus 1991. p.252) are developed 'in interplay with the self-concept, which they in turn moderate, as well as from their social and cultural context.' (Erikson, 2007, p.356), allowing individuals to evolve as they begin to see themselves fitting into their particular professional fields.

When individuals have explored their possible options and have arrived at a degree of commitment to the decisions they have made, they can use their vision of a future self to provide both a sense of potential and a goal or goals to pursue (Oyserman & James, 2011), and a personal sense of 'what the person is *becoming*, or the direction of development' (Cross & Markus, 1991, p.251, emphasis in original). Part of the process of achieving a desired future self is through measuring oneself against role models, experimenting with aspects of one's professional identity, and evaluating one's efforts against internal and external feedback. Positive feedback from established professionals provides evidence and validation for the individual that their envisaged self is being realised (Kerpelman & Pittman, 2001); indeed, Oyserman et al. note that 'performance improved only among participants who set a goal, felt competent about reaching it [and] *obtained feedback* about their current performance' (2004, p.145, emphasis in original). This feedback is an established aspect of art and design pedagogy, based on the open studios and critical discussion of students' work. Mentoring by senior colleagues also plays a major part in some of the participants' development.

The potential future selves available to an individual are based on the individual's own assessment of their strengths and weaknesses, talents and abilities, and on 'assessments of what is possible for people like oneself' (Oyserman & James, 2011, p.119) and are largely shaped by their background and sociocultural context (Frazier & Hooker, 2006; Creech, Varvarigou & Hallam, 2020) (their habitus) and hence by their awareness of possibilities

(Harrison, 2018). Resultingly, the vision of the future self is social as well as personal, and reliant not only on individual habitus, capital and agency but also on an awareness of how other people might see the individual's future potential and the influence of the context, the field, in which the individual is located (Oyserman, 2015).

The attainment of their desired futures is also influenced by individuals' perception of time. If the future is seen as so far off that it has no relevance in the present, then there is little or no call for current action. If, however, the present is seen as linked directly to the future, that the future is beginning now, then acting now is seen as immediately necessary (Oyserman & James, 2011). This *connection* to the future is seen by Oyserman and James as one of three conditions which will affect an individual's future focused behaviour. The other two are *congruence*, how the actions needed to achieve the future self are compatible with the perception of the current self, and *interpretation of difficulty*, the degree of difficulty associated with achieving the desired outcome. If it seems too difficult (or conversely too easy) to achieve, then there is little call for effort; if overcoming any difficulty is seen as congruent with the current identity then the effort is seen as worthwhile, and as success-likely rather than failure-likely (Oyserman, Destin & Novin, 2015). These issues of possibility, context, connection and compatibility will appear in the participants accounts of their education and professional practices.

This envisaged ambition for the future goes beyond having aspirations. Although aspiration has been a much used concept in recent years (especially in widening participation circles) it has been increasingly criticized as too vague, 'with no evidence of causal relationships between aspirations and outcomes' (Barg, Benham-Clarke & Mountford-Zimdars, 2020, p.70). As Oyserman points out, 'simply imagining one's future self is not enough to lead to positive behavioural engagement' (2015, p.5). In contrast to aspirations, an elaborated vision of a potential future self can provide a compelling link to the future and a roadmap (Oyserman et al, 2004) of the steps, the strategies, needed to achieve the desired results – or to avoid the unwanted ones. This is especially so when the individual's vision is supported and reinforced by significant others (Barg, Benham-Clarke & Mountford-Zimdars, 2020, p.73), be these parents, peers, lecturers or friends.

The change in context created by progression from school into tertiary education, when successful students, who have been able to compare themselves favourably with less successful students, move from being a 'big fish in a little pond' to a 'little fish in a big pond' (Burleson, Leach & Harrington, 2005, p.109), can lead to the vision of their potential (and their current ability) being challenged when comparing themselves with their new peers. If they are sufficiently invested they can rise to this challenge by being inspired by their highly talented

peers, particularly as most new art students 'are already heavily invested in their disciplines' (Harwood, 2007, p.314). This investment in the subject area is important since 'Effective performance is not just a question of having the requisite skills and abilities; it is also a matter of motivation' (Ruvolo & Markus, 1992, p.95). Of particular relevance to art and design is their view that this motivation is:

> particularly beneficial in those tasks that are somewhat unstructured and that require significant input or contribution from the individual. (Ruvolo & Markus, 1992, p.120)

In this research the participants' reflective stories begin as they set out on their journeys to becoming the selves they envisage themselves in the future. It follows their stories as they develop their practices in their education and in their professional activities, and as they develop their provisional selves as their illusio, their motivation, leads them to invest their energy and find the fit between their habitus and their field and accumulate relevant capital within the field.

2.3.2 Habitus, field, capital and illusio

In working with the data, Bourdieu's conceptual tools of *habitus*, *field, capital* and *illusio* will be deployed to develop understandings from the participants' narratives. In Bourdieu's logic of practice, an agent's practice is dependent on the combined and interactive relationship of habitus, capital and field, which he expressed as a formula:

> [(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice (1984, p. 101)

This formula is interpreted by Maton as 'practice results from relations between one's disposition (habitus) and one's position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field)' (2014, p. 51). Habitus is a widely used, but contested concept, and seen by Reay as widely over used in educational research (Reay, 2004). It has been critiqued as too deterministic, allowing no opportunity for self-determination (DiMaggio, 1979; King, 2000), and by Sullivan as 'too all-inclusive and too vacuous to be of any use to empirical researchers' (2002, p.163). Habitus is, however, not an isolated concept, but one which has to be applied as part of this triad. For Bourdieu, habitus denotes the dispositions, beliefs and understandings which individuals acquire through the social milieu of their upbringing; their family, culture and education:

> [W]e are not born with a habitus. As the word suggests, this is something we acquire through repetition, like a habit, and something we know in our bodies, not just our minds. (Calhoun, 2003, p.276)

As a result, it includes predispositions, socially structured by a person's environment, and socially structuring dispositions, both of which influence the individual's future actions and agency. Although not concerned with Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Crotty describes

something very similar:

> The mélange of cultures and sub-cultures into which we are born provides us with meanings. These meanings we are taught and we learn in a complex and subtle process of enculturation. They establish a tight grip upon us and, by and large, shape our thinking and behaviour throughout our lives. (Crotty, 1998, p.79)

This 'tight grip' on behaviour would appear to be restraining and deterministic, a criticism also levelled at Bourdieu's concept of habitus. For the participants in this research habitus is, however, capable of evolution and development through time, education and experience, so that while habitus may constrain, it does not determine thought or action. In Bourdieu's words,

> It expresses first the *result of an organizing action*, with a meaning close to that of words such as structure; it also designates a way of being, a habitual state (especially of the body) and, in particular, a *predisposition*, *tendency*, *propensity* or *inclination*. (1977, p.214, emphasis in original)

Habitus has been seen as being like 'two sides of a coin, the habitus is structured by principles of the structure, as a code, and practices are structured by the principles of the habitus' (Nash, 1990, p.434). Rather than being entirely deterministic, the constructivist nature of Bourdieu's conceptualization of habitus means it can also be generative: 'an open system of dispositions that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures. It is durable but not eternal.' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 133). Habitus cannot, as we have seen, be considered on its own, it has to be understood and used in combination with field, capital and illusio. Bourdieu's linked concept, field, designates any social space, its system of social positions and its practices. The relation between habitus and field operates in two ways.

> On one side, it is a relation of conditioning: the field structures the habitus [...] On the other side, it is a relation of knowledge or cognitive construction: habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and with value, in which it is worth investing one's energy. (Wacquant, 1989, p.44)

The field, be it a profession, social setting or a sports ground, is seen as structured through power relationships and as the arena of a struggle for whatever form of capital is considered significant within that field. Furthermore, a social or professional field is not a level playing field, with some players beginning with the advantage of more of the relevant forms of capital than others (Thomson, 2014). As such, field has both structure, with each participant being positioned appropriately (knowing one's place), and agency, the individual's struggle to achieve a different, more favourable position.

> These positions are objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97)

As Calhoun (2003, p.291) puts it, 'Every field of social participation demands of those who enter it a kind of preconscious adherence to its way of working'. As a result, any struggle for position or benefit is constrained by an unconscious acceptance of the limits imposed by one's social position and the unspoken rules of the game, what Bourdieu calls the doxa: that which 'goes without saying because it comes without saying' (Bourdieu, 1977, p.166-167). As a product of an individual's social history, Bourdieu shows that habitus 'is endlessly transformed, either in a direction that reinforces it' through participation in harmonious fields, 'or in a direction that transforms it and, for instance, raises or lowers the level of expectations and aspirations' (Bourdieu, 1990a, p.116) when there is a mismatch. An extreme mismatch between habitus and field, either a sudden change in a comfortable field, or a move to a different field, can create a crisis, called a hysteresis by Bourdieu, and the unpredictability of the future makes the agent more consciously aware of their practices and the opportunities these might lead to. This awareness of practice and opportunity will be seen when two participants in this study make major changes in their occupational directions

Habitus can also be transformed when individuals become familiar with a field, develop 'a feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990b, p.66), and reflexively compare themselves with others active in the same field, as Yang explains:

> Put succinctly, through intentional and strategic learning combined with practical familiarization, as a result of reflexive thinking, a secondary habitus, which is significantly distinctive from the primary habitus unconsciously produced during the earliest phase of upbringing, can be acquired. (2014, p.1533)

This feel for the game, be it tennis, a cocktail party or an art exhibition, is not automatic but must be 'developed over time, and is only acquired through enormous application' (Noble & Watkins, 2003, p.527). What binds habitus and field together, what establishes a fit between one's habitus and any particular field, is illusio, the individual's belief that the game is worth playing, that the benefits (be they qualifications, goods, money, reputation or status) are worth the investment of time and effort. This commitment is not dependent on any formal contract, but on the player's belief in the value of the game.

> Each field calls forth and gives life to a specific form of interest, a specific illusio as tacit recognition of the value of the stakes of the game and as practical mastery of its rules. Furthermore, this specific interest implied by one's participation in the game specifies itself according to the position occupied in the game (dominant vs. dominated, or orthodox vs. heretic) and with the trajectory that leads each participant to this position. (Wacquant, 1989, p.42)

The game is worth playing for the capital which players may accumulate. For Bourdieu, the capital which is competed for in a specific field may be economic (money, possessions), social (status, networks), cultural (qualifications, experiences, tastes) and symbolic (the cumulative

effect of the other forms). Each of these can be exchanged to gain advantage, so economic capital can be used to improve social capital by buying a house in a higher status neighbourhood, or to buy privileged education at an independent school, an education which will improve cultural capital, all of which will improve the individual's symbolic capital. In the broad field of cultural production, and the field of art and design contained within it, cultural capital is especially valuable. Cultural capital is seen as having three elements; objectified, the possession of cultural goods and artefacts; institutionalized, the holding of qualifications and the esteem based on these; and embodied, similar to habitus in that it is an inherited, habituated ability to understand, appreciate and decipher cultural products and practices (Bourdieu, 1984). Specialised fields also have their own positions, their own status, within broader social spaces, and an individual's symbolic capital is proportionate to the position of the specialised field. An example of this inter-group variance is the distinction between the value and status afforded to fine art practitioners as opposed to commercial artists or craftspeople.

An individual's position and potential practice in a field both depend on the individual's capital and its value within that field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992); the chances of an individual's success within the field are determined by their amount of relevant capital the individual has and the correspondence between that capital and what is valued in the particular field (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). An individual with an honours degree, who owns original works of art and listens to classical music has a cultural capital which is different to someone with school leaver qualifications, who collects superhero and Manga comics, and listens to hip-hop music, making each one a 'fish out of water' in the other's social field. This applies not only in a social field but also in educational, occupational and professional fields, including the fields of art education and of cultural production; as Waller (2011, p.127) has noted 'Everyone has extensive cultural capital, but some forms of it are of greater benefit than others in a given setting'. This implies that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to progress beyond an assigned position and status. However, as Yang points out using the example that a working-class habitus and associated capital would be expected to make educational success impossible, but 'Our real-life experience tells us this could not be more wrong and, in fact, Bourdieu himself [the son of a provincial working-class family] is a typical example, which contradicts his own theoretical claims.' (2014, p.1528)

Writing about young peoples' career choices, and drawing overtly on habitus, Hodkinson and Sparkes use the term 'horizons for action' to denote the limitations placed on those choices:

> By horizon for action we mean the arena within which actions can be taken and decisions made. Habitus and the opportunity structures of the labour market both influence horizons for action and are inter-related, for perceptions of what might be

> available and appropriate affect decisions, and opportunities are simultaneously subjective and objective. (1997, p.34)

This sociocultural constraint on opportunity can be equated with Bourdieu's habitus, the dispositions, beliefs and understandings which individuals acquire through the social milieu of their upbringing; their family, culture and education. The motivation of an envisaged and desired future, however, is comparable to Bourdieu's illusio, the agent's belief in the value of participating in a particular field, that the benefits, the capital, available within the field is worth striving for and leading to action and agency.

2.4 The political context for the study

This section aims to set the thesis into the context of the time of its writing and to examine the threats that currently face education from government policies and the threats to liberal education in general (including arts education), particularly in higher education, due to the commodification of studies. In recent years it has become clear that the political climate has grown increasingly hostile to art (and arts) education, and increasingly emphasises the neo-liberal discourse of vocational education, where all learning is expected to lead to specific employment related outcomes. As Carr puts it:

> …education is now understood as an activity for utilitarian and economic purposes, rather than an ethical activity directed towards morally desirable or socially transformative ends. (2003, p.15)

Most of the participants in this research were on foundation courses in the late 1980s to the mid 1990s, a period when vocational, or enterprise, education was being established in schools through the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) which started in 1983, the Certificate in Pre-Vocational Education, launched in 1985 and the Business and Technical Education Council's First Diplomas and Certificates which launched in 1986. In higher education the TVEI initiative was matched by the Enterprise in Higher Education initiative which began in 1987. These early and relatively tentative beginnings have accelerated and proliferated into the current heavily marketised, vocationalist, neo-liberal environment of further and higher education.

2.4.1 Neo liberalism, education, performativity and instrumentalism

Although it can be seen as a return to the liberal economic theories of Adam Smith (Thorsen & Lie, 2006), modern neo liberalism developed in the economic and political reforms of the 1960s and 1970s (Reaganomics in the USA and Thatcherism in the UK). It is a doctrine which holds that the market is more important than the state and seeks to change society by creating free economic competition, in the belief that individuals taking part in self-regulating markets are a better way of achieving economic efficiency. This leads governments to withdraw from

many of their social and economic roles, and to concentrate on ensuring the efficient operation of a free market (Chandler & Reid, 2016). Neoliberal regimes encourage people to see themselves as acting autonomously, free to make their own decisions, responsible for their own success. To achieve this the individual needs to be resilient, entrepreneurial, flexible and self-marketing. Both the responsibility and the risks are placed on the individual, and any failure to achieve is seen to be due to the individual's own shortcomings.

As a political and economic theory, neoliberalism is based primarily on the expectation of benefits to individuals and to the state from free trade and free markets, and that these benefits arise from individual entrepreneurialism with little or no state interference with the market. As a result Harvey (2003) sees the state's role shifting from the provision of social care to facilitating the practices of the free market. This role is:

> to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. […] Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. (Harvey, 2005, p.2)

For many of the participants and for many more working in the creative industries this leads to the precarity discussed below, what Bourdieu calls 'the utopia of unlimited exploitation' (1998, p.94). In the case of education, the second part of the quotation from Harvey has particular significance for this study because when these organisations could not be wholly privatised, new forms of control, accountability and governance were introduced, exactly the opposite of the deregulatory reforms for the private sector. In England, the Education (Schools) Act of 1992 established the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), with inspection powers to fail schools and put them in special measures. Also in 1992 the Further and Higher Education Act introduced two funding regimes, the Further Education Funding Council (later the Education and Skills Funding Agency), with its own inspectorate (later part of OFSTED), and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (later the Office for Students) along with the Higher Education Quality Council (later the Quality Assurance Agency) and the Research Assessment Exercise (later the Research Excellence Framework). For Connell neoliberalism is not only economic and social transformation, but also 'the institutional arrangements to implement this project that have been installed, step by step, in every society under neoliberal control.' (2013, p.100). As a result these 'new systems of government funding, political interference with institutional management, new control mechanisms of audit and the assessment of core activities' (Harland, 2009, p.513) led to schools, colleges, and universities developing far more managerial regimes to control and enhance the performance indicators required of them in a regime of performativity.

In their examination of higher education in the current neo-liberal regime, Glynos and Howarth

propose four social logics, in which '*the logic of a practice comprises the rules or grammar of the practice*' (2007, p.136, emphasis in original). These social logics enable the characterisation of a practice through 'capturing the rules that govern regimes or practices, as well as the conditions and objects that make such rules possible' (Howarth, Glynos & Griggs, 2016, p.100). These social logics of higher education are competition, atomisation, hierarchy, and instrumentalization, all of which are driven and underpinned by the regime of audit practices. Competition covers competition between universities for students, status and funding, between faculties, schools and academics for resources, and students for scholarships, bursaries and places in elite institutions. Atomisation describes how individuals and institutions have moved away from collaborative and social structures, becoming increasingly isolated and self-reliant. The logic of hierarchy describes the way in which universities have become governed like commercial institutions, led by authoritarian governance and responsive to market trends and audit demands. Finally, instrumentalization moves teaching, learning and research away from their intrinsic values and instead focuses on their exchange value in the marketplace. These logics are clearly visible in current universities' policies and ethos and have a significant impact on the marginalisation of art and design faculties and programmes.

In 1997 the government's acceptance of the Dearing Report (the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education) led to the expansion of student numbers and introduced a new funding system for students with fees and loans replacing grants. This led to universities competing for students in order to maximise their income, with students becoming effectively purchasers or consumers of their education (Thompson, 2005). As a result, 'Knowledge became recognised as a commodity that could provide economic wealth and also be traded' (Harland, 2009, p. 513). Whilst this appears to identify the student as a consumer and customer of higher education, an investor seeking a financial return on that investment, an alternative view sees them as the education industry's 'raw materials, that are transformed into the "products" purchased by corporate employers' (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2000, p.74). This means that, as Deresiewicz asserts, 'The purpose of education in a neoliberal age is to produce producers.' (2015, p.26), and that consequently:

> Instruction is redefined as workforce preparation more than as personally and socially enhancing education. (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2000, p.74)

The traditional liberal-humanist, socially and personally enhancing focus of education has been radically changed to one in which:

> Differentially skilled and socially/politically/culturally neutered and compliant human capital is now the production focus of neoliberalised education systems and institutions (Hill, 2006, pp.27-28).

Moreover, these policies have moved the responsibility for learning from the provider to the

consumer and 'turning education from a right into a duty' (Biesta, 2009, p.38). This creation of neo-liberal subjects as investors in themselves, as entrepreneurs of themselves, was acknowledged by Foucault in his lectures to the Collège de France:

> *Homo œconomicus* is an entrepreneur, an entrepreneur of himself. This is true to the extent that, in practice, the stake in all neo-liberal analyses is the replacement every time of *homo œconomicus* as partner of exchange with a *homo œconomicus* as entrepreneur of himself, being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings. (2008, p. 226)

This is further emphasised in Lord Young's 2014 report for the government on enterprise in education, Enterprise for All, which begins by saying 'Enterprise means more than just the ability to become an entrepreneur. It is that quality that gives an individual a positive outlook, an ability to see the glass as half full rather than half empty, and is a valuable attribute for the whole of life' (Young, 2014, p.1). This neo-liberal focus on the purpose of education being to foster an enterprising attitude has changed 'the conception of higher education from a common social good to a private commodity measured largely in terms of financial returns on investment.' (Kenning, 2019, p.116)

The idea that the function of education is to prepare productive workers has led to a redefinition of skills as competencies, with an expectation that a competence 'is something that a person has, an ability to do something, which they can take to the market place as product and sell (Turner, 2020, p.143). As Turner goes on to point out:

> This is in stark contrast to the earlier concept of a skilled craftsperson, a person who not only had a skill, but through acquiring that skill had developed the patience, judgement and pride in their work that rendered that skill effective. (Turner, 2020, p.143)

Furthermore, this emphasis on students as purchasers of and investors in education has led to academic managers commodifying education, transforming ideas, information and education into items to trade, valued only for their economic value, and:

> moving programs and processes to the marketplace more to generate revenue than to meet any clearly defined social or educational need. (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2000, p.78)

This has the effect of marginalising and othering courses and subject areas which do not promise attractive economic returns for the student, the consumer in this higher education marketplace. The foundation course is even further marginalised by this, as it has no prospect of economic return, serving only to enhance progression into higher education.

2.4.2 Commodification of higher education

This neo-liberal drive to measure and quantify everything in terms of financial return (Conroy, 2004) extends into higher education more generally (Wolff, 2017; Scott, 2018). An example of

this market-driven approach came in the former Minister of State for Higher and Further Education's speech to the Higher Education Policy Institute in June 2018 (Gyimah, 2018). He began by saying that:

> There is more to a university degree than lifetime earnings. Higher education is first and foremost education, and not all the benefits of education can or should be captured in future salary.

However, Gyimah went on to say that 'Value for money is a matter of central importance for the Review of Post-18 Education the Government is currently conducting', and thereafter everything else he said was based on a form of cost/benefit analysis focused on potential future earnings, implying that courses and institutions with lower returns should improve or be closed. These 'underperforming' courses included creative arts degrees which can lead to salaries 'at least 44% lower than the average graduate – approximately £11,000 per year' (Gyimah, 2018).

This emphasis on value for money and the financial returns from higher education has been seen as 'one of the great ideological achievements of neo-liberalism is to disseminate the idea that the purpose of education is to give the individual the skills to compete in the labour market' (Turner, 2020, p.144), and that the resulting commodification of higher education 'with its focus on value-added education and labour market prospects for highly skilled and competent graduates, is a vivid outcome of market-driven economic imperatives' (Zajda, 2020, p.153).

Universities have frequently been reminded of 'the need to ensure that students, graduates and the taxpayer all receive value from their investment' (DFE 2019b, p.1; DBIS 2015; DBIS 2016; Johnson, 2015). The market driven policy frameworks of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills equate value for money (VFM) directly to quality and employability:

> Students expect better value for money; employers need access to a pipeline of graduates with the skills they need; and the taxpayer needs to see a broad range of economic and social benefits generated by the public investment in our higher education system. (DBIS, 2015, p.18)

This shift to VFM and to the student as consumer has radically altered the relationship between staff and students, what Wilkinson and Wilkinson call the 'front-line interface between provision and recipience of HE services' (2020, p.2), which sees the student as a passive recipient of education rather than as an active participant in it. In examining the impact of marketisation of HE in the United States McMillan and Cheney identified that the metaphor of the student as consumer 'inappropriately compartmentalises the educational experience as a product rather than a process' (1996, p.1).

In an open letter to the UK Education Committee criticizing the marketisation of higher

education, signed by over 120 professors, Lesnik-Oberstein wrote that higher education's traditional values and attributes:

> are being undermined and degraded from within and without, with innovation, creativity, originality and critical thought, as well as notions of social justice, being threatened by forces of marketisation demanding "competitiveness" and "efficiency" in teaching and research. (Lesnik-Oberstein, 2015)

This passive consumption of education is totally at odds with the pedagogy of art and design, which requires:

> an engagement with work, both from the students' side and the tutors' side […] tutors view their role as a mentor or guide to student work, as opposed to imparting knowledge to students – a transactional, non-personal mode of teaching. (Wilkinson, 2020, p.542)

Since art schools began to be merged into the polytechnics in the 1970s, art and design, with its fluid, experimental, qualitative approach, has always had an uncomfortable relationship with mainstream higher education with its more quantitative measures of success, a relationship which has seen art and design becoming increasingly "other" within the prevailing marketised, vocationalist paradigm. This uncomfortable relationship is clear in the tensions between the neo-liberal vocational emphasis on prescription, competition, instrumental skills, productivity, and measurable outcomes on the one hand and the art foundation course's creative, experimental, playful, cooperative ethos on the other. The sense of personal development within a collaborative community of practice (Wenger, 1998) which is at the heart of the foundation course affords a very different perspective on the value of education, rather than education as value for money.

The next section examines how the doctrine of free market enterprise, individualism, and the neoliberal requirement to see a return on investment in education has led to the growth of vocationalism in higher education.

2.4.3 Vocationalism in higher education

Historically, courses in subjects such as law or medicine were vocational, with the degree being required for professional practice and the doctorate required for university teaching. Going further back, Waterhouse points out that 'the European universities were invented to deliver vocational education in the strictest of senses. They were set up by the Church to train clerks, i.e., clerics.' (2002, p.7). In more modern times the liberal conception of education, that 'The responsibility of education, primarily, is to illuminate not reflect.' (Jones, 2008, p.10), has been central to the function of (in particular) higher education, but this has gradually been eroded in the last four decades.

This concern about vocationalism in HE has occurred before in the expansion of HE in the

1960s proposed by the Robbins Report (Committee on Higher Education, 1963). Although intended to widen access to HE, the existing institutions worried that these new students would 'seek a degree course to earn a living rather than college residence to complete their induction into a style of life' (Halsey, 1961, p. 56), leading to pressure for vocational courses and university education becoming the training of technical experts (Hall, 1961).

Although this did not materialise in the way the universities feared as the expansion recruited more traditional, middle class students rather than the wider groups it was intended for, further reforms introduced by the Education Reform Act (1988) and the Further and Higher Education Act (1992) were to have far reaching changes as the field of politics increasingly impacted on the previously relatively autonomous field of higher education (Naidoo, 2004), eroding 'the social compact underpinning higher education'(Maton, 2005, p. 687). This major restructuring, based on neo-liberal economic principles, with its processes of inspection of both teaching and research, the linking of these to funding through a state controlled funding council and the driving down of costs, defined success in performative terms set by government agencies (Grenfell, 2010).

The pressure that fields exert on other fields and the way this pressure changes the other fields can be seen as 'cross-field effects' (Rawolle, 2005), in this case resulting from interaction between institutions of education (the educational field) and the fields of politics, power and bureaucracy. The pressure of these (and subsequent) reforms have created what Grenfell calls a 'centrifugal and centripetal dynamic' (2010 p. 91) in education policy as institutions, rather than the state, are made responsible for the implementation of policy, whilst the state regulates and controls through centralised accountability systems and organisations, what Maton (2005) calls acronym bodies. Furthermore, this free market approach means that universities which had previously existed independently of each other, albeit with an implicit tiered system of Oxbridge, stone built, red brick and concrete institutions (Scott, 1995), were now competing with each other for teaching and research funding, student numbers, and explicit league table positions.

In his foreword to Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Shaull posited the existence of two forms of education:

> Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, *or* it becomes the "practice of freedom", the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (Shaull, 2000, p. 34)

A version of the instrumental view, that the function of education is to prepare young people to work in a capitalist society, has gained political support in the last quarter of the Twentieth

century. In his 1976 Ruskin College "Great Debate" speech, Callaghan expressed his concerns that graduates had no desire to work in industry, preferring academia or the civil service, and in 1995, Blair's speech to the Labour Party Conference stated that 'Education is the best economic policy there is' (Blair, 1995). Recently the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills has called for a higher education sector that enables students to benefit from 'teaching that supports their future productivity' (2106, p.8).

This has led to an increasingly pervasive view that the main purpose of higher education is to produce graduates who are adequately prepared to take their place in a competitive workforce. This is exacerbated by universities' concerns for the marketability of their programmes, leading to a view of students as customers (a view emphasised by government) whose requirements must be satisfied (Mayo, 2003). Furthermore, as Jones has pointed out, the curriculum has been moved from the centre to the periphery of higher education, and that many staff have 'become fixated on the EXIT sign, with the chief question being what do students need to get a job?' (2008, p.10). As a result, universities have had to reconceptualise themselves as a service industry which assesses learning and awards certification.

This is in direct opposition to the view that education 'is concerned with a continual journey of 'becoming', rather than the end-state of 'being' educated (Clarke & Phelan, 2017, p.4). Colley, James, Diment and Tedder also see learning as becoming, and that 'teaching and learning are primarily social and cultural rather than individual and technical activities' (2003, p.472). As a result there is growing concern about the balance between preparing employment-ready graduates and the academic goals that higher education has traditionally aimed to achieve (Daniel, 2010). That question of balance is summarised by Universities UK as:

> [T]he primary purpose of higher education is not to develop narrow skill sets, even though occupational skills are a necessary element in the education process. (UnisUK, 2010, p.v)

The Leitch Review (2006) made a case for a need to 'ensure universities are appropriately incentivised to deliver improvements in high level skills throughout the workforce' (p.68), but went on to point out that 'No one can accurately predict future demand for particular skill types' (p.69). Eisner goes further, arguing that basing education policy on preparation for the future leads to its greatest weaknesses:

> [W]ho among us can tell what the future will look like? Projections about lifestyles, social arrangements, and problems that will be encountered are notoriously difficult. Who could have predicted 20 years ago the challenges that adults address today? Indeed, some of the most significant weaknesses of education policy stem from the belief that the aims and content of education can be justified on the basis of preparation. (2004, p.6)

A similar point was made by Clegg in a lecture in 1970, 'There must be hundreds of thousands

of people today earning their living in occupations which were unknown at the time when I and others of my generation were being trained for a job'. This argument is particularly significant at a time when the coronavirus pandemic has created growing uncertainties in the economy, the job market and in education.

It might be thought that art education, with its traditionally more radical, less regimented approach might be less concerned with vocationalism, and more concerned with the way in which it 'develops creative thinking and the capacity to learn and to be innovative than solely for its ability to train occupational skills' (Ball, Pollard & Stanley, 2010, p.42). The Precarious Workers Brigade (2017) found that for art students there was very little, if any, connection between their studio practice and critical thinking on the one hand and professional development sessions on the other. These sessions frequently offered unrealistic information about precarity and employment rights in the creative sectors, and students were often given uncritical views of freelance work based on entrepreneurship which bore little relationship to the realities of professional practice or how students might be able to make a living. The Precarious Workers Brigade, like the Carrot Workers Collective, is a group of workers in both culture & education, with a commitment to research which examines the relationship between the cultural economy, education and precarity; Mai and Hutnyk (2020, p.1121) see the Brigade as having 'developed a substantial and well-documented critique of precarity'. These sessions amount to a form of cruel optimism, defined by Berlant as 'a relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility' (Berlant, 2010, p.94), an attachment to fantasies of a better future which is, in fact, very unlikely to be attainable.

In a diametrically opposed view Jaspan has pointed out that 'the accredited version of art curricula is too heavily based around the needs of business and the creative industries, and delivering quantifiable, standardised outcomes' (2016, p.35). In the United States Beckman carried out a survey of universities' arts entrepreneurship activities, which he felt arose as 'a response to poor professional outcomes [and] accountability pressures' which made them a growing priority in higher education (2007, p.88). He identified two models in use, one based on the traditional view of entrepreneurship as practised in business schools, and the other intended to "transition" students into professional careers in the arts; the second one takes a broader approach to entrepreneurship, and 'teaches students new skill sets, (for-profit and non-profit acumen, creativity education, and opportunity recognition, for example) in the context of the arts environment they will inhabit as professional artists.' (Beckman, 2007, p.91). The particular needs of students aiming to work in the creative industries are articulated by Noonan:

> The employability agenda that has been taken up so enthusiastically by HE needs to be

> complemented with an employment agenda where understanding and unpacking the exclusionary practices of industry and the problematic routines of work are part of the educational experience for these future workers, most especially those aspiring to join the creative sector. (Noonan, 2015, p.308)

These views are, however, at odds with the results of a survey of students in a university school of art and design in 2003, the majority of whom complained about the loss of studio time to attend sessions on business skills (Wilkinson, 2021).

2.4.4 Liberal education

All this has to be set against the values promoted in a truly liberal education which 'ought to make a person independent of mind, sceptical of authority and received views, prepared to forge an identity for himself or herself, and capable of becoming an individual not bent upon copying other persons' (Freedman, 2003, p.56), in which education was seen as 'a process of self-development, through which a rounded personality was created, or at least enabled' (Turner, 2020, p.143).

Axelrod offers a precise definition:

> Liberal education in the university refers to activities designed to cultivate intellectual creativity, autonomy and resilience; critical thinking; a combination of intellectual breadth and specialized knowledge; the comprehension and tolerance of diverse ideas and experiences informed participation in community life; and effective communication skills. (Axelrod, 2002, p. 34)

Axelrod's references to creativity and to critical thinking are particularly relevant in the context of this study's focus on creative individuals, their places in the creative industries, and the educational experiences which contributed to their development, and need to be set against current thinking in which creativity is now about:

> devising "innovative" products, services, and techniques - "solutions," which imply that you already know the problem. "Creativity" means design thinking […] not art thinking: getting from A to a predetermined B, not engaging in an open-ended exploratory process in the course of which you discover the B. (Deresiewicz, 2015, p. 31)

The current neo-liberal, vocationalist form of education, is an 'artificially instrumental' (Bojesen, 2019, p.1) factory form of education which subjugates students into little blocks of learning, into 'performative components' (Drummond, 2003, p.62) and 'a skills agenda under successive governments that has narrowed the concept of skills to something akin to training' (Crossick, 2011, p.72). In particular this has led to 'a distrust of embodied, situated and tacit knowledge as other and necessarily inferior' (McGuirk, 2011, p. 218). This instrumentalist approach leads to what Pring identifies as a:

> failure to respect what it means to be and to grow as a person is reflected in the narrow conception of successful learning, … in the failure to see the arts (or 'aesthetics') as a valuable form of knowledge through which one explores values and

> what it means to be human. (2012, p.755)

Rebalancing this requires a different approach to how we conceptualise people in education, to see them as agents in their own learning rather than as consumers of knowledge as a commodity leading to economic success, to re-establish what Dewey has called 'the organic connection between education and personal experience' (1998, p.4). This requires challenging:

> the limited sense of personal dignity and fulfilment in current educational theory; the language and metaphors which shape educational policy and practice; the neglect of the aesthetic in the exploration of what it means to be human. (Pring, 2012, p.759)

In their accounts of the foundation courses, the participants can be seen to be crafting themselves as well as their artefacts and their practices. Their education can be seen as 'a trajectory through spaces of learning, and our movement through these spaces can be reaffirming of who we are or be part of becoming different' (Ball, 2010, p.72).

2.4.5 An alternative, transformative view of education

This section considers an alternative style of education, one which emphasises the personal, intellectual, aesthetic and social over the functional, instrumental, performative and individualistic. This alternative, transformative learning has been defined as:

> learning that transforms problematic frames of reference - sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mind-sets) - to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, reflective, and emotionally able to change. (Mezirow, 2003, p.58)

Illeris (2014) raises a number of concerns about Mezirow's original concept of transformative learning, in particular its focus on adult learning rather than learning throughout life, and proposes a new definition which 'comprises all learning which implies changes in the identity of the learner' (p.577), but which excludes 'all the small and less important everyday changes, or school learning of ordinary knowledge and skills […] transformation means a change or alteration into something qualitatively different' (p.576). Transformative learning has been seen as a process by which we 'transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mindsets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change' (Taylor & Cranton, 2012, p.76), a form of learning which is needed as neo-liberal vocationalism has provided society with 'enough individuals who are able to copy and regurgitate information or are tied to one set of specific skills' (Juggins, 2000, p.229).

Ingold's work with anthropology students convinced him of the failings of 'the requirements of teaching and learning set out in the institutional protocols to which we were expected to conform. According to these protocols, teaching is the delivery of content, learning its assimilation' (2017, p.viii). He sees education as more than the transmission of established

knowledge, but as something:

> …which opens paths of intellectual growth and discovery without predetermined outcomes or fixed end-points. It is about attending to things, rather than acquiring the knowledge that absolves us of the need to do so; about exposure rather than immunisation. The task of the educator, then, is not to explicate knowledge for the benefit of those who are assumed, by default, to be ignorant, but to provide inspiration, guidance and criticism in the exemplary pursuit of truth. (2017, p.ix)

This inspiration, guidance and criticism is at the heart of art education. Furthermore, the open, communal nature of studio spaces, art and design staffs' own professional practices, and the frequent use of visiting practitioners, accords with Ingold's view of the relationship between research and teaching, that:

> …research does not precede teaching as production to dissemination. It wells up under the eyes of teaching only to become those eyes, allowing a new generation to begin under their watch […] teacher and students are together immersed, as companions and fellow travellers, (Ingold, 2017, p.73)

Concerns about the use of the word "learning" in educational discourse have led Biesta to coin the term 'learnification' to characterise the growth of terms such as learning environment and learning facilitator. He goes on to point out that:

> …the word *learning* is in itself neutral or empty with regard to content, direction, and purpose. To suggest that learning is good or desirable—and thus to suggest that it is something that should go on throughout one's life or that should be promoted in schools—does therefore not really mean anything until it is specified what the *content* of the learning is and, more important, until it is specified what the *purpose* of the learning is. (Biesta, 2105, p.63) [Original emphasis]

In examining what an alternative to a performative education might look like, Ball has argued for a form of education which:

> consists of a process of creative self-fashioning, the opening up of vulnerability, unruly curiosity and frank speaking – a space of education that is not defined and limited by an institutional rationale (2019, p.141)

Such an education would encourage experimentation, an awareness of the influence of one's culture on one's being, and an openness and willingness to think critically, to critique the assumptions we hold to be self-evident, and to develop a permanent curiosity. In Foucault's words:

> a readiness to find what surrounds us strange and odd; a certain determination to throw off familiar ways of thought and to look at the same things in a different way; a passion for seizing what is happening now and what is disappearing; a lack of respect for the traditional hierarchies of what is important and fundamental. (1997, p.325)

All this is in stark contrast to current education policy, described by Pring as:

> the primacy of 'the academic' over 'the practical' (thinking over doing); the role of

> measurement in assessing that personal development in its various forms; the limited sense of personal dignity and fulfilment in current educational theory; the language and metaphors which shape educational policy and practice; the neglect of the aesthetic in the exploration of what it means to be human. (2012, p.759)

This neo-liberal, vocationalist turn to education carries particular threats to art education, which are outlined in section 2.6 below.

2.5 The creative industries

The next section sets out some definitions of the creative industries, the sub sectors of fine art, design and craft, and sets the context for the participants' accounts of their careers. In spite of Bourdieu's warning that in researching the field of cultural production 'the social scientist's task is not to draw a dividing-line between the agents involved in it, by imposing a so-called operational definition, which is most likely to be imposed on him by his own prejudices or presuppositions' (1983, p.324), it attempts to establish the professional identities of practitioners in the various fields of art and design.

In 1998, with an increasing interest in the so-called "knowledge economy", and having recognised the contribution to employment and to the economy of what has been variously called the cultural sector, the creative class, and the creative industries, the government set up the Creative Industries Task Force, using the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) broad definition of these industries as 'those activities which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent, and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property' (DCMS, 2001, p.00:05). The Task Force broke the industry down into a number of sectors. The ones of relevance to this study include advertising, architecture, crafts, design, the performing arts and publishing. There have been a number of reservations expressed about the DCMS list (such as the Crafts Council, 2013), especially around the inclusion of software and computer services. As Chapman has pointed out, 'Art and design is a neat and compact title, though grossly inadequate, for the sprawling range of jobs and careers it encompasses' (1998, p.2).

Art and design is a substantial educational and employment sector. In 2018-19 there were 9,620 full time equivalent staff teaching art and design in UK universities (HESA, 2020a), with 166 universities offering 1,883 undergraduate courses (Prospects, 2020) and there were 164,280 entrants to those courses (HESA 2020b). Research for the Design Council (2018) reported 625,000 designers working in design-intensive firms and one million designers in embedded roles in other sectors (such as packaging designers in the pharmaceutical industry). Just over a quarter of all designers were self-employed. Also in 2018 the Crafts Council reported 129,000 people working in the crafts, of whom 40% were self-employed. Data for

artists is harder to estimate, however in the 2011 Census 54,021 people identified themselves as artists (ONS, 2015). Since many artists will be engaged in portfolio work to finance their own creative activities (Ashton, 2015), this is likely to be an under-estimate as some may have identified themselves with that employment (e.g. teacher) rather than artist as their career. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 2018) estimates that there are some 70,000 artists in the creative industries. This gives a total of some 1.8 million people working in the sector.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK's creative economy was growing five times faster than the overall economy, employing over two million people (an increase of one third since 2011), and producing almost £112 billion, more than the combined total of the oil and gas, automotive, aerospace, and life sciences industries (Prospects, 2020).

2.5.1 Art, design and craft

As the participants in this study entered their foundation courses with the ambition to become practicing professionals in some area, some field, of art or design, the following sections examine what these fields are, how they might be differentiated, and how professionalism in each field might be recognised.

What do we mean by the terms fine art, applied art, commercial art, design and craft, and how do we distinguish between them? Indeed, can we even arrive at a definition, as Ingold says;

> 'Art' covers such a broad spectrum, and embraces such an eccentric assortment of practices, that attempts to pin it down to a single definition are bound to founder on the rocks of exception. (2017, p.65)

Fine art is practised mainly for its aesthetic value rather than its functional value; it has traditionally encompassed drawing, painting, printmaking, and sculpture, and more recently includes installations, conceptual works and video (fineart.ac.uk, n.d.). It is often contrasted with design which has been seen as much more utilitarian and functional, and intended to be of practical benefit to its consumers. Historically fine artists survived either through patronage or through commissions for individual works. More recently, patronage has been largely replaced by artist-in-residence and community arts schemes, and most artists attempt to make a living through commissions and through gallery sales.

The broad field of design could include, as examples, architecture, furniture, fashion, cars, books, jewellery, vacuum cleaners and cutlery. Design is often broken down into subsections, including commercial art, applied art, and crafts. Applied art produces objects of everyday use which have been designed with both appearance and function in mind. Applied artists and designers are seen as following more commercial paths, and are usually either employed by a company, are self-employed or work as freelancers.

Commercial art, now more usually referred to as graphic design, has been described as 'the activity that organizes visual communication in society' (Frascara, 1988, p.20). This includes advertising, corporate identity, book covers and packaging, and people working in this field may be (increasingly) freelance or employed in graphic or advertising agencies, publishers, television and animation studios and similar organisations.

Craft denotes activities involving a high degree of hands-on skill, usually employed to produce objects which have a degree of individuality, and are intended to be both functional and aesthetically pleasing, such as studio pottery or silversmithing (Hunt, Ball & Pollard, 2010). For Greenhalgh, 'Craft has always been a supremely messy word' encompassing 'definitions and descriptions of craft as something which is (or is not) art, is (or is not) design'. (2002, p.1). He goes on to offer his interpretation of craft as 'the elevation of the necessary activities of life to the level of creative practice.' (p.9).

In recent years the boundaries between what Lees-Maffei & Sandino (2004) have called this 'ménage à trois' of art, design and craft have become somewhat blurred, with designers such as Memphis and Alessi producing forms that go beyond functionalism, and with artists appropriating the techniques and media of traditional crafts. This has not always been readily accepted; in Grayson Perry's acceptance speech for the Turner Prize, he commented that 'I think the art world had more trouble coming to terms with me being a potter than my choice of frocks.' (Tate, n.d.).

2.5.2 Fine art

Figure 10. What do you need to be a professional artist? (Webb2012)

Webb's cartoon points out the difficulty in defining the boundary between professional and amateur artists; unlike most professions, there is no requirement for an entry qualification. This issue of defining who is an artist is matched by Bourdieu's problem of defining a work of art – the difficulty of deciding the 'moment form takes over from function' (1984, p.29). This problem of definition is also an issue in education, 'Right at the centre of fine art education is something nobody really wants to talk about [...] The neglected topic is nothing less than the

definition of the subject itself' (Sweet, 1992, p.1). However, even if we accept the notion of particularly creative individuals who can be seen and accepted as artists, the question about how we might define a professional artist remains. At a seminar at the art school in Nimes a student asked Bourdieu for his definition of the word "artist" and received the following answer:

> An artist is someone who other artists say is an artist. The artist is he whose existence as an artist is up for grabs in the game that I call the art field. The art world is a game in which is in play the question of knowing who has the right to call themselves an artist, and above all to say who is an artist. This is a definition, which is singular and has the advantage of escaping the trap of definitions, which one should never forget is at stake in the art field. (2016, p.11)

According to Becker, there is 'a perfect correlation between doing the core activity and being an artist. If you do it, you must be an artist. Conversely, if you are an artist, what you do must be art (1982, p.18). Van Winkel takes a more questioning approach:

> …there are no longer any criteria to determine what it means to be a visual artist. No specific skills are required of visual artists (unlike artists working in other branches, such as music, dance, film or typography). The profession lacks indisputable norms of competence and expertise.' (2012, p.166).

In sport, which also has no entry qualification barrier, professionals are seen as those for whom sport is a full-time paid job, but clearly only a small minority of people who regard themselves as professional artists make a full-time living from their art (Velthuis, 2003). Arts Council England has reported on a number of problems facing artists trying to support themselves through their art, including 'the lack of clear definition of the professional artist' (Jeffreys, 2004, p.4). As a result, deciding who can be recognised as an artist poses a dilemma, summed up by Mitchell and Karttunen as:

> When we ask "what is an artist" we are dealing with more existential or ontological problems: what are the inherent characteristics of artistic work and artists themselves. (1991, p.1)

These problems lead to a lack of agreement about how we might conceptualise an artist, ranging from broad, inclusive and all-embracing to narrower, more restricted definitions. UNESCO's definition of an artist epitomises the open and inclusive, accepting an individual's self-definition as an artist:

> 'Artist' is taken to mean any person who creates or gives creative expression to, or re-creates works of art, who considers his [sic] artistic creation to be an essential part of his life, who contributes in this way to the development of art and culture and who is or asks to be recognized as an artist, whether or not he is bound by any relations of employment or association (1980, p.5).

By contrast, others such as some national arts councils have attempted to define who can be

seen as a professional artist rather more narrowly. One attempt for the Arts Council of Ireland views professional artists as those who have:

> …received a grant or support from a funded artists' organisation, and support is itself an acknowledgement that the individual is accepted by the Arts Council as being an artist. (Annabel Jackson Associates, 2000, p.78-79)

This includes both self-definition (the applicants claiming to be artists) and institutional definition (the applicants being judged to fit the Council's criteria). The Australia Council for the Arts requires seriousness, evidence of practice and some formal professional criteria:

> The seriousness is judged in terms of a self-assessed commitment to artistic work as a major aspect of the artist's working life [...] The practising aspect means that we confine our attention to artists currently working or seeking to work in their chosen occupation. The term professional is intended to indicate a degree of training, experience or talent... (Throsby & Hollister, 2003, p.14)

As Swindells, Atkinson and Sibley (2001) have pointed out, 'the professional artist or designer may be counted upon to do their job but not necessarily to define their job' (p.133), and as a result any attempt at a definition will be 'fluid, elastic or even vague' (p.130). Furthermore, any need to be defined as a "professional artist" is in stark contrast to most other professions: there is no need to speak of a "professional doctor", for example. One attempt to avoid this issue has been the use of the term "practitioner" instead of "artist" to 'denote someone who practically applies his or her creative ideas' (Hope, 2011, p.180).

Figure 11. Tony Hancock in The Rebel, 1961. (British Film Institute. n.d.)

The beret wearing, bohemian stereotype referred to in Webb's cartoon (Image 10) is exemplified by Tony Hancock's portrayal of an artist in The Rebel, or Kirk Douglas as Van Gogh in Lust for Life. Bain describes this populist stereotype as:

> The spirit of Romanticism was embodied in the stereotypical image of the starving

> artist living in a garret – an image that glamorized the precarious position of the artist and communicated a powerful new definition of the avant-garde artist as a Bohemian rebel, outsider and social critic who sacrificed status, money and material comfort for the supposed freedom this afforded the imaginative spirit to pursue individual creative expression. (2005, p.29)

Hancock's portrayal of an artist is also an example of what Goffman describes as 'one of the culture heroes of our dinner-table mythology … the man who walks out on an established calling in order to write or paint' (1962, p.486). The bohemian sacrificing of material comfort mentioned by Bain is typified by Giacometti who spent forty years, between 1926 and his death in 1966, living in a twenty-three square metre studio with a tiny bedroom and an outside toilet, even after he became economically successful.

In the 21st century, however, while artists have continued with experimental, innovative approaches and have pushed the boundaries of art, many have also developed a distinctive and marketable individuality:

> In this market-savvy entrepreneurial role, artists are encouraged to exaggerate and exploit their individuality and to feed into popular myths to reinforce their occupational authenticity. (Bain, 2005, p.29)

As a result, an increasing number of artists can also be identified as "brands", a process largely initiated by Andy Warhol, whose relentless pursuit of fame blended the images of the brands and celebrities he portrayed (Campbell's soup, Brillo, Marilyn Monroe) with the image he constructed for himself. More recently artists have continued to extend their reputations by marketing themselves through notoriety, media profile or celebrity status, such as Tracey Emin, Damien Hirst, Grayson Perry, the Chapman Brothers and Gilbert & George. These successful artists can be seen as:

> … brand managers, actively engaged in developing, nurturing, and promoting themselves as recognizable "products" in the competitive cultural sphere. (Schroeder, 2005, p.1292)

Leonardo da Vinci, having identified himself as qualified in both art forms, compared sculpture with painting, 'The sculptor undertakes his work with greater bodily exertion than the painter, and the painter undertakes his work with greater mental exertion.' (in Kemp, 2001, pp.38). This almost blue collar/white collar division between manual and mental occupations has more recently been used to consider the artist's position in contemporary society:

> The arts occupy a special, anomalous position in our society as a mediator between the occupational categories of 'trades' and 'professions'. Whereas working with one's hands might be considered working class, the occupational title 'professional visual artist' suggests that, as professionals, artists might be considered members of the social elite (Bain, 2005, p.33).

Yet, as Bourdieu points out, 'The literary and artistic fields attract a particularly strong

proportion of individuals who possess all the properties of the dominant class minus one: money' (1993, p.165); artists may lack money, but they possess 'cultural capital' and the status of the title 'professional'.

In recent times art has been largely divorced from the patronage of religion and its traditional aristocratic clientele for portraits, landscapes and so on, and has become determined by the personal preferences of the individual artist – art for art's sake. This means that artists have to fight for:

> copyright and royalties; they have had to struggle for scarcity, uniqueness, and quality, and only with the collaboration of critics, biographers, professors of art history, and others have they been able to assert themselves as artists (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 71-2).

While this has freed artistic output from determination by dominant patrons who saw art as a product valued by its size and the quality of the pigments used, it has not freed it from the influence of tastemakers and collectors such as the Saatchis, nor has it freed artists from competing to achieve distinction or accumulating capital. Moreover, an artist's claim to be uninterested in commercial profit can be seen to legitimise their claim to be a serious artist, the denial of interest becoming a declaration of interest (Grenfell, 2014). As a result, an artist's status in the hierarchy of other artists is determined by the prestige system of his or her specific field, and by the artist's accrual of social cultural and symbolic capital rather than economic capital.

Highly successful artists, however, can use this to maximise the economic benefits as well as the symbolic benefits by working closely with galleries and collectors to produce and enhance the value of their work, which means that this value is produced by:

> not only the direct producers of the work in its materiality (artist, writer, etc.) but also the producers of the meaning and value of the work - critics, publishers, gallery directors, and the whole set of agents whose combined efforts produce consumers capable of knowing and recognizing the work of art as such (Bourdieu, 1983, pp.318-319).

In their analysis of the loose grouping which became known as the Young British Artists, including Damien Hirst, Rachel Whiteread, Chris Offili and Tracey Emin (all of whom attended prestigious London art schools, and all have been Turner Prize nominees with Hirst, Whiteread and Offili winning), Grenfell and Hardy note how these 'field patterns and habitus configurations mutually collide' to enhance capital accumulation, and the economic benefits to the artists from their symbolic capital. (2003, p.32). But for most artists income generation remains a struggle.

2.5.3 Design

The Cox Review defined design as "what links creativity and innovation". It shapes

> ideas to become practical and attractive propositions for users or customers. Design may be described as "creativity deployed to a specific end". (Design Council, 2015, p.12)

The term design covers design-intensive sectors, including graphic design, web design, product design, animation, fashion and interior design, to designers working in other industries, such as the automotive or pharmaceuticals sector. It can also include architects and planners, all of which use design in various ways.

In 2018 a DCMS report identified 101,000 graphic designers, 62,000 web designers, and 43,000 account managers and creative directors in the advertising and marketing sector. Around half of graphic and web designers were self-employed. The product, clothing and related design sectors accounted for a further 90,000 designers, with 60% of these self-employed. London and the south-east accounted for 40% of all design businesses, with over a quarter of all design intensive firms and 20% of people working in the design economy based in London. (Design Council, 2015, p.53).

In 2010 around 60% of freelance designers had a fee income below £50,000. The majority of freelancers and consultancies work on a fixed fee or day-rate basis and rely on keeping and increasing their client base to maintain or increase their income. New clients are usually acquired through personal recommendations from existing clients or from networking, rather than through marketing (Design Council, 2010).

2.5.4 Craft

Defining what is a craft and hence what is a craft worker is almost as problematic as defining a work of art or an artist. (Throughout this section the terms 'craft worker', 'crafts person' or 'maker' have been used, except where references require the use of 'craftsman' or 'craftsmanship'.) Becker offers some useful pointers to how we might define craft, seeing it as 'a body of knowledge and skill which can be used to produce useful objects […] functional objects made with virtuoso skill' (1978, p.864). In spite of this virtuosity, compared to fine art craft has been seen as 'high art's abject other' (Shiner, 2012, p.231.) Shiner sees a need to distinguish between seeing 'craft as a process and practice, and craft as a category of disciplines' (2012, p.232). Becker's description above fits into the process and practice model, whereas the Crafts Council uses a lengthy category of disciplines. The word craft has also come to be used to distinguish hand-made articles from industrially manufactured ones, although as Sennett (2009) and Frayling (2011) have pointed out, the word craft has been increasingly appropriated by industry, promoting mass produced products as craft products (equated by Frayling to the comforting use of "organic" by the food industry), a distinction exemplified by John Ruskin, William Morris and the Arts & Crafts Movement, who promoted a return to

individual hand crafting skills as a reaction to increasing industrialisation.

The broad range of craft practices, exemplified by the Crafts Council's list, means that:

> Craft practice defies easy categorisation because it ranges from innovative work that is experimental both in terms of its vision and its use of material, to traditional craft that supports and preserves our cultural heritage. (Jennings, 2012, p.4)

A number of reports for the Crafts Council have sought arrive at a robust classification of the crafts, most recently in 2014 (Crafts Council, 2014). This lists a number of occupations including jewellery makers, silversmiths, blacksmiths, weavers and textile workers, glass, ceramics, furniture makers and craft woodworkers, and the catch-all "other skilled trades". These are, of course, broad categories which can be further broken down: craft woodworkers, for instance, could include toy makers, musical instrument makers, wood turners, clog makers, and so on. Furthermore, the Crafts Council draws a distinction between contemporary crafts and traditional or heritage crafts (Crafts Council, 2012). Heritage crafts have been described by Jennings as 'Practices which employ manual dexterity and skill, and an understanding of traditional materials, designs and techniques to make or repair useful things' (2012, p.4). The Crafts Council has contested the DCMS (2013) classification of the creative industries, drawing attention to the split between those sectors that deal with the public (e.g. film, performing arts, music) and those that supply business (e.g. advertising, design and software), with particular concerns about software not matching the primarily aesthetic dimension of the creative industries (Crafts Council, 2013), although Sennett (2009) sees open source software such as Linux as being a form of modern craft.

The Crafts Council's 2018 survey identified 129,000 people employed in the crafts, 40% of whom were self-employed, just over a quarter worked part time and 40% were over 50 years old (Crafts Council, 2018). In an earlier analysis of craft practice, the Crafts Council (2010) identified that 87% of all craft businesses were sole traders and that almost half have business turnovers below £10,000, and as a result some 70% have portfolio careers (McAuley & Fillis, 2004, 2005). Beyond these people making some level of income from craft, there are also a large number involved in craft hobbies, exemplified by TV programmes such as Channel 4's Great Pottery Throwdown or the BBC's Great British Sewing Bee.

2.6 Creative careers

Although (with one earlier exception) the participants in this research entered employment in the creative sector some twenty years ago when, as one points out, it was a different era, the following section looks at the challenges facing recent and future entrants to the creative industries, since these will impact on students on foundation courses now, and those aspiring to progress onto foundation courses. A particular problem in establishing a career in the

creative sector is that it 'represents one of the *indeterminate* sites in the social structure, which offer ill-defined posts, waiting to be made rather than ready-made […] and career-paths which are themselves full of uncertainty and extremely dispersed' (Bourdieu, 1983, p.324, emphasis in original).

One critical study of art education has pointed out that the transitions art and design students have to make as they move from school to higher education are matched by those they have to make between higher education and employment within the creative industries, and that these are 'key points where gaps in expectations become evident and where we as educators need to undertake further work to support our students as they enter and exit further and higher education.' (Vaughan et al, 2008, p.125)

2.6.1 Early creative careers

One major source of information on graduate careers is the HESA dataset on the 'destinations of leavers from higher education' (DLHE), which collects information on graduate employment at a point about six months after graduation (used by Faggian, Comunian, Jewell and Kelly for their study of "bohemian graduates", 2013). However, due to the often long transition period required for graduates in creative disciplines to build contacts, and to establish a portfolio or relevant experience (Blackwell & Harvey, 1999; Prospects, 2020), its data for arts graduates is skewed towards un- and under-employment (see 2.7.2 below).

There have also been a number of large scale surveys looking at the early careers of graduates from art, design and craft courses. Blackwell and Harvey (1999) surveyed almost 2,000 graduates from 14 institutions. Ball, Pollard and Stanley (2010) carried out a longitudinal study of the career patterns of some 3,500 graduates in art, design, crafts and media subjects from 26 UK higher education institutions, Hunt, Ball and Pollard (2010) explored the early careers of more than 600 graduates in crafts subjects, and Oakley (2009) surveyed 500 fine art alumni of the University of the Arts London. The findings from these surveys are discussed below.

2.6.2 A sense of vocation

Students still chose to undertake specialist art and design education, in spite of the fact that art and design, and the arts in general, are seen as precarious areas for employment, often associated with low income levels and short-term project working with periods of unemployment or portfolio working. It has been suggested that creative workers are willing to tolerate this because they derive "psychic income" from creative work (Throsby, 2007), bringing a sense of fulfilment and gratification through using creativity and making things happen. Aspects of this psychic income include 'opportunities to use a wide range of abilities and to feel self-actualized at work' and the potential for a 'high degree of social recognition for the successful artist' (Menger, 1999, p.555). Indeed, working in this field can be seen as a

vocation, defined by Dik and Duffy as 'a sense of purpose or direction that leads an individual toward some kind of personally fulfilling and/or socially significant engagement within the work role, sometimes with reference … to a sense of passion or giftedness.' (2009, p.427). (Vocation in this sense differs from "calling" in not necessarily having any transcendental or divine intervention.)

This sense of vocation, coupled with the nonmonetary benefits of psychic income, explain why the emergent careers of many of these participants are based on personal rather than business entrepreneurialism. Their human capital is based on cultivating the person as a specific form of social investment. The concept of human capital was originally based on the financial returns from investment in education and training. However, as Schultz has explained, this investment can go beyond the financial and that 'Some of it is for future well-being in forms that are not captured in the earnings stream of the individual in whom the investment is made.' (1962, p.7). This does, however, form one of the challenges for art education (see 2.8 below).

2.6.3 Slow start to creative careers

Aspiring creatives often have to find their own pathways into employment; these may involve a long transition period with many attempts to enter the industry, including self-employment, short-term contracts, part-time and casual employment, and spells of unemployment (Daniel, 2010). Writing about "craftsmanship", Frayling (2011) recognises a similar list of issues, including flexible working, short term employment, portfolio careers and multi-tasking, the speed of technological change, and also the appropriation of the concept of craft by the advertising industry, where it is used to enhance the image of industrially produced goods.

Recently three major issues have impacted on transition into the creative industries. Qualifications alone are no guarantee of entry, aspiring entrants may not have the time or resources to engage in unpaid work experience or to take part in industry networks, and the volatile nature of the industry means that they must adapt rapidly to new markets and new technologies (Haukka, 2011).

One method of building up experience in the creative industries is by working as an intern (Hope, 2010; Creative Skillset, 2011; Ashton, 2015). Hunt, Ball, & Pollard's survey found that 'Thirty-nine per cent of graduates had worked unpaid since graduating, and working on a voluntary basis, or in an unpaid internship post-graduation is becoming increasingly common' (2010, p.xiii). In 2015 The Warwick Commission's report stated that:

> The number of graduate internships in the Cultural and Creative Industries is increasing rapidly. In a recent study of respondents drawn from the Cultural and Creative Industries workforce, 91% said they had worked for free at some point in their career yet only 28% indicated that working for free had led to paid work. (Neelands et al, 2015, p.46)

Research for the Institute for Public Policy Research (Lawton & Potter, 2010) points out three ways in which internships differ from other forms of work experience: they last months rather than weeks, sometimes up to a year; interns are often expected to work the same full-time hours as employed staff members; they are not being trained and they are expected to do work which would normally be done by a paid employee. As a result, unpaid internships also suppress wages for those who do attain paid positions (Holford, 2017). An unpaid six month placement in London has been estimated to incur costs of £5,500, mostly in rent (Sutton Trust, 2014). Furthermore, not only are there direct financial costs for an individual taking up an internship but also, three years after the internship, they can carry a financial penalty of around £3,500 per year compared with those entering paid employment on graduation (Holford, 2017).

The report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions makes it clear that these internships are often very low-paid, or not paid at all, and as Jeffreys points out, the major drawback to this is that 'Artists who do not have the financial means to support themselves through this process of 'professional development' are often excluded' (2009, p.6). Research by the Carrot Workers Collective found that eight out of nine interns in the cultural sector are unpaid, and that:

> …recent graduates do upwards of five consecutive internships. After this, they are mostly either still unemployed or are in the lowest paid and most precarious of positions. (2011, p.55)

(The Carrot Workers Collective is a group of educators, workers in the cultural industries and current and ex-interns, who carry out participatory action research, with extensive case studies, on the prevalence and implications of free labour in the creative and cultural sectors.)

For many young designers it appears that the only way get into the creative industries is through underpaid or even unpaid internships, which means in effect these unpaid workers are subsidising the companies or organisations they work for. Furthermore, this free labour leads to the erosion of stable jobs and well-paid commissions for established designers (Precarity Pilot, 2014) since employers can seek to avoid paying wages and on-costs for established staff.

A later report by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility (APPG, 2017a) found that a third of university graduates in internships were unpaid, and that two thirds of cultural and creative sector internships advertised on the Graduate Talent Pool were also unpaid. In his evidence to the Inquiry, Sir Peter Bazelgette, Chair of the Arts Council, raised unpaid internships as a particular problem for young people trying to access jobs in the arts and media, describing them as 'the curse of the arts industry' (APPG, 2017b).

2.6.4 Precarity of creative work

For people entering the creative industries, and for those in the early stages of their careers, a major problem is the precarious nature of their employment, typified by short job durations, working occasionally and low pay (Jeffreys, 2004; Ashton, 2015); what Gill and Pratt have called 'bulimic' patterns of working (2008). Structured entry to careers, which traditionally involved competition at the point of entry (interviews, tasks and portfolio presentations), have given way to extended "entry tournaments" with extended competition, involving internships and short-term, project based employment (Marsden, 2011). Marsden goes on to suggest that unless these periods of short-term creative contracts lead to prestigious outcomes which enhance the individual's reputation, they can actually reduce the likelihood of eventual long-term employment. Furthermore, like Jeffreys (2004), Marsden argues that extended periods of precarious employment in the early stages has made creative occupations more elitist, as aspiring entrants need some form of financial support during periods of low pay and uncertain hours, making family capital a greater determinant of success. Aspiring creatives from low-income households who have substantial debts from their undergraduate fees and loans would find this precarity far harder to deal with. And overall, as Marsden says, 'A "bohemian" lifestyle may be attractive in one's twenties, but it becomes less so when raising a family, or contemplating old age without an adequate pension' (2011, p.13).

While cultural workers often find their work to be fulfilling and enjoyable, it frequently offers them little income, little security, making their working lives 'complex and contradictory, combining work satisfaction and relatively high levels of autonomy with job insecurity, low pay, anxiety and inequality', and it is this autonomy that makes the cultural sector 'an ideal field for introducing insecure and precarious working conditions, and for constituting the creative worker as an ideal entrepreneurial subject of neoliberal capitalism' (Sandoval, 2016, p.51). Similarly de Peuter sees the 'self-reliant, risk-bearing, non-unionised, self-exploiting, always-on flexibly employed worker in the creative industries' (2014, p.263) as a role model of contemporary capitalism. The level of precarity experienced in the creative industries by what Szreder (2021) calls the projectariat has led McRobbie to argue that:

> … the key characteristics associated by Foucault with the neo-liberal ethos are all deeply embedded, indeed naturalized, in London's creative scene with barely a murmur of discontent: Enterprise, competitiveness and human capital have all been core values in the recent prominence of the art and creative worlds in London in the last two decades. (McRobbie, 2011)

Taking a Marxist viewpoint, Cohen points out that 'capitalist commodity production, under which those who do not own the means of production must sell their labour power to earn a living, thus engaging in a consensual relationship of exploitation of surplus value' (2012,

p.143), is remarkably similar to the exploitation of many in the cultural industries, especially those who work for companies that rely on intense competition for commissions which are low paid and insecure, and sometimes not paid at all. (Carrot Workers Collective/Precarious Workers Brigade, 2012).

As Sandoval points out, ‘A freelance cultural worker might be free from hierarchical control, but she is also free to starve’ (2016, p.54). Furthermore, while the cultural industries have tended to give their creative staff a degree of independence at the point of creation, they have increased their control over the commercial benefits from the creatives’ work through the aggressive pursuit of copyrights and intellectual property. Employing freelance creatives also means that employers avoid the on-costs of employment, training, overheads, benefits, and paying for unproductive time. By short-term hiring or buying in completed works, they can shift the costs of production (including premises costs) onto the workers, who will, non-the-less, seek to produce their best possible work in the hopes of securing future contacts. In a telling example, Cohen (2012) cites the case of freelance writers who are often paid in ‘exposure’, through getting their by-lines onto popular news websites.

As a result of this precarity, many people engaged in work of a creative nature have to resort to seeking multiple sources of income through working in a range of jobs, which may not necessarily be of a creative nature (Aston, 1999; Jeffreys, 2004; Bridgstock, 2013; Ashton, 2015). Indeed, one survey found that 48% of art and design graduates in work were involved in multiple activities (Hunt, Ball, & Pollard, 2010). A major source of supplementary income comes from teaching, with the same survey finding that a third of the graduates had some experience of teaching, and one in ten had studied for a post-graduate teaching qualification. When considering those graduates who described themselves as artists, Throsby found that only 41% were able to work full-time as artists, with the others undertaking non-art work ‘out of necessity rather than choice’ (2007, p.396).

Even as long ago as 1979, Adler demonstrated how artists have increasingly taken salaried positions in further and higher education because of increased employment security and access to specialist facilities and equipment, an escape from reliance on the precarity of working as an artist, and a reduction in the isolation experienced by many artists.

In spite of the problems of securing contracts and of chasing payment for work completed, the Institute for Employment Research (IER) found that ‘despite the pitfalls, the majority preferred self-employment’ (IER, 2003, p.2). That workers in cultural industries tend to have intermittent or portfolio careers is often seen as an inherent characteristic of cultural workers themselves and ‘less often as a coping strategy to deal with work made intermittent and precarious – a decidedly less glamorous view’ (Cohen, 2012, p.143). In their study of graduates from craft

courses Hunt, Ball, & Pollard found that ‘In their early careers, more than one in three crafts graduates had worked freelance’ and that even beyond this ‘self-employment was an important form of working for crafts graduates relative to graduates in general’ (2010, p.ix), a finding borne out by surveys of other creative graduates (Aston, 1999; Jeffreys, 2004).

As Christopherson has pointed out, for those freelancers working in the creative industries, particularly in advertising, fashion and music, ‘motivations for self-expression and economic success (or at least sustainability) are present in equal measure’ (2008, p.74). As a result, these workers tend to focus their attention towards the requirements of the companies buying their services, rather than to their audience, so that the competitive strategies of the firm are likely to drive the strategies of the apparently independent freelance workforce. The film industry made early use of flexible, freelance and precarious employment. One consequence of this is that it has made gaining work in the industry increasingly reliant on networking and insider contacts, reducing access for those outside those circles (Christopherson, 2008, Creative Skillset, 2011).

Research by the Institute for Employment Research found that many clients do not appreciate the high hidden costs of artistic practice, including the research and development aspects of professional practice, and the background costs of education, training and professional expertise. Furthermore, the research pointed out the difficulty faced by artists and designers, not just in securing contracts for work, but also in chasing payment for work done (2003). As a result:

> [T]hose in cultural occupations earn less than those with comparable education, training, skills and experience in non-cultural occupations. (Jeffreys, 2004, p.5)

Sainsbury’s has recently had to apologise after one of its stores placed an advert calling for an ambitious artist to voluntarily decorate the staff canteen for free; the advert added that the artist would gain experience in the creative industry. The Artists Information Company’s response was that most artists’ annual income from their practice was less than £10,000 a year, and that ‘examples like this are just one of the reasons why’ (Press Association, 2016).

Commercial galleries usually require young artists to pay in advance for the exhibition space and any private viewing, as well as paying commission on sales. This is in addition to the material, equipment and time costs of producing the work in the first place (Jeffreys, 2004). Jeffreys also points out that even when artists are commissioned to produce work, payment is often only on completion of the work, and is often late when staged.

A survey of artists exhibiting in publicly-funded galleries by The Artists Information Company found that in the three years up to 2014, 71% of the artists were not paid for their work, and 59% did not even have their expenses recompensed. Exhibitions can represent months or even

years of an artist's time and expense, but these costs often go unrecognised and unrewarded. As a result, the survey found that many of the artists had to take on other jobs, not only for their living expenses, but to cover the costs of their creative activities. Over half of those surveyed generated less than a quarter of their income from their art. As the survey points out:

> For many, this does not offer enough stability and life as an artist is unsustainable, even when their work may be displayed at galleries that attract tens of thousands of visitors. (a-n The Artists Information Company, 2014, p.4)

This creates a dilemma for the creative artist of whether to produce work which is more personal and more artistically rewarding but less commercially viable, or more mainstream work which could prove more lucrative. (Throsby, 2007, p.396)

Hope's 'FUNding FACTORY' used the production line as a metaphor for the professionalisation and precariousness of commissioned cultural work, and to examine 'the conditions of art and labour and the artists' complicit role in perpetuating systems of exploitation' (2010, p.3), and to challenge the assumption that 'the more money we can make as cultural producers the more successful we are' (p.6).

The difficulty in distinguishing professional artists from amateurs is seen by Bain as one of the reasons for these low incomes:

> Without clear definitional parameters, I argue that there is little incentive for society to compensate artists adequately for their labour. Consequently […] artistic labour tends to remain largely undervalued, and predominantly subsidized by the artists themselves through secondary employment in other occupations. (2005, p.26)

2.6.5 Workspace issues

The combination of precarity and low earnings creates a major problem for those entering the creative industries as self-employed artists, designers and crafts people and needing affordable studio, office or workshop space.

> The provision of workspace is a fundamental issue for artists in the process of setting up and maintaining a successful business. […] A lack of capital can restrict artistic practice through the inability to afford business premises that are suitable to specific artistic requirements. (Jeffreys, 2004, p.7)

This problem is exacerbated by the clustering of the creative industries in metropolitan areas, especially those that have come to be called 'creative cities':

> Within a year or so, the Mayor of London's Creative London commission and new agency (Creative London, 2004) had been replicated by a roll-call of Creative New York, Creative Amsterdam, Create Berlin, Creative Baltimore, Creative Sheffield, Design Singapore, Design London and Creative Toronto, to name a few. (Evans, 2009, p.1007)

In Britain, these creative cities are generally seen as London, Manchester, Bristol, Cardiff and Leeds, with Brighton also being very attractive to creative workers. The Department for

Culture, Media and Sport estimate that one third of creative workers are based in London (DCMS, 2015). One advantage of this clustering is the opportunity for networking and strategic self-promotion; a major disadvantage is a lack of affordable space, and in response to this cheaper, run down areas have been colonised by artists. These eventually come to be seen as cultural quarters, and become attractive to bourgeois bohemians (Pratt, 2008) leading to gentrification, rising prices and the artists being forced out.

One response to this has been the establishment of commercially or community operated shared spaces, which provide reasonable cost access to workspaces, and often to specialised equipment which individuals may not be able to afford; these shared spaces can also be a comfortable replication of the open studio environment of art schools and also combat the isolation of working alone at home. An extension of the shared space is the development of virtual offices, which enable people working from home to appear to have a prestigious address.

These shared spaces are, however, becoming increasingly commercialised and expensive. Ruth Solomons, an artist working in London, writes about the problems of:

> Continuously working part-time, balancing rent rises against stagnant pay rates, and navigating oversubscribed, diminishing numbers of artists' studios in city centres […] As the space needed to store past paintings increases, time available to practice is reduced through the need to subsidise ever-increasing studio rent through part-time jobs. (Solomons, 2017)

For many artists these costs have to be set against the need to be in a cultural hub, but these increasing costs point to the increasing unsustainability of art practice in major cities.

2.6.6 Unprepared for business

Whether working in a commercial field or a fine art field, a number of participants talk about being unprepared for the challenges of making a living in the creative industries, a concern echoed by creative employers:

> Employers in the industry state that the higher education system is not fit for purpose; supposedly highly-qualified graduates are not entering the sector "job-ready", and thus need to acquire further skills. (Creative Skillset, 2011, p.38)

Almost a quarter of creative businesses reported difficulties recruiting into particular roles. Over half of these blame applicants' lack of experience, and over a third cite the lack of specialist skills for particular roles. (Creative Skillset, 2011). What they say is missing are:

> Management, leadership, business and entrepreneurial skills: especially project management for multiplatform development; the hybrid skills combining effective leadership with innovation, creativity and understanding of technology, and the analytical skills to understand audience interests and translate it into business intelligence.' (Creative Skillset, 2011, p.16)

Employers can, of course, use this perceived lack of skills and experience to justify the exploitative business model of internships, allowing them access to these highly-qualified graduates' skills and time at no cost to themselves.

2.7 Threats to arts education

Having set out the problems facing people starting and pursuing creative careers, this chapter ends by looking at the threats to art education in schools, colleges and higher education.

This research has been carried out at a time when specialist art and design education (and arts education in general) in schools, FE and HE, has been threatened by a number of issues. First introduced in 2010, the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) is a government-mandated suite of GCSE subjects that includes English, maths, sciences, foreign languages, history and geography. Schools are judged on their pupils' success in these subjects, leading schools to prioritise these subjects over others, and limiting the time available for other subjects. Furthermore, there has been a significant reduction on the number of state schools using specialist teachers to teach arts subjects (Neelands et al, 2015) and a one third drop in the number of entries for GCSE arts subjects (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2018). The Alliance also found a 6% drop in A level art and design entries between 2010 to 2017. This, of course, has the effect of limiting the numbers likely to progress into specialised tertiary art and design.

Alongside these structural declines, in November 2014 Nicky Morgan, then the education secretary, made a speech which warned young people that choosing to study arts subjects at school could 'hold them back for the rest of their lives'. She claimed that although in the past arts subjects were useful for all kinds of jobs but 'Of course now we know that couldn't be further from the truth'. (Morgan, 2014). In 2021, Gavin Williamson, one of her successors as education secretary, made a similar claim:

> The record number of people taking up science and engineering demonstrates that many are already starting to pivot away from dead-end courses that leave young people with nothing but debt. (Williamson, 2021a)

In the HE sector, reduced levels of funding have led to pressure on specialist arts courses to reduce staffing ratios and students' contact hours, and to a steep decline in the number of specialist courses available, with craft related courses dropping by almost half, including a 58% decline in ceramics and glass courses in the last five years (Neelands et al, 2015). In the publicity for their 2019 annual conference, the Group for Learning in Art and Design (GLAD) argued that:

> Despite the significant benefits of the Creative Industries to the UK's economy and self-image, creative education feels to be under great threat. In many institutions there appears to be an acceptance of, and obedience to, the conclusions drawn from

> the instrumentalist governmental metrics. All appear to present an existential threat to the future of creative education in the UK at every level. (GLAD, 2019)

In 2019 the Auger committee's report (DfE, 2019a) on funding for post-18 education stated that:

> We recognise that a significant number of graduates in the Creative Arts make a strong contribution to the economy through work in the dynamic creative industries sector and to society through careers in the arts and design. (p.84)

In spite of this, and an acknowledgement of the social value of the arts, the report went on to question the numbers of students taking arts courses and whether 'the current grant top-up, and the large likely debt write-off given these graduates' predicted earnings, constitute good value for taxpayers' money.' (DfE, 2019a, p.84)

More recently, the Department for Education's conditions for its proposed restructuring regime for universities impacted by Covid-19 (DfE, 2020) states that HEIs should 'focus more heavily upon subjects which deliver strong graduate employment outcomes in areas of economic and societal importance, such as STEM, nursing and teaching' (p.3-4). In order to apply for funding HEIs will have to detail how they will 'focus on courses with strong continuation rates and graduate returns', and 'courses that meet societal and economic need' (p.11). Institutions would have to consider whether any programmes which do not deliver economic benefits 'could be more effectively offered at Level 4 and 5, either at the institution or at a local FE college' (p.9). This would seem to imply a further significant threat to art and design programmes.

Alongside the Auger committee's proposal to cap student annual fees at £7,500 (down from £9,250), in January 2021 Gavin Williamson (then the Education Secretary) instructed the Office for Students (OfS) to:

> reprioritise funding towards the provision of high-cost, high-value subjects that support the NHS and wider healthcare policy, high-cost STEM subjects and/or specific labour market needs. […] the OfS should therefore reduce funding by 50% for high-cost subjects that do not support these priorities. We would then potentially seek further reductions in future years, (Williamson, 2021b, p.2)

This led the OfS to begin a consultation on funding which proposed:

> A reduction by half to high-cost subject funding for other price group C1 subjects – that is, for courses in performing and creative arts, media studies and archaeology. (OfS, 2021, p.6)

Taken together these cuts in funding can be expected to have serious consequences for the provision of art and design programmes. In what could be seen as an attempt to mitigate this, Williamson's letter also instructed OfS to:

> increase funding for specialist providers, particularly those who are world leading and specialise in the performing and creative arts, by approximately £10m to £53m […] to secure positive outcomes for graduates, boosting outcomes for the sector. (Williamson, 2021b, p.4)

As these “world leading” institutions are primarily in London, they will be impacted not only by the cuts in subject funding, but also by Williamson’s removal of the additional funding provided by the London weighting.

2.8 Gaps in the literature

As discussed in this review, there are a number of texts which consider the pre-diploma course and the foundation course historically, and others which consider issues of teaching and learning on foundation courses; there are also many publications which examine teaching and learning in degree stage art education. Studies which look at graduates’ progression into creative careers have concentrated on the degree stage of education rather than the foundation course, whilst others concentrate on early-stage careers, without necessarily linking these to prior education. Although there are a few research outputs that explore students’ understandings of their experiences on their foundation courses there is no published research that takes them from their school experiences, through their foundation courses, onto their degrees and through into their professional careers and practices.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the theoretical framework used in the study, and the impact of habitus, field, capital and illusio on the development of creative identities. It has located the study within the context of education’s move to commodification and vocationalism driven by the prevailing neo-liberal discourse, and how liberal, transformative education could provide a more fitting approach, particularly for art education. It has considered the elements of and the definitions of the creative industries and the sectors of fine art, design and craft, and then examined some of the critical issues and tensions faced by workers in the creative industries in a neo-liberal economic regime. Lastly it has identified the threats from neo-liberal education policies currently impacting on art education and arts education more generally. It is not only the precarity of employment in the creative industries but also the precarity of specialist art education itself (and arts education more generally) that form the main concerns of this study.

The following chapter explains the methodology and the methods used in the research to enable the research questions to be answered.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Figure 12. Richard Hamilton at King's College, Newcastle, 1963.

Having taught a course based on the Bauhaus initial course at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London, Hamilton taught design at King's College from 1953 to 1966, where he developed the basic course with Victor Pasmore.

3.1 Introduction

This study is concerned with how the participants' experiences of education (and the discourses which shape these), and particularly their art foundation courses, have impacted on their identities as professionals. This focus on identity affects the methods which can be used to find 'reasonable answers' (Freebody, 2003, p.68). This chapter describes the epistemological foundations for the study, the sampling choices and the methods of data generation and analysis that were used, and also considers issues of positioning, reflexivity and ethics, and so 'acts as a bridge from questions to reasonable answers' (Freebody, 2003, p.68). Because the research is concerned with the participants' reflections on and interpretations of their lived experiences it required a qualitative research design.

As this research is about people's experiences, memories and life histories, it is dependent on what they choose to relate and on how they choose to relate, to re-enact, their stories. This accords with Berger and Luckmann's (1991) account of social constructionism, that our knowledge of other people and our perceptions of them are created through social interaction. Furthermore, these stories were told at a particular time and in response to a particular (and unusual) situation, the research interview. As a result, the meanings the participants apply to their experiences are dependent on that particular social setting, and on how they choose to present, to perform themselves in that situation (Goffman, 1969).

3.2 Researcher positionality

Positionality is characterised by Sikes as 'where the researcher is coming from' (2004, p.18) in terms of assumptions, values and beliefs due to where the researcher is 'biographically situated'. The following section describes my positionality. As the researcher is the research instrument in qualitative research (Patton, 1988, Hammersley & Gomm, 1997) and an active participant in the research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995), particularly in the researcher's role in the interview as a collaborative process, a social interaction, 'in which the interviewer affects the organization of this talk-in-interaction and the processes by which the talk is produced' (Pezalla, Pettigrew & Miller-Day, 2012, p.166), I need to position myself within this research. As Guba and Lincoln have pointed out, to ensure the process is trustworthy 'the goal is to minimize investigator bias by acknowledging researcher predispositions' (1989, p.3). Biases can, however, have an important place in selecting research topics:

> …let me put in a word on behalf of the much maligned term bias […] The biases of our careers, our personalities and our situations constitute essential starting places for our research attention. (Wolcott, 1994, p.408)

As I have been an art student, an art teacher and course leader for a foundation course I have to consider myself as an insider researcher (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Eisner, 2001; Hammersley,

2010). Three levels of insider membership roles for qualitative researchers have been identified by Adler and Adler (1987): those who observe without taking part in the study group are seen as peripheral members, others who do participate in the group's activities but in relatively marginal ways are seen as active members, and those who fully participate or are already members of the group are complete members. In this case the study group consists of people who have taken art foundation courses and progressed into professional careers; while this means I could be seen as a complete member (see Annex 1 for an autobiography), as it has been over 20 years since I was actively involved in art and art education, I would see my position as that of a peripheral member and so able to take a more reflexive approach to the research.

A reflexive approach to narrative inquiry 'involves critical examination of the nature of the research and the role of the researcher' (Hickson, 2016, p.381). Researchers use reflexivity in an attempt to represent research data in a way which evokes the participants' experiences, and which does justice to their stories, their voices, whilst making the author's voice and influence as the instigator and as the author of the research story explicit. A reflexive researcher has to recognize and be aware of their positionality and influence at all the stages of the research, from initiating the topic, gathering the data, analysing the data, and reporting on the research. During analysis the researcher selects particular words or phrases from the participants' narratives to form codes which are then sorted into themes, and there needs to be constant reflexive questioning and reviewing of the rationale for those choices and for any inferences made from them or about them. In reporting the research all researchers have to make editorial choices; lengthy interview transcripts (already a form of translation) are reduced so as to be represented in a readable way. This re-presentation of the participants' voices is analogous to cropping a photo to remove extraneous detail in order to concentrate on a particular part of the image. The researcher, however, has to be aware that someone else could crop the photo, or edit the data, in a different way depending on what elements they were interested in.

This required me to reflect on and acknowledge my previous participation in art and art education, on my empathy with artists and designers, and to be conscious of my own position and preconceptions in relation to the research. Constant reflexive critical questioning of my prior knowledge, previous experiences and my position in relation to the research and the potential influences these may have on the research (including how my history in art education, my age, gender, social class and political beliefs could influence both myself as the researcher and the participants) attempted to reduce the influence the research process, while acknowledging that this would not completely eliminate influence or bias.

Reflexivity on the part of the researcher is necessary to mitigate potential bias, including what Hammersley and Gomm (2017) describe as a tendency 'to collect data, and/or to interpret and present them, in such a way as to favour false results that are in line with their prejudgments' (1.7), and to exclude data which conflict with these. The researcher does not have first hand experience of what the participants' stories recount but must represent these 'under the constraint of not producing an account that is at odds with the evidence available about the relevant phenomena' (Hammersley and Gomm, 2017, 4.2).

In an appropriate metaphor for this research McCutcheon (1999) describes reflexive researchers as being:

> like artists who paint themselves, their subjects, and sometimes even their audience into their own canvases, allowing the observer to see the artist painting the picture of the artist painting the picture of the viewer watching the artist paint a picture; all of this challenges the viewer to see themselves actively viewing, even making, the picture a picture. (p.10)

In a social constructionist approach there is no independent, objectivist reality but there are multiple meanings or interpretations constructed through social interactions. This approach is not about 'the certainty and objectivity of knowledge and the quest for universal truths' (Dhunpath, 2000, pp.543-544). This emphasises that narrative inquiry is relational inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) in that narrative researchers see themselves and their own lived stories in relation to their participants, seeing themselves 'as part of the phenomenon under study' (Clandinin et al, 2009, p.82). The ethical duty of care the researcher has for the participants goes beyond protecting their anonymity and their dignity to the researcher's responsibility for the relationship between them, as that 'relationship is key to what it is that narrative inquirers do' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 189). The ethics of this relationship 'recognizes and values mutual respect, dignity, and connectedness between researcher and researched (Ellis, 2007, p.4).

3.3 Research approach

Four elements are required in the design of a research project, epistemological considerations, the theoretical perspective, the methodology, and the methods used (Crotty, 1998), alternatively referred to as epistemologies, theories, approaches and strategies (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005). The theoretical lenses of habitus, capital, field and illusio have been considered in the literature review, and epistemology, methodology and methods are discussed in the sections which follow, along with the ethical considerations relating to this research, and the strategies used in data collection and analysis.

Ontologically, this research starts from the position that social reality is constructed by

individuals, and co-constructed through their interaction, actively making meaning out of their perceived social environment; their realities are seen through their lived experiences. Epistemologically, what knowledge we can have about their realities is perceived through focusing on them as social actors, responsible for their actions and acting within the cultural and historical settings which inform the development of their identities and experiences. As a result what we can know of others is subjective, and so:

> all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context. (Crotty, 1998, p.42)

A social constructionist approach does not seek objectively 'true or valid interpretation [only] useful interpretations' (Crotty, 1998, p.47), and these will vary with viewpoint, time and context. Social constructionism has been criticised as being narrowly focused on society and culture and ignoring the objective reality of the natural world (e.g. Craib 1997), too narrowly focused on social, cultural influences on human behaviour, excluding any innate biological influence. These criticisms came from a realist position which assumes that knowledge can be based on direct perception of a discoverable and independent reality, whereas a relativist position assumes that there is no definitive single reality but that knowledge is socially constructed through the interactions of individuals within society and based on the subjective experience of individuals' lives rather than on any objective reality. As a result, social constructionism, as discussed by Berger and Luckman (1991), makes epistemological claims to knowledge and no ontological claims.

Using narratives to make meaning through story begins as a joint enterprise between the narrator and the listener, but in the understanding that 'realities are constructed entities' (Lincoln, 1992, p. 379), what Esin, Fathi and Squire call 'participants' self-generated meanings' (2014, p.204). Furthermore:

> Language and speech do not mirror experience: They create experience and in the process of creation constantly transform and defer that which is being described. The meanings of a subject's statements are, therefore, always in motion. (Denzin, 1997, p. 5)

The metaphor of the researcher as a traveller proposed by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), in which 'the interviewer is a traveller on a journey to a distant country that leads to a tale to be told on returning home' (p.48) fits well with my approach. They go on to distinguish between the 'pilgrim' whose destination is determined by external standards, and the 'tourist' whose destination is self-selected based on personal criteria. While art education may not be an unfamiliar field for me, the career development of professional artists and designers is. Resultingly, my research journey is not a pilgrim's search for proof, but that of an explorer

charting and recording new territory (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). A similar metaphor is used by Lugones who refers to world-travelling, moving from one's own world of experience into another's, a process which she describes as 'skilful, creative, rich, enriching' (1990, p. 390).

As this research sought to understand the effects of the art foundation course from the viewpoints and experiences of its students, rather than from observers or tutors (Sonntag, 1969; Walker, 1981; Robins, 2003), it required a qualitative approach which would allow participants the opportunity to reflect on and to recount their experiences in narrative format. Within the qualitative tradition the particular method used was life history interviewing, or more specifically episodic life history interviewing (Flick, 1997; Harding, 2006), as these were not full life histories. The basis of episodic interviewing is that an individual's experiences of a specific issue are recalled through narratives which relate to particular occasions and real-life experiences, to episodes in their lives, and so questions focus in on specific events rather than on whole life accounts. Although the interviews for this project were organised chronologically, from school to career, they were subject orientated on themes and topics within the context of the research.

In episodic life history interviewing, the researcher makes decisions prior to the interview about the domains, the episodes, which participants will be asked to respond to, and so 'providing a proverbial skeleton on which they can restructure and recount their own experiences' (Mueller, 2019, p.5). These decisions lead to a semi structured interview, with each question or group of questions relating to a particular episode but allowing the researcher and the participant freedom to expand on or deviate from a fixed schedule of questions. As this research focused on particular episodes in the participants' stories (such as their experiences on their foundation courses and their transitions into work) this approach sought to generate their accounts of 'subjectively meaningful features and critical episodes' (Dunpath, 2000, p.545) in their education and in their professional practices.

Encouraging participants to tell their own stories in their own ways enables what Chase sees as one of narrative inquiry's strengths, 'exploring lived experience through a focus on personal narratives.' (2018, p.557). Chase goes on to elaborate on the nature of a personal narrative as a form of communication which makes meaning of experiences, organises and generates understandings of events, actions and feelings, and which may include 'narratives that are visual as well as oral or written' (Chase, 2018, p.549). Participants' rich responses enable 'thick description [which] inserts history into experience' (Denzin, 1989, p.83). Thick description has been described by Ponterotto as 'the researcher's task of both describing and interpreting observed social action (or behaviour) within its particular context.' (2006, p.543)

In working with narratives, rather than beginning their research in the expectation of a

definitive answer, narrative researchers begin with a puzzle which has 'a sense of a search, a "research", a searching again' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 124). Narrative inquiry helps to 'understand a phenomenon or an experience rather than to formulate a logical or scientific explanation. The object of narrative inquiry is understanding—the outcome of interpretation—rather than explanation' (Kramp, 2004, p.104).

With its focus on participants' stories of their lived experiences, narrative enquiry has been described as:

> …a way of understanding experience. It is collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in the same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that made up people's lives, both individual and social. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.20)

Indeed, narrative inquiry places the participant and the participant's story at the heart of the research:

> Narrative privileges the storyteller. It is through the personal narrative, a life as told, rather than through our observations as researchers, that we come to know a life as experienced. (Kramp, 2004, p.111)

Furthermore, although narrative inquiry starts with an individual's experiences it is also:

> an exploration of the social, cultural and institutional narratives within which individual's experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed and enacted - but in a way that begins and ends that inquiry in the storied lives of the people involved. Narrative inquirers study an individual's experience in the world and, through the study, seek ways of enriching and transforming that experience for themselves and others. (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2006, p.42)

Narrative inquiry is based on the 'epistemological assumption that we as human beings make sense of random experience by the imposition of story structures' (Bell, 2002, p.207), but narrative inquiry also requires moving beyond just telling stories to an analytical examination of what the stories illustrate. The co-construction of the stories at interview and the subsequent analysis 'illuminates the researcher as much as the participant' (Bell, 2002, p.210), as the researcher's interpretation imposes meaning on the participants' experiences. Furthermore, the researcher needs to be aware that they are attempting to construct a more or less coherent story based on a limited number of 'accounts of participants' lives that are already 'edited' as they emerge – that-is, reduced by location, time, format, and interlocutor – for a specific research purpose at our request.' (McAlpine, 2016, p.40).

3.4 Methods

This research investigated how art foundation courses may have influenced their students and

the role the courses might play in their subsequent development as creative individuals, their choices of further study, their careers and their artistic identities. The principal focus was on the narrative accounts the artists and designers constructed as they recalled their experiences and involved them in reflecting on their creative lives. This required a method of data collection that would allow them space and time to reflect on their experiences, and for the researcher to explore the participants' stories. Throughout this thesis I have used the terms 'participant' or 'respondent' in preference to 'interviewee', to mark the sense of their active involvement in the joint production of the data. Indeed, Brinkmann (2014) proposes replacing the term 'data' with 'creata', to emphasise the element of construction.

The next section describes the methods used to access the data, breaking interviewing into two sections, face to face and email, and goes on the describe the use of images in the interviews.

3.4.1 Interviewing

The principal method of data generation in qualitative research is the interview, in which the researcher and the participant become joint creators of the data. Although an act of co-construction, nonetheless the quality of the data generated through the interview is largely dependent on the skills of the interviewer in helping the participants tell their story, not just through their questions but also through active listening, what Kvale and Brinkmann call 'questions, nods, and silences' (2009, p.74). Although they go on to describe the research interview as 'an interpersonal situation, a conversation between the two partners about a theme of mutual interest' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p.123) there are considerable differences between the relative formality of a pre-arranged interview and a normal, social conversation.

Although regarded as co-constructors, nonetheless the interviewer and the respondent can be seen as unequal partners in the transaction. The interviewer will have set the topic, takes the initiative by asking the first question, and may have a structured set of questions to work through. The interviewer can then decide to follow up a response with supplementary questions or to prompt for further information. The interviewer can therefore be seen as having the controlling role (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Knapik, 2006) and these power differences have led to the view that 'the act of interviewing is invasive' (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p.317).

There is, however, an alternative view in which the power lies with the participant. The participant has power as the expert, the authority, in the topic under discussion (Knapik, 2006), and decides how much to reveal to the interviewer when responding to a question — and whether to answer a question at all. Participants have the power to terminate their interviews at any point, and also to withdraw their information altogether (Mills, 2001). This

was emphasised to participants in the consent form they received before agreeing to take part. (See Annexes 5 and 6.) Since, as already stated, I see myself as being on an explorer's voyage of discovery, I align myself very closely with Knapik's view of the participants' power as experts, as Kramp points out:

> … narrative inquiry reconfigures the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee that is characteristic of traditional research. You as researcher give authority to the storyteller, whom you acknowledge as the one who knows and tells. (Kramp, 2004, p.111)

As discussed above, my position as a former course leader meant that whilst I may have been able to establish a rapport with the participants through a sense of shared experience, I also needed to be particularly careful to remain aware of my positionality and not to let this, or my subjectivities, influence the conversation or my interpretation of the participants' responses.

My interview questions and schedule were developed and structured by breaking down the overall research topic into sections (Rubin & Rubin, 1995), each with several main questions which were open rather than leading but which would prevent participants digressing too far from the topic. Their responses could lead to follow up questions, either seeking more information or to check my understanding of their responses. In some interviews certain questions were missed out, usually because the participant had answered them as part of another question or because they were not relevant to that participant. (The interview schedule is set out in Annex 7 and mapped onto the research questions in Annex 8.)

3.4.2 Face to face interviewing

The basis of face-to-face interviewing goes beyond the spoken words to include 'the relationship of researcher and participant(s)' (Huber et al, 2013, p.220) which includes nonverbal communication and active listening (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014). Face-to-face interviews, described by McCoyd and Kerson as 'the gold standard' (2006, p.390), with human contact which can provide visual and other cues such as facial expressions, gestures, voice tones and volume, and are therefore usually considered a richer medium than telephone or email interviews.

There are, however, certain hazards in face to face interviewing. In the immediacy of the situation participants' responses are necessarily biased towards reaction rather than reflection. There is also the potential for interviewees to put on a performance, presenting themselves as they would wish to be seen (Goffman, 1969), preventing the interviewer from gaining 'authentic and direct contact with interviewees' realities' (Roulston, DeMarrais & Lewis, 2003, p.645). If the interviewer tries to allow for this, to "read between the lines" as it were, then the interviewer's assumptions and perceptions come into play. Interpretation on the part of the researcher has to be about creating meaning from what people say, rather than

any presumptions the researcher may make. Some of these assumptions may be made based on the respondent's setting, accent, clothing, appearance and mannerisms. Additionally, the setting in which face to face research takes place may influence the interviewer - as Seymour points out 'The domestic home, for example, is a potent site of personal identification. Social class, prestige and aspirations are readily accessible in this context' (2001, p.157). Furthermore, the participant's reciprocal presumptions about the interviewer may influence their responses (Kendall, 1999; Seymour 2001).

All four face-to-face interviews took place in the participant's workplace, although for Luke and Mervyn this was also part of their homes. Although I did have an interview schedule (see Annex 7), the interviews were more semi-structured than that suggests as each one varied with the flow of the participants' responses. Some responses led to supplementary questions, others led to questions probing deeper into the meaning of the reply, or to my checking back to allow the participant to validate my understanding or interpretation.

3.4.3 Email interviewing

Having carried out face-to-face interviews with six participants, the opportunity arose to interview someone overseas, when time differences meant that telephone interviewing would not have been feasible, so asynchronous contact was required given the different time zones, and the interview was carried out using e-mail. Email interviewing offers several advantages, as Bampton and Cowton (2002) suggest; the main one being that as the interview is asynchronous, participants can respond at a time to suit themselves, and there is no need to find an extended time period to complete the full interview. As it had been difficult for some of the face-to-face participants to find time for their interviews (and I was very conscious of intruding into their time) this asynchronous contact seemed a more considerate approach to interviewing, and so was used for the remaining interviews. To reduce the pressure on their time as far as possible, having informed them that there would be a number of questions, I usually sent one question at a time, leaving them free to respond in their own time before sending the next question. The exception to this was Narbi who asked to have all the questions at once.

Additionally, it allows time to reflect and construct a considered reply to each question. It also means that 'The participant is in control of the flow of the interview and is able to respond in a way they are comfortable with' (Ratislavová & Ratislav, 2014, p.454). Email can also provide a more leisurely opportunity for participants to reflect on their experiences through critical engagement with their stories and perspectives (James, 2016), rather than having to make an immediate response as in face to face interviews. (Mervyn, a face to face participant, heavily involved in web design in a virtual agency, commented on the difference between cyberspace

and what he called ‘meatspace’.)

It has been suggested that email interviewing may empower research participants, since it gives them control over when to respond and how to respond, and also frees them from any sense of pressure which they might feel in a face-to-face interview (Bowker and Tuffin, 2004; Seymour, 2001). Email also avoids the kind of assumptions discussed earlier based on the interviewer’s perceptions of the respondent’s physical presence. Participants also have time to consider their responses and can edit or completely rewrite them before sending them (Mann and Stewart, 2000; Van Manen & Adams, 2009). They have time to consider what to include in their narratives, and to review their responses ‘before they were “uttered,” giving them the feeling that they had control over their presentation of self.’ (James, 2016, p.159). The records of exchanges developed as emails went back and forth preserve the chronological sequence of the discussions, allowing both parties to reflect on and revisit previous responses (James & Busher, 2006).

Another benefit of email interviewing is that since participants’ responses are written they have time to draft, edit and revise their responses, so that the researcher does not need to interpret or edit respondents’ comments by deciding which pauses, ‘ums’ and ‘ers’ may be significant (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). Pragmatically, they also avoid the need for lengthy transcription but since transcription does lead to a more intimate acquaintance with the data, they require considerably more frequent reading to enable a similar acquaintance with the data.

Somewhat to my surprise, on the whole the email interviews seem to have provided much richer, more in-depth information. As discussed above this is due to the on-line process giving more time for reflection as noted by Barry - ‘Maybe the email version gives the interviewee more time to think though, and they have to make the responses concrete and explanatory’.

Maintaining confidentiality is a great concern in e-interviewing, and the steps to ensure this are discussed below in 3.5, the ethics section.

3.4.4 Visual: images that tell

Anthropologists and ethnographers have a long tradition of using visual data in their research, either photographs or drawings made by the researcher or artefacts of cultural significance collected from the population under study (Guillemin & Drew, 2010). These images and artefacts are then analysed and interpreted by the researchers, and as Berger (1972) has pointed out, any such interpretations have the potential to be influenced by the researchers’ experiences and their cultural perceptions and prejudices. Recently there has been increased use of visual data by social researchers more generally and in particular the use of images

generated by participants in the research, what Prosser and Loxley have called respondent created data (2008). Examples include photo elicitation with Buddhist monks (Samuels, 2007), Clark's work with pre-school children (2005), the use of Lego for participants to construct visual metaphors (Gauntlett & Holzwarth, 2006), drawings produced by health service users (Guillemin & Drew, 2010) and Ingram's use of plasticine with teenage boys (2011).

Combining the participants' images with their interview data enhances how they explain and construct themselves, and follows Hammersley's advice that using various types of data can 'provide complementary information that illuminates different aspects of what we are studying' (2008, pp.31-32). The use of the participants' own images can also 'extend the participatory principle by emphasizing respondents' ownership and agency through the act of creation' (Prosser & Loxley, 2008, p.33), and, as Rouse claims, using images in an interview can have a number of benefits, they can serve to 'break the ice' at the start and can also be an aid to memory, rapport-building and sharing understandings (Rouse, 2013).

As my participants are artists and designers who are used to expressing themselves visually, asking them to produce images as part of the interview process seemed a particularly appropriate approach, and allowed me to follow Jones' advice: 'If your research question is about people, find a way to really involve them in the process, not just answer some stupid questions' (2014). Similarities between artists and qualitative researchers have been noted by Wainwright and Rapport, who point out that both activities require 'an engagement on the part of researcher and artist, a commitment to being truthful rather than being on a quest for truth' (2007, p.9). Similarly, Eisner has written that both artists and qualitative researchers 'use forms of communication that are intended to do more than tell, but to show, that is, to convey a sense or feeling of person or place' (2001, p.136).

When asking participants to produce images, 'It is vital that participants are provided with a clear rationale for the use of visuals' (Gourlay, 2010, p.86), and this was set out in the information sheet accompanying the consent form (Annexes 5 & 6):

> My intention in using this approach is informed in part by Jones' maxim that 'If your research question is about people, find a way to really involve them in the process, not just answer some stupid questions' (Jones, 2014), and that art/design creative people are as, or more, happy to communicate through images than through words, and may express different things in the other medium.

Participants were asked to produce two images or artefacts to use in their interviews; one based on their identity on their ADF course and another based on their identity now. The only specification they were given was that the images could be 2D or 3D, any media or mixed media, as long as they would reproduce on A4 paper or could be photographed to go in the thesis. (See annexes 5 and 6 for the information sheets and consent forms participants were

sent before taking part.)

Some participants chose objects to represent themselves, others used examples of their own or others' work and some used found images. This accords with Gourlay's view that since images can readily represent metaphors 'a visual representation can be made to stand for an important concept or difficult-to-express aspect of experience' (Gourlay, 2010, p.83). Although only Luke produced images made specifically for the research, there is still a reflective process of selection and decision making about how such an image may represent the concept being portrayed. As Gauntlett states 'Turning any of the information "in" your head into something representable entails a task of arrangement and processing.' (2007, p.126). This process is very different to being in 'a face-to-face session where someone asks a question and you have to provide an answer straight away' (Gauntlett & Holzwarth, 2006, p.85). My expectation was that the reflective time involved in doing this would allow them to be better prepared, more relaxed and able to participate more confidently in the research process (Prosser & Loxley, 2008; Rose, 2014), because:

> By inviting participants to create things as part of the research process, it's *a different way into* a research question… It's a different way in, and engages the brain in a different way, drawing a different kind of response. (Gauntlett and Holzwarth 2006, 84; italics in original)

The anticipated benefits of asking the participants to produce images in advance of their interviews, this different way in, worked well. Not only had this prepared them for their interviews, but there were some striking uses of metaphor, such as Barbara's matches, Mervyn's heart shaped stone and Tess's string.

As well as being the participants' free standing images of themselves at particular points in their stories, during the interviews the images were also used as a stimulus for the narration of their stories at the points when they were asked about their identities on their foundation courses and their identities now, for example "Can you say something about who you were, your identity, on the foundation course? You may want to refer to your foundation image here." or "Could you talk about your image of who you are nowadays?". They gave their own accounts of the images and their meanings without any interference or comment from myself, because, as Gauntlett and Holzwarth assert, any interpretation has to come from the producer of the image because 'My own guesses or speculation [as researcher] about someone else's meanings are just that – guesses and speculations' (2006, 86). This, of course, aligns with Berger's caution that 'our perception or appreciation of an image depends also upon our own way of seeing' (1972, p.10), so I let them describe the image and what it says about them without entering into discussion (although I would usually ask some supplementary questions afterwards).

3.5 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations go beyond formal requirements. As Josselson has pointed out, ethics in narrative research 'is not a matter of abstractly correct behaviour but of responsibility in human relationships' (2007, p.538). Working with participants as intimate co-constructors of knowledge involves researchers in what Josselson has described as '(politely) intruding on people in the course of living real lives' (p.538), and as a result all narrative inquiry is relational, placing an obligation on the researcher to be respectful of participants' stories (Bach, 2007). As my participants were all busy, professional people I was very conscious of minimising my demands on their time, but as part of this duty of care, at the conclusion of each interview I asked participants if there were any responses they wished to re-visit, or if there was anything they wished to add. This responsibility towards participants applies especially when researchers make conscious ethical decisions about what to include in their texts. Even with careful anonymisation, decisions about including information which might be harmful or have consequences for participants require careful consideration, even when participants are willing to share that information (Bach, 2007; Craig & Huber, 2007). A particular issue in this research was that one participant talked about his sexuality. He was totally open about this and was happy to discuss the impact it had had on his career, and although his sexuality had little relevance to the intentions of this study it was clearly important to him as part of his story, so after checking with him it was decided to include this information.
Formal ethical approval for this research was granted from the York St John University Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee (Approval code ET/01/03/16/JK) on 1st March 2016, prior to the commencement of the empirical work. All formal ethical requirements have been complied with. All participants gave voluntary, informed consent to take part (BERA, 2011), based on an information sheet explaining the research and the uses of their data, with a consent form for their signatures (see Annex 5). The information explained that during the interviews they could decline to answer any question at their discretion, and that they were free to withdraw their data from the research at any point. Formal requirements arising from the Data Protection Act (2018) have also been complied with, including the secure storage of any identifiable materials, including consent forms, audio recordings, emails and un-anonymised transcriptions. As appropriate this secure storage included locked cabinets, encrypted digital storage and secure university servers.

Confidentiality was a particular ethical concern. At the beginning of each interview participants were asked if they preferred to be anonymised or identifiable, and to choose an alias if they wished to be anonymous. Subsequently, for those using an alias all other identifiable data was removed in transcription, such as schools, universities, other locations and places of

employment. Even for those who chose to be identifiable such information was removed except where the participants felt it was important to their stories, such as moving to and seeking employment in London.

As mentioned above, confidentiality was a particular concern in on-line interviewing. Emails were sent from, and participants' responses were received on a secure university server. Responses were copied into a word processor and saved on an encrypted drive, and the emails deleted (McCoyd & Kerson, 2006). A revised consent form was used to reflect the use of email and to account for the methods utilised to protect participants' information. The information about the research and the revised consent form (see Annex 6) were sent as email attachments to the potential respondents.

3.6 Sampling

Clearly a research project can only deal with a limited number of participants from the population under study, and the process of selecting individuals to take part is called sampling. When this sampling is based on selecting characteristics which are appropriate to a research study's questions it is called purposive sampling (Teddlie and Yu, 2007).

> [S]ince qualitative inquiry seeks to understand the meaning of a phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants, it is important to select a sample from which most can be learned. This is called a purposive or purposeful sample. (Merriam, 2002, p.12)

In qualitative research employing a small sample Polkinghorne uses the term selection rather than sampling, in that participants are selected because 'they can provide substantial contributions to filling out the structure and character of the experience under investigation [and are] fertile exemplars of the experience for study' (Polkinghorne, 2005, pp.139-140), effectively purposive sampling. My participants could not represent the extremely diverse population of artists or designers, nor could their experiences be generalised across that population, but they could offer enough data from a range of experiences to examine my research questions through (Mason, 2002). I began by approaching potential participants who were known to me either personally or professionally, and who met the primary criteria of having studied on an art foundation course, progressed to a degree course in art and design, and then developed a career, either in the creative industries or in other occupations.

I did not carry out a trial interview, following Wolcott's advice that 'Instead of "practicing" qualitative research, I suggest the way to begin research is to begin research […] proceed with a genuine study, not a pretend one or a warm up exercise' (1994, p.400). Those who agreed to take part often suggested other contacts who they thought would qualify for participation and be able to offer interesting perspectives, a form of snowball sampling, or what Robinson (2014) refers to as referral chains. Whilst this did have the disadvantage of limiting the

potential pool of participants it did mean that the individuals suggested were at a similar stage in their careers, and usually of a similar status. Not all the suggestions were followed up, one designer, for example, had not done a foundation course and another, an artist, had done a degree in theatre rather than art. Gender was not a specific issue in this study, although the proportion of female participants at 33% is not too far from the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) estimates of female employment in the creative industries of 40% (DCMS, 2014).

3.6.1 The sample

Nine participants took part in the research (those who chose to use pseudonyms are in italics here). Two are graphic designers, *Barbara* is the creative director of a large agency, and at the time of the interview *Mervyn* had recently become self employed after many years working in the industry. *Luke* is a freelance illustrator and animator who has also started some part time lecturing. Barry is an artist with two contrasting strands to his practice, Narbi is a painter who works part time for an artists' information network and Cath is a studio potter. Egon studied architecture after his foundation, and *Journey* studied community art, planned to train as a teacher but now works in nursing. Finally, Tess has worked in the design industry, taught on foundation courses and is now a community artist, puppeteer, performer and trainer.

Participant	ADF in FE or HE	Degree area	Post Grad	Foundation artefact	Later artefact	Subsequent career path	Interview method
Barbara	FE	Media		Lump of coal	Box of matches	Graphic designer	Face-to-face
Barry	Art college	Fine art	MA fine art	Painting of boxers	Laughter yoga, two wire dogs	Artist	Email
Cath	Art college	Ceramics		Ceramic briefcase	2 large jugs	Studio potter	Face-to-face
Egon	FE	Architecture		Wooden chair	"Maximalist" shed	Architect	Email
Journey	FE	Community art	PGCE (left)	Splashing paint	Sunflower	Nursing	Email
Luke	HE	Marketing		Confused student	Confused lecturer	Illustrator, p/t lecturer	Face-to-face
Mervyn	FE	Graphic design		Stereo cassette player	Heart shaped stone	Graphic designer. Gardener	Face-to-face
Narbi	Art College	Fine art	MA fine art PhD	Chuck Close self portrait	Empty studio	Artist	Email

Tess	HE	Set design	PGCE	Tangled string	Lots of tangled string	Designer. Lecturer. Performer.	Email

Table 2. The participants

Two people who had taught on foundation courses were also interviewed to gather personal and historical context for the study. Mike had been part of a discussion panel at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park's 2013 conference on Tom Hudson's legacy. As he had been taught by Hudson at Leeds and worked with him on Leicester College of Art's pre-diploma course I asked to interview him to get his eyewitness views on the early days of the course and on its subsequent development; the interview was face to face and took place in his studio. He mentioned a younger colleague at the college where Mike went on to teach on the Diploma in Art & Design fine art course. *Vladimir* had been a student on a later iteration of the basic design influenced foundation course, and had gone on to be course leader of a foundation course for many years and so could extend Mike's account. Vladimir's face to face interview was at his home. Both were interviewed in 2016 before any of the other participants.

3.7 Working with the data

Having described the methods used to co-construct the data, I now account for the processes subsequently used to analyse the data.

3.7.1 Approach

My approach to analysing the data, or in Wolcott's terms transforming the data (1994), is in the narrative tradition, because the research deals with the participants' stories. Stories told with all their performed (Goffman, 1969) and socially constructed constraints, stories told in response to specific questions, on a specific occasion within the social, cultural and economic context for artists and designers described in the literature review.

> The researcher understands that each story has a point of view that will differ, depending on who is telling the story, who is being told, as well as when and where the story is told. Consequently, verisimilitude—the appearance or likelihood that something is or could be true or real—is a more appropriate criterion for narrative knowing than verification or proof of truth. (Kramp, 2004, p.108)

When seeking to confirm the accuracy of a researcher's account of participants' experiences, rather than using the positivist, rationalist concepts of validity, reliability or objectivity, Lincoln and Guba recommend the concepts of 'credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability' (1985, p. 300) as fitting better within a naturalist paradigm. The dependability of my accounts of participants' realities being accurate and credible, was established through employing reflexivity on the part of the researcher, through the use of thick description, rich accounts of the participants' experiences, through triangulation across their accounts, and

through member checking. Reflexivity positions researchers within the research through acknowledging the potential for their backgrounds, beliefs and biases to influence the research. Thick description provides 'deep, dense, detailed accounts' (Denzin, 2001, p.99), with sufficient detail for readers to establish verisimilitude for themselves (Major & Savin-Baden, 2010). Credibility of the data was evidenced through an audit trail of audio recordings, email conversations, participant images, field notes and journal entries.

The use of data triangulation across data sets enabled checking for convergence of 'salient characteristics' (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p.376) across sources of information, in this case the participants' accounts, to form categories and themes. Importantly it also looks for what Creswell and Miller call disconfirming evidence, although this 'should not outweigh the confirming evidence' (2000, p. 127). I employed triangulation between the various interviews and the participants' images as well as their interpretations of these to check the dependability of the inferences I made from their data; as Hammersley states 'we engage in triangulation in order to *check* our answer, not so as to gain further information in order to *produce* an answer' (Hammersley, 2008, p.24. Emphasis in original).

Member checking asks the participants to confirm the dependability (or otherwise) of the researcher's version of their accounts and provides them with an opportunity to review and clarify their responses as part of the co-construction process. When participants tell their stories in a research interview, they are making decisions about what they choose to recount and what they miss out, as well as the vocabulary they use, in order to give a particular impression of themselves. When researchers re-create these stories, they are making the same decisions as co-constructors of the participants' narratives. As these decisions inevitably influence the stories to a greater or lesser extent, it seems reasonable and ethical to check with participants that what has been written is a fair account, and that they have no concerns about how they have been represented. A number of authorities are wary of member checking narratives (e.g. Sikes, 2010), especially if this leads to having to deal with any concerns raised (through dialogue with the participant), or even to a participant choosing to withdraw from the research.

In my case ethical concerns I had about Journey's narrative – that his open account of the steps of his career and how his sexuality had impacted on this might still, in spite of careful anonymization, be identifiable to close friends or colleagues - led me to check with him that my version was an accurate representation of what he said and that he was content for me to use it in the thesis. In spite of some caution about member checks, Thomas points out that 'Member checks may also be useful […] where extensive quotations or case studies which could identify individuals are to be used in research reports' (2017, p.39). As it seemed

unreasonable to single out one participant, I checked with a larger sample of my sample. As stated previously, I had concerns about intruding into my participants' time, and 'involving them in activities they wouldn't otherwise have been involved in' (Sikes, 2004, p.25), so checked only with those who agreed to look at their narratives.

Rather than just being a check on the credibility and trustworthiness of the data, Candela (2019) argues that member checks can also afford a reflective experience for respondents, and this appears to be the case for the participants I checked with; their responses are quoted below.

> I have had a read and have no concerns whatsoever. Interesting to read what I put as it tells a part of my life story! (Journey)

> Yes, that's fine for me. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to look back on those days. (Barry)

> I'm happy with the text as a narrative and representation. Sounds like me! (Mervyn)

This reflective experience for the participants is returned to at the end of this chapter.

3.7.2 Transcription

After each interview, either immediately or as soon as I was able to, I recorded my feelings on how the interview had progressed, including any concerns I had about the interview including the relationship or the setting. I then transcribed all the oral interviews myself, attempting to achieve what Hammersley (2010) calls strict transcription, ensuring that I indicated laughter, pauses and sighs, where participants had emphasised particular words or phrases, and false starts. Even strict transcription cannot be a perfect record of what was said, given the differences between the spoken and written modes. Indeed,

> 'research' includes considerably more than face-to-face inquiries and encounters and always involves complex translations - from one language to another, but also from one context to another, from talk to text, from account to analysis. These translations matter in epistemological and methodological as well as other ways, for they are crucial to what is (re)presented and how it is read. (Stanley & Temple, 2008, p.278-279)

I listened to the recordings of the live interviews several times before transcribing them to check if there were any occasions when I may have influenced the participants. In the process of transcribing I listened to each sentence multiple times, and when each transcription was finished I played through the recordings several times while checking the text for errors and any possible misinterpretations. This immersion in the data (Colley, 2010; Hammersley, 2010), allowed me to begin to 'understand what is central, what is peripheral' (Wolcott, 1994, p.21). The process of working with the textual data from the e-interviews followed a similar immersive pattern of reading and re-reading. When each participant's data had been edited

into a biographic narrative, I went back and checked that against the recording or original text to ensure that I had not missed anything salient or misinterpreted anything.

Beyond the necessity of protecting participants' privacy and protecting them from any harm which may arise from their participation there is also a duty to respect and protect their dignity. In transcription and especially in creating narratives based on their data, this leads to choices in the translation of speech to text about whether to correct grammar (and spelling in e-mail interviews) and whether to include verbal "ticks" such as frequent ers, ums, 'you knows' and 'if you likes', which, although they are 'accepted features of spoken language, transcribed they appeared inarticulate juxtaposed with usual standards of written language' (Dortins, 2002, p.208). In reporting the face-to-face interviews I have removed these, but kept, for example, "haven't" rather than changing to "have not" in order to reflect the spoken context. In email interviews, in the few occasions where necessary, I have corrected spelling.

3.7.3 Analysis

Analysis, synthesis and interpretation of the data are not separate processes but begin as soon as data collection commences and the researcher starts to think about the data; they are also, to some extent, built into the research questions. Indeed,

> There is no particular moment when data analysis begins. Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations. Analysis essentially means taking something apart…giving meaning to the parts. Not beginning, middle and end, not those parts but the parts that are important to us. (Stake, 1995, p.71)

A major element in the analysis of qualitative data is immersion in the data.

> There is no shying away from the fact that data analysis requires the time-consuming process of immersion. … Repeated reading and re-reading of interview transcripts and contextual data and listening to recordings of the interviews is therefore the first step in analysis. (Green et al, 2007, p.547)

As described above, this immersion was through repeated listening to the recorded interviews, repeated reading of the email interviews, and constant checking back with the originals both as I transcribed and then analysed the data (Colley, 2010; Hammersley, 2010). Polkinghorne describes two forms of working with the data, analysis of narratives and narrative analysis.

> In the first type, analysis of narratives, researchers collect stories as data and analyse them with paradigmatic processes. The paradigmatic analysis results in descriptions of themes that hold across the stories or in taxonomies of types of stories, characters, or settings. In the second type, narrative analysis, researchers collect descriptions of events and happenings and synthesize or configure them by means of a plot into a story or stories (for example, a history, case study, or biographic episode). Thus, analysis of narratives moves from stories to common elements, and narrative analysis moves from elements to stories. (1995, p.12)

These are discrete and contrasting approaches to making sense of information from the field.

My approach was one of narrative analysis, which turns the researcher into a storyteller. Writing about the process of developing his own dissertation, Kim describes feeling like a midwife 'trying to deliver stories conceived of by my participants' (Kim, 2015, p.119). He equates writing up his data to a *Bildungsroman*, a word made up of *Bildung* (formation, education, cultivation, development) and *Roman* (a story), a story focussed on the protagonist's personal growth and identity development, a story of developing the self as part of the journey of becoming. In my case a more precise genre equivalent would be the *Künstlerroman*, focussed specifically on the development of an individual in the process of becoming an artist.

As Gergen cautions, an 'analytical method of deconstructing stories into coded piles' (2004, p.272) may distract the researcher's attention from the narrative account of the participant's experiences; this is important as their stories 'must be cared for as they are at the heart of how we make meaning of our experiences of the world (Huber et al, 2013., p.214). The participants' rich accounts of their experiences demonstrated that 'Deep and insightful interactions with the data are a prerequisite for qualitative data interpretation' (Maher, Hadfield, Hutchings & de Eyto, 2018, p.1). I worked with the data in two ways. I began by writing a biographic, episodic, life history of each participant, to give a coherent, chronological view of the participants' journeys from education to professional practice, as opposed to fragmenting their stories into a thematic account. Unless the participants chose to be identifiable, I endeavoured to follow Ponterotto's advice to fully describe the participants 'without compromising anonymity' (2006, p.564).

Clearly the data needed reducing to make stories of manageable length so, like Colley, I 'reconstructed these narratives, by selecting, interpreting and ordering small portions of lengthy interview transcripts' (Colley, 2003, p.6). The intention in this process was to re-tell each individual's experiences (using direct quotes from their interviews), preserving their stories and their chronology as much as possible, while seeking to avoid the interference of any potential interpretation on my part. This required reflexivity, not only on my possible interference with the data, but also on the power relations discussed above, because:

> Narrative researchers' own positioning within power relations, and the power relations operating between them, the participants, the data and its interpretation, also have to be taken into account. (Esin, Fathi & Squire, 2014, p.206)

This reflexivity required me to be constantly mindful of my experience as an art educator and course leader and so to be careful not to allow myself to make any assumptions about the participants' accounts. As it is over fifty years since I was an art student and over twenty since I was an art lecturer, as discussed previously, I see the participants holding power as the experts

in the field and on their own lives too.

Once these narratives had been completed, allowing me to become more familiar with their accounts, I could then read across these biographies for patterns, similarities and differences, and at how I might interpret these. In Wolcott's terms, after having tried to 'present an adequate descriptive account and then – marking the threshold – suggest what I make of it' (1994, p.259). At this point their stories form 'a resource to ask: What experiences has this person had? What do these experiences mean to him or her?' (McAlpine, 2016, p.35). Their descriptions of experiences were grouped thematically; I began this process using NVivo, but soon abandoned this as it seemed to be imposing a rigid quasi-scientific format on the data. This is supported by James, who writes:

> Dealing with the blocks of often de-contextualized and disembodied data segments that computers can churn out may, if we are not mindful, lead us to forget the huge complexities of our subjects' lives which, as analysts, we set out to understand. (2012, p. 568)

Similarly, Saldaña suggests 'there is something about manipulating qualitative data on paper and writing codes in pencil that give you more control over and ownership of the work' (2013, p.26).

Although not using grounded theory, the use of a constant comparative process allowed for what Glaser calls 'some of the vagueness and flexibility which aid the creative generation of theory' (1965, p.438). In this approach in-vivo codes were written on sticky notes and placed on large sheets of paper. This enabled an initial sort to be made to see what groups they suggested. The ability to see all the codes together, their relationships with each other and between the interviews, and to interact with them by moving them between groups, reducing codes through combining some, re-coding others, and by creating and deleting groups in an iterative process allowed continuing comparisons and reflections and new perspectives to develop within the scaffolding of the theoretical framework developed in the literature review (Chapter 2.2).

Figure 13. In-vivo codes on sticky notes (colours are random)

Using highlighters, sticky notes and memos felt far more sympathetic to the participants and their narratives and allowed me to interweave the writing up process with continuous interrogation of the data, and to tell their stories as far as possible using their own words. As Frank puts it, ‘For me, analysis that is not grounded in appreciation of a story risks missing the point of that story … Appreciation entails recognising why the story matters deeply to the person telling it, and why the storyteller tells the story as she or he does’ (Frank, 2010, p.666).

Figure 14. Codes sorted into groups.

From this process two overarching themes emerged for their time on the foundation course: transitions and exploring identity. Transitions includes sub-themes of acculturation (becoming full time art students after the fragmentary school or college timetable, and beginning to envisage themselves as potential artists or designers), exploring the fields of art & design (the diagnostic element of the course), and consolidating their choice of specialism, be that the one they intended from the start or a new one discovered on the course. The second major theme, exploring identity, includes the transformations they go through as they begin to mature as art students and as they become fledgling artists or designers, and their developing independence and confidence.

3.8 Conclusion

Within a social constructionist epistemology, this research employed qualitative interviewing with the addition of participant generated images to co-construct the participants' stories. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) call participants' accounts of their lives "stories" and the researcher's descriptions of these stories "narratives". My participants' stories were edited into narratives after immersing myself in their data, and analysed through in-vivo coding, codes which were then refined and sorted into groups and themes through a constant comparative process. The credibility of these narratives and the analysis arising from them is evidenced through reflexivity on the part of the researcher, through the use of thick description (Denzin, 1989, 2001; Ponterotto, 2006), through an audit trail, through

triangulation across their accounts and through member checking.

Clandinin is hopeful that in paying close attention to peoples' stories we can return the narratives developed from these to them to help them see 'the social, cultural, and institutional stories they work within and that shape them' (2006, p.52). In this case a number of the participants have already asked to see the finished thesis, a request I aim to comply with. Having accounted for how I constructed the participants' narratives, the following chapter presents these in a biographic format.

Chapter 4. The participants' stories

Figure 15. Victor Pasmore at the Scarborough Summer School, c.1965.

The work displayed behind Pasmore shows the concentration on the formal language of art encouraged by basic design courses, line, shape, tone, pattern, form and colour.

4.1 Introduction

Each participant's account of their experiences is represented here as a chronological biographical narrative, expressing their views in their own words (although subject to the reflexive editorial process referred to earlier). The visual representations of their identities both on their foundation courses and their identities now are included along with their own interpretations of the images. This chronological approach permits a more cohesive sense of the participants' journeys through their professional lives, rather than the fragmented accounts created through a thematic approach. Ponterotto advocates 'describing fully the participants without compromising anonymity' (2006, p.564), and this I have endeavoured to do (unless the participant chose to be identifiable). This approach felt far more sympathetic to the participants and their stories and allowed me to interweave the writing up process with continuous interrogation of the data, and to tell their stories as far as possible using their own words with my voice providing the links in the narration. As Frank puts it, 'For me, analysis that is not grounded in appreciation of a story risks missing the point of that story … Appreciation entails recognising why the story matters deeply to the person telling it, and why the storyteller tells the story as she or he does. (Frank, 2010, p.666)

> A personal narrative is a distinct form of communication. It is meaning making through the shaping of experience; a way of understanding one's own or others' actions; of organising events, objects, feelings, or thoughts in relation to each other; of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions, events, feelings, or thoughts over time (in the past, present, and/or future). … Communication includes narratives that are visual as well as oral or written. (Chase, 2018, p.549)

The individual accounts which follow are arranged in alphabetical order and each participant has a brief introductory paragraph. In the following two chapters their collective experiences will be analysed to identify the themes and issues which arise from them and to examine their educational and career journeys.

4.2 Barbara

Barbara has some 20 years' experience in the design industry. She left a media production degree at the end of the second year for a job in a relative's design agency, then set up her own agency. She is currently creative director of a large, national award-winning, agency.

Barbara was 'excited' about art at school and enjoyed the less structured, exploratory lessons:

> It was the lesson that I always looked forward to, I was always excited. It was somewhere I knew I could explore, and it was freeform, it wasn't as structured as the other subjects were.

In the examination phases she still enjoyed it and did not feel constrained by assessment or feedback.

> Through GCSE and even into A level there was always the opportunity to take it where you wanted, and there was still never a right or wrong. I knew when I was satisfied or happy with an output and felt genuinely fulfilled with what I'd done.

Barbara had decided on her career at an early age:

> I'd heard about this thing called graphic design and I just knew that it just appealed to me instantly, so I announced when I was seven (and my mum still says this) "I'm going to be a graphic designer", and that was it, I never faltered off that course really.

Although she enjoyed the more free-form aspect of art at school, what appealed about design was that there were constraints and boundaries:

> I just knew there was an opportunity to apply art, but within a purposeful environment. [Pause] So although I say I like the freedom to explore, actually what I discovered is I do need some, some purpose, some challenge, some boundaries within which that art can be free to move, to achieve an outcome that actually answers some objectives.

Moving into foundation was a 'shock', with its new social groupings and more mature, more focused full-time study.

> It's quite a culture shock, because you've been in this environment of a protective school, with your friends and everything […] It was quite daunting, but it felt more [long pause] it felt like you were moving towards your career, it was more – actually, because you're moving into full time study in that one particular subject, it felt like a reality, that there was a career becoming available, and here's your chance to focus on it.

She says she 'grew up a little bit during that phase', in part because 'there was more responsibility to take ownership of what you were doing', although she admits she didn't take full advantage of this.

> So, the one thing that caused me to grow up suddenly on the art foundation course was that it wasn't structured. We were given… we were trusted as adults to utilise the time and apply ourselves in ways which we chose, which was very different to the school structure, where you had set hours. […] Whereas art foundation was suddenly this opportunity where you were trusted to go and apply your time as and when you wanted.

Looking back, she says 'I just think it's a really valuable stage in education, that foundation year. I don't know why they only do it for art!' Having reflected on her time on the course, she chose to use an object to represent who she was becoming on the course.

Figure 16. Barbara's foundation image

> I suppose it's partly where I was and what I was at the time, and where I am now, thrown together in some way, because for me, this piece of coal represents [pause] the layers of learning that happened during that year. Obviously there were ideas created and shared, they didn't go very far, but they created the basis which over the years have become solidified in my conscious, and existed and embedded themselves deep down. […] So, this coal represents what was happening at that point, that there was experience seeping in and there was a process going in, which I wasn't consciously aware of at the time, but that I was being challenged on during that foundation,

Part of the challenge was exploring other areas of art and design, which Barbara enjoyed, and says still 'feeds into the work as a designer anyway'.

> I just knew that design was the area for me, but the foundation gave you the opportunity to really explore the other aspects, the other areas that you might move into, so pottery, and silk screen printing, and furniture design, product design; there was a whole range of things that you could test out, explore, apply yourself to, and just see what really sparked your interest and fired your imagination.

Although she was focused on graphic design, one other area of the course almost made her change her plans.

> I'd designed some cutlery in art foundation, and really enjoyed that process – and it's not a million miles away from the process that you go through in graphic design of answering the problem and coming up with designs. And I did dabble with the idea of finding myself more drawn towards product design.

As a result, she applied for product design, and was interviewed for a course, 'but as I went through the interview process and was offered a place, intuitively I kind of felt [pause] hmm, when it came down to it I was still more drawn to the graphics side'. Having turned down the place, she found another university that was offering a new course in media production 'and they were really promoting it hard, and they were drawing in students to populate it, because

it was last-minute’.

> And so, what they said to me was that there was a graphic design element in the degree, but you also get the benefit of the other aspects, TV production, radio production, which were things we hadn’t covered on the art foundation course. So I was [pause] given a good sell, and I accepted and went onto the media production course, which […] didn’t really hold my interest. So once the graphic design module was done I very quickly drifted out, I lost sight of that degree really.

She decided to cut her losses, and she ‘left after my second year … to pursue graphic design through full-time work, rather than stick around and complete a degree that I wasn’t connected with’. A relative ran a design agency, so she went to work there, ‘I was really lucky, the first agency that I joined was actually run by a family member, she gave me a lot of opportunity to develop and grow’. Nevertheless, like starting foundation, starting work was ‘a shocker, isn’t it? Full-time, 37½ hours a week, nine to five’, but she threw herself into it ‘with gusto’.

> At last, to be doing it, in an environment that I was just in awe of it. So I was putting in all hours, just because I thoroughly enjoyed it, but they are long days that you’re not used to. You know, long intense days which the educational system [pause] is quite different to.

She finds the same problem facing new staff straight from university joining her present agency.

> Being able to concentrate for the entire eight hours of the day, and bounce between as many different things as you need to, is actually a bit of a culture shock, takes a bit of getting used to.

Working with a relative gave her a good grounding in both working in and running an agency, as she ‘had a great mentor’. However, ‘I knew from quite early on that I wanted to set up my own agency.’ When her relative decided to retire, Barbara was ‘able to set up my own agency, but starting from scratch with investors who put money in and got share certificates out of it’, and to feel quite confident about it, as working closely with her relative had meant that:

> I learnt a lot about the running of the agency, the financial side, the processes and the systems, the legal side, you know. So I learnt not just the trade, but also the running, the business running aspects.

Consequently, knowing that ‘time is money’, especially when you can only bill the client at the end of the process, she feels that graphic design courses should have sessions on the business side.

> I think a commercial awareness is really valuable, and I think it should be standard as part of the degree course […] commercially, every hour you spend on something has to be charged for, has to cover its overhead costs of you being there to do it, and a lot of people come in without that commercial awareness. […] Even if it was a fine art student and they want to go out and make their living, surely a commercial mindset is

> just so, so essential.

All this experience leading up to being co-owner and creative director of her current agency has changed the nature of her work and her perception of herself.

Figure 17. Barbara's image now

> So as a creative director my role now, really, is to bring out, is to set alight to the bedrock of ideas or the learnings or the talent or the skills that others have developed through their learning process, and make it burn bright as possible. And also it's like I need to be a spark for people, it's not about my ideas really any more, all I do is enhance other people's ideas. My role is to bring other people's ideas to life, or create the opportunity in which they can produce their brightest work.

She now feels that 'graphic design itself was a fleeting moment' in her career, as she is now is 'very much more business orientated'.

> The business demands are a lot of financials, a lot of forward planning, strategic thinking, dealing with clients, dealing with people [laughs] the HR side of things. There's a lot of pitching, there's a lot of business development, networking, a lot of considering who we are as an agency, developing new products.
>
> I do love the work still, and when I can I like to get my hands back into it. But there's so much else to do as well. I love it. I sometimes lock myself away when I know I have to just exercise some of that.

4.3 Barry

Barry has a BA and an MA in fine art and has been practicing as an artist since graduation nearly 20 years ago. He has a diverse, process-based, conceptual art practice involving sculpture, photography, video, works on paper, writing, talks and performance. He chose not to be anonymised.

Barry was fascinated by images and techniques from a very early age.

> Even before I could hold a pencil properly I would boss my mum into drawing me exact copies of Mister Men and Disney characters, and I vividly remember being fascinated by the process of her stencilling simple flying birds around the edge of my bedroom ceiling.

He enjoyed art at school and 'was also often busy at home with projects'.

> Art in school was always the subject I was most enthusiastic about. I suppose I was quite exacting and patient in my set drawing projects in art class and perhaps crucially it was the one area I garnered praise. I always enjoyed the dishevelled, democratic atmosphere of the art rooms.

He remembers a neighbour buying him a craft knife and cutting mat when he was about nine, which he used for 'paper sculptures, collages, kits, trimming, taking things apart'. The knife was soon blunt, 'but I use the mat in my studio to this day'.

Barry says he applied for foundation with no 'long term plan or target', but

> … to see if I was good enough, like taking your next grade in music. And although it felt like an uncertain, risky path, I was still hedging my bets as I could have gone into Graphic Design, Architecture, or even Fashion.

He found the transition into foundation 'a huge shift':

> All creative subjects, all day. Teachers called by their first names. No more still-life studies. Computers for creative purposes. No uniform. Art and design magazines. Interest in your ideas more than your skills.

Barry's image of who he was on his foundation course uses one of his paintings from the time. He says:

> I mentioned before about the shift in how art was taught, and I think that then shifted my sense of myself proportionately, as the thing I cared so much about was changing in front of me. It was broader, more interesting, surprising, but also more demanding. The work asking more of you. The painting is from my foundation year; as an extension of life drawing I went through a period of making acrylic paintings of boxers on TV, pausing the image and painting with my fingers. […] If you're asking how the painting itself relates to my mindset at the time then there may have been something about struggle and challenge, within a predetermined system perhaps (maybe what I'm still making work about)? But I think half the meaning would have been this chance to experiment on my own terms

Figure 18. Barry's foundation image.

Since he ‘certainly couldn't see a place for me in the job market at 18’, and in spite of having ‘tried and enjoyed all the other subjects’ on his foundation, he decided to apply for fine art which he says, ‘in hindsight may have been me following my passion, fear of change, or the direction I was encouraged to go’.

> Foundation trips to colleges to compare fine art degree courses made the full-time art student lifestyle immediately palpable. I loved seeing these art departments and studios, meeting BA students for the first time, so this was probably when it really locked in as an ambition.

When he started his degree his aims were ‘To let the degree do its work on me. To survive.’

> I always thought the college had high expectations of me, and I had so much admiration for my friends' work, that I tried to push myself as much as possible. This was a much more conducive, productive form of competitiveness, as we were all working in our own ways, no-one's work alike at all.

Barry feels that his foundation course prepared him well for his degree course:

> … in that it shifted my way of thinking about art making out of an A-Level curriculum mindset, with more interest in independent thinking, thought process and ideas than technical skill, then it was great preparation. Also in emphasising that the Foundation was about choosing a path I suppose it made me feel more self-determined about the choice to take art further.

He had no placements on his degree course, and feels the degree offered little in the way of

preparation for life beyond college:

> No placements. Just studio space, tutorials, workshop time, some critical theory and writing projects. In some ways it was a great grounding in being immersed in contemporary art - in the college and in the various galleries in the city. In other ways that actually hides from you the difficulties of functioning without this support network once you leave. I left the city straight after - as it still felt quite small, over familiar, and an opportune time to make a break - and moved into studios with two Foundation friends in another city. This studio time was probably more of a grounding - self-determined, adventurous, inventive, cold, skint and very little outside interest in what you're up to! It gives you the sword but not the shield, if that makes sense. You have to develop that yourself.

Reflecting on how he managed the transition from student to working as an artist, including being 'skint' with little outside interest in his work, he says:

> I've coped with that transition twice. First when leaving my BA, next when leaving my MA. The first time round, as I said, I moved straight to live and work with friends. This peer support group, and some continuity living with art students eased that jolt out of art school - which is a kind of abstract, detached place, where we got no advice about how to cope outside of college, except that is for applying to MAs.
>
> The second time around after MA it was also coping with living in London too. Which if I'm honest probably took me 5 or 6 years to find my feet. To work out how to keep earning a living, finding time, finding space, and also finding any external interest in what you're doing!

Asked how he did 'work out how to keep earning a living, finding time, finding space, and finding any external interest', Barry says:

> That's a huge question actually, a long story, and a good 1hr professional practice lecture! But in short I suppose I gave myself time to find my feet, and each little bit of success (a work turning out well, something in group show, being taken seriously by someone, making a good contact) helps you on the way if you let yourself appreciate them. Key moments for me were probably getting my first studio space not at home, and taking part in a group show internationally […] But it's a slow process, one I'm still on, and by no means a linear, steady progression - with plenty of moments of stasis, setbacks, or reroutes on the way.

Barry's work has two elements, there is his personal practice and he also makes animals from chicken wire. He was asked how he reconciled these.

> When I started I wouldn't mention one side to anyone I was working with in the other. This separation was probably rooted in an idea that it would look like I had abandoned my artistic principals for commercialism, and experimental processes for twee sentimentality! But over the years I've got more confident in both areas, and actually now like to mention the animals in art circles, as now more than ever it is important to think about how an art career is possible, viable. I certainly bring it up when talking to art students as I don't want to sell a false dream of artistic freedom. Plus the wire animals never fail to get an awkward laugh. (Conversely I find when I mention my art practice to animal customers they generally glaze over!)

Figure 19. Barry's now image

His image of his professional identity now is of him leading a ‘laughing yoga’ session during a residency at a naturist club.

Figure 20. Barry's second now image.

> The Laughter Yoga at a naturist club I suppose shows how far I've come in this time - how a blurry line between artwork and real life is actually more interesting, even provocative. I've found that the recent work on my residency at this club has also marked a threshold in my confidence in dealing with uncertain outcomes, uninvited

> activity and unusual subject matter and processes (never mind the taking part!). Though the apron in the photo marks the limitations still present in this approach.

Reflecting whether his foundation course still has any influence on him, he says;

> I would say it still does influence me. You can see from my previous answers that the time, approach and relationships are still vivid for me. Being treated like an adult, with genuine and valuable ideas to bring, and developing the skills to handle them was a real turning point to me, so I would feel I'm still on that continuum.
>
> I think it's because the foundation year was purposely a year of uncertainty. Maybe the start of years of work-related uncertainty throughout art education and beyond. And I mean that in a generally positive sense in that it removed the certainties of school art education. I probably have those uncertainties still but have just got a bit better at managing them over the intervening years.

4.4 Cath

Cath is a studio potter, with many years' experience, making and selling her pottery from her own premises. She has recently started giving private lessons. She chose not to be anonymised.

Cath's experience of art at school was very different to most of the other participants;

> I wasn't allowed to take any art subject at all. I had to do extra French and Latin and stupid things like that. But I became quite friendly with the art teacher, and this would never happen today, but she used to allow me to go into the art room during lunch times. So that was my experience of art at school.

She was the only one in her sixth form not to go to university because 'I wanted to go and live in France, which is what I did'. She decided to put a portfolio together and apply to the École des Beaux Arts in Paris. Cath didn't get in because, although her work was acceptable, the school didn't think her written French was good enough, but she says:

> So that was my first taste, that was where I thought "I really want to do this, this is what I want. I don't want to be a chemist; I don't want to be an air hostess".

She applied to her nearest college, using the same portfolio of work that she had used in Paris, but they said:

> "No, we're not interested in stuff like this. No, sorry." So to this day I can't understand how the Beaux Arts in Paris would accept some work but [they] wouldn't.

Looking back she thinks:

> I think that was the beginning of where art colleges really wanted to be wacky and outrageously up front. Anyway, so I went home, and for three weeks I just did a completely new portfolio, took that back, knocked on the door and said, "I'm here again." And they hadn't filled the places, and they were very kind and said "Well, OK, you've gone to all this effort. Welcome aboard."

When she started on her pre-dip, she had no specific ambitions, 'None, I just knew I wanted to

do, and make stuff. And learn'. She enjoyed sampling all the areas of the course:

> … all the different disciplines that you learn on foundation were fascinating. Vacuum forming had just come in, silversmithing, we did some iron, metal work, fine art, we did figure drawing – oh well, you name it. We did ceramics obviously, glass, it was just fantastic.

In spite of having no specific ambition on entry, and enjoying all the different disciplines, the diagnostic element of the course worked well for Cath.

> … out of everything I tried, I think ceramics was number one, I enjoyed making three dimensional pieces and I enjoyed going on the wheel, throwing on the wheel, although we didn't have enough time to learn how to throw properly. I don't know, ceramics – I just fell in love with it.

Although there was little time on the course to develop her skills very far, she remembers being excited by the properties of clay. She has a cutting from a local paper showing her working on a slab built piece.

Figure 21. Cath's foundation image.

> I was somehow drawn to trying to make the clay sag and fold like leather or fabric or what-have-you, and in that photograph, that's a handbag, a shoulder bag, very floppy leather that lent itself beautifully to – you know if the earthenware clay is in exactly the right condition, it's amazing what you can do with it.

The transition from foundation to her DipAD course was very marked.

> Definitely walking into a very professional environment, it was "Form and function",

> you know, we should have had that tattooed on us, “Form and function, form and function”. I mean foundation had all been fun; probably the best year of my life actually, to be absolutely honest. We were learning new things all the time. But this was definitely “This is work”.

She also says that a major element of the course was ‘seeing what other students are doing – that was terribly important, feeding off each other’. Although now totally focused on ceramics, Cath still had no professional ambitions when she started her degree course, ‘No, I don’t think – I don’t really think anybody did, and that’s another part of the course altogether’. She had the opportunity to spend a week in Lucie Rie’s studio in her third year, and the course did have an element of preparation for setting up in practice.

> Yes, there were some lectures and information given about setting up your own studio, what to do when you leave, but not until the third year obviously.

Along with some friends she tried applying for grants to start up a studio, but their uncertainty about what they wanted to do meant they went their own ways.

> When I left, it was obvious that an art student cannot just set up a studio, and I think a couple of us got together and tried to apply for some grants which were available at the time and of course the Crafts Council had come onboard […] and was as helpful as possible, but we didn’t know where we wanted to live, what we actually wanted to do, what did we want to make at the end of all this.

Eventually Cath moved north and bought an old chapel with her boyfriend who had started making furniture. She planned to start a pottery but installing a more powerful electricity supply for a big kiln was too expensive. She had some small test kilns, so ‘I ended up making all the knobs and the handles and stuff for the furniture […] But from there on in I did manage to purchase kilns and equipment’, she had a wheel that she had bought as a student, and she started making pottery.

> I’ve always done ceramics and I’ve always either exhibited in galleries, I’ve sold my work, and about 15 years ago I opened a gallery here, in the chapel, I made my work for my own gallery, and I sold every single piece. But now the situation, the current situation with galleries is that of course they’re charging anything from 40 to 60% commission, and with commission at 60% it’s not worth getting out of bed.

Figure 22. Cath's now image.

Cath says that although her ideas and inspirations have changed, ‘I think you move on in life don’t you, you get attracted to other forms, colours, shapes, whatever it might be’, her current work still has elements of the techniques she discovered on her foundation course.

> I was thinking, isn’t it strange that these two jugs, one of the most recent things I’ve made are actually almost identical technique [to the clay handbag]. I think it was just making objects, because you have to be inspired. And I think things like the foundation course and the degree course, they feed your head, basically.

Cath says that without her foundation she would not have got onto her DipAD course and all that followed that, but she is concerned about how art education has changed:

> […] now, it’s all under universities and, I don’t know, everything’s more rigid and formal, everything’s got to fit in. It was nothing like that, and yet we did the work - we worked damned hard actually.

4.5 Egon

Following foundation he studied architecture, and has worked for a number of highly rated practices. He now has nearly 20 years’ experience and has worked as lead architect on some major developments in the UK and overseas. He chose not to be anonymised.

Egon was interested in drawing and painting from an early age, inspired by an uncle who encouraged him. He was so keen that:

> I purchased a weekly series of magazines with my pocket money called 'draw it! paint it!', totalling 8 hardback volumes, which I still have and learnt more detailed techniques from these.

At junior school he was very pleased when one of the teachers allowed him to paint all afternoon if he did his work in the morning, although 'little did I know that afternoons were handed over to creative play anyway'. He also spent a lot of his spare time drawing and painting. At secondary school art 'Art classes were one of my favourite times in school as I had a recognised natural ability for the subject with my classmates'. He regrets that there was little coverage of the history of art, and that in the school 'the focus with art and design was always on producing with a minimal focus on context or approach'.

He also took Craft, Design & Technology (CDT) GCSE, and 'with the focus on designing and then crafting an item it suited me down to the ground'. The CDT teacher 'really gave me a lot of support', and:

> He allowed me to go off and develop my own brief, document and design my projects, within the confines of the curriculum tasks.

The teacher wanted him to take an 'A' level in the subject 'after I achieved the only A grade in the school at GCSE level'. Egon did not, as 'at the time I wanted to aim for electrical / mechanical /aeronautical engineering degrees', and as other teachers 'also guided me towards Architecture qualifications, I took Art as one of my 3 A level subjects, others were maths and physics'. The A level art course was a disappointment:

> The art A level felt a little staid, the teacher was not as enthusiastic as some I had experienced in the past and the subject matter didn't especially grab me. […] The fun and love for the subject left me a little.

Egon did not get the grades in maths and physics that he needed for his chosen degree courses, and decided to 'aim for a degree course that would suit my skills a little better, that had a greater focus on art and design', so 'rather than just taking a year out I decided to enrol on an art foundation course', and chose the one 'that gave me the ability to look beyond the focus of traditional art and design subjects and head towards subjects that had a mix of science and art'.

He says the foundation course gave him a new enthusiasm for education, because:

> it opened my perspective to the many facets of the world of art and design and provided a framework for understanding my own development and artistic / design preferences with the context of each module.

Like some of the others, he feels it also helped with his personal and emotional development and his first steps away from home and school, and provided a more gentle transition than going straight to university, and which 'proved to be beneficial when I finally moved away and

attended university'.

He feels it helped develop his identity through being encouraged to 'pursue a variety of methods of potential creative responses'. It also gave him 'a first taste of the design by the "investigation - interpretation – response" process that I continue to this day'.

Egon's image is of a chair he made in response to a foundation brief (he still has the chair today).

Figure 23. Egon's foundation image.

He says the chair was an interesting first step in his design career, and highlighted his desire to understand a design problem and work to produce an original solution. It also highlighted the way he was interested in objects that had both a purpose and an aesthetic value. For Egon, this piece

> represents the formation and development of the ability to approach design tasks in a way that creatively generates visual, material and contextual connections between objects, shapes and forms that may at first appear unconnected or abstract and dislocated, but actually imbue greater meaning and connectedness to the architecture and objects I design now.

Egon was offered places to study architecture, transport design or production design engineering, and took the offer to study architecture. He says his foundation prepared him for

his architecture degree in two main ways, firstly ‘through the variety of methods of investigation we were encouraged to pursue’, and secondly, because ‘the brief based approach’ of the foundation course was very similar to the briefs issued on the architecture course. He feels that

> The exploratory ethos of the foundation course and the general ‘permissiveness’ in terms of disciplines and types of approach that were promoted provided me with the ammunition to approach the architecture course design briefs with an open mind and a variety of forms of expression that proved beneficial to investigating potential architectural approaches and solutions.

The foundation course provided him with the foundations that ‘could easily and very straight forwardly be built upon within the degree course, giving me an immediate understanding of how to approach design problems, and a head start on the course.’

He was awarded a first, which enabled him to take up a post in a major London practice. He describes it as an interesting place ‘but the hours expected and maintained by the staff were long’. He went straight into production design work, which he describes as ‘something of a roller coaster, going straight from university to design production … the regular 10-11pm finishes and weekend working hit me quite hard’. He continued to work there on a part time basis during his post graduate studies, this time on a Formula 1 team’s headquarters. Here the hours were even more gruelling ‘with all night design sessions every Wednesday’. He then joined a renowned architect as part of a three person team, an experience he values highly. He describes this architect as being ‘restless in his pursuit of investigation and creativity, very similar to the way we were taught to look at the world on our art foundation course’. Egon went on to work in several other large practices.

Reflecting on his career, he feels that ‘I haven’t really changed a great deal, I have become a good deal more world wise, but still want to have that practical experience of doing and making’. Egon says that now, after the advent of minimalism as a design term, he has described himself ‘on a number of occasions as being a maximalist, always wanting to see where things could go and see where particular branches of exploration can take me’. His image of now is of his self-built maximalist garden shed.

Figure 24. Egon's now image

As lead architect for a recent hospital project his maximalist approach saw him designing the built in furniture, the light fittings, the door furniture and the interior design as well as the building itself. He feels he is 'just approaching the point where I think I have some understanding, if not mastery of architecture and design'. Looking to the future, Egon says 'I think the next stage in my path may be stepping out and doing things in practice for myself'.

(Postscript: during the pandemic Egon did set up his own private practice.)

4.6 Journey

Journey has a degree in art, dropped out of his Post graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course but later took a degree and post-graduate qualifications in nursing, and now works in health service management.

He says his 'experience of art/design at school varied depending on my age' but he 'always thought I was creative […] I could make something quite special out of 2 Biro pens and a piece of paper!' While at primary school:

> I got immense satisfaction knowing my artwork was displayed in corridors and was thrilled when asked to participate in special activities for the school such as being involved in producing a mural for a communal area.

But this enthusiasm 'was also my enemy', and the more he worked on his art, the more his other subjects got neglected, 'so much so that people started to make comments which made me feel the only thing I was good at was art'. By the time he got to senior school he was 'labelled as stupid' which meant that he hated senior school and became somewhat rebellious:

> I would often be the fool of the class and not take art classes seriously. I remember

> once I used pastels to paint a forest. Being silly with my friends, I used an array of bright colours. I thought the picture looked terrible and was hoping it would get me in to trouble. However, my art teacher loved it so much that it went on the school wall!

In spite of this, he did not take art as an exam subject and left school with limited qualifications. He worked for a while, but hearing friends talking about going to university made him return to college to resit his GCSE exams, including art, although 'half of me thought this would be an easy way of obtaining a qualification, a laugh'. But once he started on the course:

> I rediscovered my passion and ability. I actually found out that I really could draw, paint and colour. I was in my element and ended up being the only student in the year who achieved a grade A. It gave me a goal to focus on, I was going to go to university and study art.

At the time he was living on benefits, and was not allowed long periods of study so the college allowed him to take his A levels alongside the foundation course 'so I could apply for university quicker', but which brought its own problems.

> It was actually fairly difficult to juggle everything. […] I felt 'A' Level work was really a step up from GCSE, whereas foundation was a step up from 'A' Level … my 'A' Level result was the highest in the whole college, yet whilst I still passed the foundation, I felt very much like I had not really met the full demands of the course and had not allowed myself to fully benefit from its purpose, which was to mature.

Other than enjoying art and wanting to go on to study it at university, he had no specific career aims or ambitions when he started the course.

> My main aim and ambition was definitely around passing the course so I could go on to study what I loved doing at university. It was certainly not about a career pathway at this stage, I had found a passion and I was young so who cares!

Although he says, 'I wish I had embraced it better at the time', it still influenced him and assisted him to move on to degree level. Beyond that, he says:

> I would even go as far as to say it changed me, not necessarily whilst doing the course but certainly afterwards. More than anything, it made me realise that art could be taken seriously and it came in many forms. I had seen what could be done. It shaped me and what I wanted to become.

Journey does not 'particularly like' his image of himself on the course, perhaps because 'maybe I did not like myself then'.

Figure 25. Journey's foundation image.

> I felt like I was a blank palette of different tins of paint that needed to burst out; be thrown around to see where they landed and what this created. I wanted to be rebellious and shock and question the system. I wanted to be experimental; I was young, was fed up of society telling me who and how to be, and I had had enough! Things needed to change and this was the start of my journey!

He feels the foundation course was good preparation for his degree, as it helped him understand what he needed to improve on, and 'how to work through a process of developing and producing work'. He had also 'taken on board the notion of trying to develop "my style" of work. As an artist, what was I trying to say? Who did I want to be?' and, more importantly, 'I guess it gave me permission to call myself an artist'.

He was accepted by his third choice degree course, which was community art rather than fine art.

> Within my minor of sculpture, I became extremely experimental, eventually focusing on Live Art and installation pieces. This is where my foundation learning really played out. I still did not really know who I was and what my style would be, but I had fun trying new things and questioning stereotypes and perspectives.

When he graduated he was determined to go into teaching and started a PGCE course in secondary Art and Design.

> I was excited to start the course and carried on with it until about 6 months in. However, a lot was going on in my world at that time. […] I had recently come out as a

> gay man, which I was finding hard in some ways. Whilst amongst my friends everything was fine, I had massive anxieties that I could not be a successful teacher and be gay. I would worry about how difficult the children/parents could become and although this sounds silly now, it was the one thing that made me decide to drop out of the course.

Journey says this decision is ‘probably my biggest regret’. Following this he did various jobs which he describes as 'dead end jobs'. One day he helped an elderly lady cross a busy road, and says:

> I suddenly realised I needed to be in a career that helped people, it was obvious; I thought about it and was going to become a nurse!

He spent a further three years at university, with very little money, but ‘passed with flying colours’. His first job was in A&E, but ‘I did not really enjoy working shifts so left after six months and started working as a community staff nurse’. He really enjoyed this and quickly progressed, which was very satisfying as he had ‘gone in to nursing with the intention of climbing a career ladder’.

Although now in a senior managerial role, he says ‘the creative is still in me’.

> Once an artist, always an artist, and artists, whilst not necessarily practising their passion in its raw form, still have an ability to think, recreate and regenerate ideas into something else. The creative allows this to occur and as artists, we have a strong ability to see a vision, work with and through the vision and develop it into something different.

His image of himself now is a single sunflower standing tall in a field of sunlight.

> Sunflowers are my favourite flower because of their simplicity, yet captivating brightness and size. They represent calm, yet at the same time strength. In this image the flower stands independent and alone, yet tall and proud, colourful and bold. […] All flowers start as a seed and grow. I have progressed from a seed to an adult plant. I am settled and at peace, less vulnerable and more resistant.

Figure 26. Journey's now image.

Journey says that ‘aspects of my foundation will always stay with me’, as it was where he first started to discover himself and his identity.

> Art foundation has an impact on most careers. I studied art to degree level, as I later did with nursing. I currently work at management level in nursing, yet value my art background as much, if not more than the foundation of nursing practice I learnt from my second degree. Understanding nursing is essential to do my role but understanding art is an added bonus. Why? Because the foundation of art is in everything I do. Without the art in me, I believe my approaches would be different, my understanding and ability to manage situations more limited, my knowledge less basic, because art helped me to understand creativity and opened my mind! Studying art made me a better judge; the skills gained from art foundation are transferable to any role.

4.7 Luke

Luke is a freelance illustrator and cartoonist, with twenty years’ experience. He followed foundation with a degree in graphic design and advertising. He has done illustrations for national newspapers, magazines and books, for record sleeves and for film companies, and has directed and produced animations.

Luke enjoyed art at school, and from an early age he found it easy:

> It was the only thing I ever felt I was really good at – it was a weird thing, from being little, everyone told me I was really good – I was good at English, but this was the thing that people were impressed by at an early age – like being a magician or something.

He remembers being ‘pushed a little bit towards the caricature-y, graphic-y side’, and being encouraged by many of his teachers, including his head teacher telling his parents “He’s obviously got something”, and that sense of enjoyment and easiness continued right though to A level. But he goes on to say that ‘it wasn’t until I went into proper art education that I got, you know, a slap across the face, and realised I wasn’t as good as I thought!’.

From being five or six he ‘assumed’ he was going to art college, and ‘assumed’ he was going to be a cartoonist – he remembers seeing Gerald Scarfe on the television and realising people did that for a living, and it just seemed ‘like a trajectory that was, kind of written. I had like this weird laser guided thing’. He applied to foundation and had a portfolio that was ‘full of comics that were properly Letratoned and lettered’ (Letratone is a system of pressure transfer sheets of different densities of dots used to simulate newspaper dot tones), but he wasn’t accepted, which he says was like ‘someone really religious finding out that God’s not real’. He went and worked in a print shop for a year, designed some posters, got some comics printed in student magazines, re-applied and was accepted.

When he started on his course he says:

> I was really adamant that I wanted to draw comics, and I wanted to design record sleeves, and around that time I wanted to work for the NME [*New Musical Express*],

> and that was about as far as I'd thought.

He describes himself as being 'pretty nerdy' and 'geeky' about the things he liked, cartoonists, Dali and Escher, but then:

> they gave us lectures about mark making, and that blew my mind … it was like splitting someone's head open and watching things go off in different directions.

His illustration of who he was on the foundation course is concerned with the times he felt 'inept' and 'really out of my depth… Sculpture's the one that I remember – I was like a cat in the snow – I thought "I'm not really any good at this"'. But he goes on to discuss the importance of: 'finding out what you're crap at – isn't that the point of foundation that you find out, that you try it all on, and you find out which bits you'll take into your practice'.

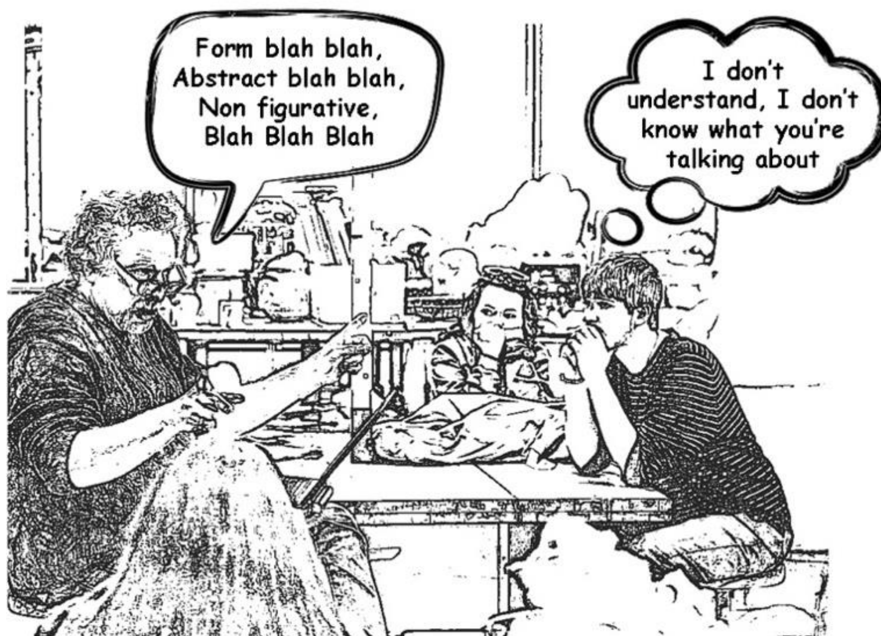

Figure 27. Luke's foundation image.

But overall he remembers 'really enjoying the whole thing, being really excited to go in'. Three things in particular have had a lasting impact on him. One was life drawing, 'I really enjoyed life drawing, and that was a quite intensive thing. I think we did that once a week. Another impact came from the specialist library, 'The library was the other brilliant thing, that you got access to, and again, it was just stumbling upon books that were - you'd be looking for one book and you'd go what's this, I'll just check this out'. The third thing was feeling able to challenge the staffs' opinions about the work:

> I mean crits and atmospheres like that, and the discussion, is a brilliant thing, and that's the first time you get that, on foundation. You were more interested in if your peers rated it than the staff, and that's the beginning of independence, isn't it, rather than "Teacher, what do I do?" I guess that's a big shift in thinking, isn't it, as a practitioner, so that would have come from foundation.

He sums up his foundation course as ‘So for a year, it’s quite a life changing set of parameters, isn’t it? Just the life drawing, throwing you out of your depth – and the library. So I’ve got really positive memories of it’. He didn’t apply for an illustration degree, because:

> there was a cockiness that thought I’d learnt enough on my own, and I couldn’t see what they were going to teach me for three years.

So he applied for graphics and advertising, since:

> even though I believed I was going to get a job out of it, I didn’t see how you could make a living out of being a cartoonist all the time, so I thought if I’m half graphic designer and half cartoonist - it’s quite cynical this, I thought I’d hedge my bets a little bit.

He found the graphics elements of the course rather stolid and old fashioned, ‘I had teachers that felt a bit like fossils, talking about what it was like in the 60s, and it was corporate sort of graphic design. So it probably felt irrelevant’. But one tutor on the advertising side made a big impact:

> He was one of those teachers that said things and I still quote them now, and they’re all advertising truisms. He said you can teach anyone advertising in three weeks: one of his things was “A good idea’s not a good idea unless you can say it over the phone”.

But on the graphics side, ‘the rest of my degree seemed to be me trying to challenge what I thought graphic design was’, although ‘a lot of that stuff I’d learnt from foundation, the mark making, I sort of carried on into typography and trying to make expressive typography and stuff’. On reflection he says, ‘So the, the story looking back, foundation to degree, it seemed it did its job well, I think, my foundation course’.

One major advantage of his degree course was its strong links into the industry, they did live projects, they had placements and went into agencies to show their work, and as a result he says:

> I think I’ve still got a mind that’s more like an ad man and a hustler, and how do you sell something, which isn’t really, well, a lot of my illustrator friends don’t have that kind of, that thing. So that was lucky, it was very “Go make it in the industry”, and it seemed like a real thing, you go out and get work.
>
> I was ringing up magazines on my second year, I was ringing NME, Dazed & Confused, Time Out, and trying to get appointments. So I started working for the NME when I was in my second year. So I was just really lucky, I managed to sort of hustle work as a student.

As a result, when he graduated and started looking for work as a freelance illustrator,

> …it was with a student portfolio but with a couple of pieces that were published, and that makes a massive difference.

Luke has only been freelance since graduating:

> I've always been self-employed, and weirdly there was no plan, it was just work, I kept getting work, and suddenly I'm 45 next year and I'm still jumping from lily-pad to lily-pad, which is not a secure thing.

He had paying jobs from the start of his career, and has never done anything outside illustration and animation (until he started some part-time lecturing), although at the beginning he says:

> I've had to do a bit of free work – which everyone has to do – but I used to be cocky about that. If someone said "Can you do some magazine stuff", I was always like "What's going on the cover?" So I'd do a cover for free, 'cos that was a brilliant way, in those days, to get your name about.

He came into teaching by what he describes as 'a happy accident'. A friend was teaching on a graphics course when a guest lecturer dropped out at short notice, so he asked Luke if he would fill in. He hadn't realised he would be paid, so when a cheque came he thought 'Oo, that's alright', and although at the time he didn't need the extra income, when he was asked to take on a formal teaching role he agreed, even though his first sessions reminded him of how he felt on his foundation course.

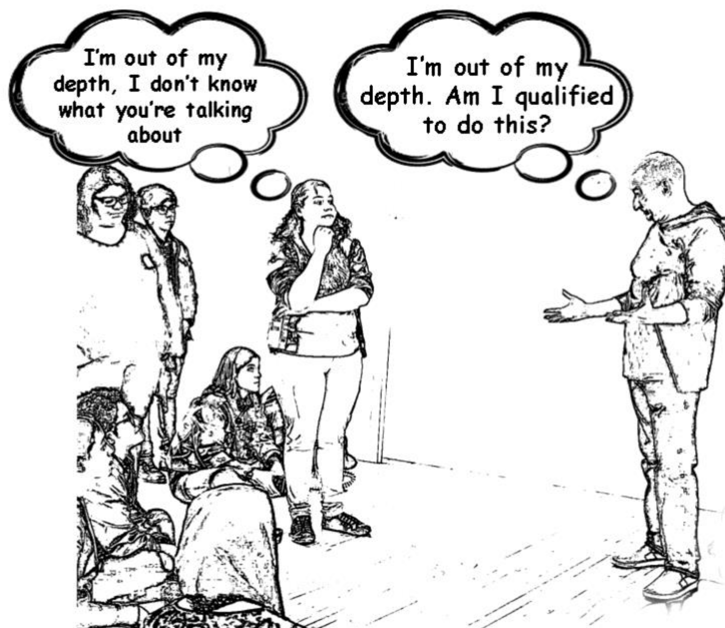

Figure 28. Luke's now image.

As the economy's changed, the teaching thing's actually been a little bit more like "Yes, I'm glad I've got it", which wasn't like that at the beginning.

Luke says his foundation still influences him in two main ways, firstly the use of libraries to discover new artists, new ways of working, and also in his teaching:

> Foundation was very arty, and the way I teach now, it's trying to keep it feeling like art college, but with that component there; the real world's out there. So I talk about it like an airlock now, trying to get a perfect airlock that you can close the rear one so

> they're not going to get a shock when they get out there, but it still feels like art college.

He also worries about his students who come straight from sixth form 'without that airlock of that year to grow'.

> There was a student who just looked utterly terrified every time I walked in the room. And I took her aside and said, "What is it, what's the matter?" She'd come straight from sixth form and I think without that airlock of that year to grow, saying "Here's the brief, go and solve it", and she's just "Uh?" It's like "Whoosh", slapping you round the face. And if that's the way art education is going to go, that you go straight from school to a degree, I don't think that's the greatest breeding ground for confident creatives.

4.8 Mervyn

Mervyn followed his foundation with a graphics degree. After graduation, he decided to take a break, and worked on building sites for two years. He has some 20 years' experience in agencies and more recently self-employment, running a virtual co-operative agency of freelance specialists 'building digital formats'. He has recently switched to gardening.

Although he found art at school to be 'very structured, quite rigid', nevertheless he says 'definitely one of the key joys of formal education that I had was being in the art department'. Even in the run up to A level, he felt:

> We were allowed, if anything, greater freedom, especially when you're preparing for examination, we were kind of encouraged more … you could engage with them [art teachers] more and get more of a drive and more of a two-way process.

His mother had wanted to be a designer, and encouraged him from an early age, and he says:

> … upon meeting my first proper art teacher at 9 years of age, something switched on in me where I knew I was going to be doing this, in some form, for my working life, and that never deviated from the age 11, I knew where I was going.

He never wanted to be an artist, 'I saw myself as a designer, and working for other people rather than just merely creating: communicating things, ideas to people in a kind of commercial sense.'

The transition onto foundation was:

> … the first time in many, many years, that I'd been in a situation where I was with a fresh new group of people […] I hadn't had that since I first went to school at 5 years of age, that I know nobody here. That kind of enabled me to almost [pause] have a soft re-boot on myself as I went forward.

He was also very aware of the intensity of the course, of:

> … knowing this next step is coming in a year's time. Nothing had ever been that quick before. And it was like that springboard to say "Well, we know where we're all going, we've come from different places and we're all going to scatter again at the end, but

> we're here for this purpose, and we're all driven". And it was kind of scary but really exciting at the same time, it really was.

He started foundation as a step on the way to becoming 'this graphic designer that was going to go on to the wonderful things he had planned inside his head', but found that:

> I did have a wobble in the middle of doing that course, because of exploring some of the other things and other people and I started to think that actually, after all these years, could I be changing my degree here, and go and do something else? But then again, that's a wonderful thing, to have your resolution challenged.

Although it didn't change his ambitions, he says it changed him 'on a personal level', it 'allowed me to come out of my shell a little bit.' He sees his Walkman as a symbol of who he was at that time.

Figure 29. Mervyn's foundation image.

> This is the original personal stereo that I had when I was on the foundation course … and what it represents is [pause] an inward view of the world around me, and the fact that music was a key component in my life, but it wasn't something that I shared, it was something that was mine. I would spend my time out of my surroundings, daydreaming about what I could be, what I was going to do. All these things that allowed me to be in a crowd, but alone, and also allowed me to focus on what I was doing.

Asked if he would have applied to degree courses straight from A levels, he said:

> Absolutely not! Absolutely no. […] The stabilisers were on the bike at that point, and dad's hand let go of the seat, but I could go forward, wobbly, and carry on. If I would not have had the stabilisers on the bike at that point, I think I would have fell flat on my face when I went to university, personally. [...] It was a wonderful time personally and academically, and the breadth of different things I was exposed to, […] Able to work with different technologies, and just come across tutors who were not actually that much older than us, but had such profound effects on what you think is possible

> from yourself and what is possible out there for you to do, that personally I think that […] without that eye-opening experience I wouldn't have developed the outlook that I did.

He went on to a general graphics degree, which, although it covered 'all these things you start to get exposed to in your normal agency life', he describes it as:

> …an expanded version of our foundation course. The trouble was, it just wasn't as good. Everything took too long. We had much sharper deadlines and much more focus on the foundation course, which again, says more for the foundation course than the degree.

When he finished his degree, he decided to take a break rather than go straight into a design studio, which he says would have felt 'like entering a monastery and being a novitiate, and you would go through your days and know nothing of the world', so worked on building sites for two years. There had been no placements on his degree, and even with his two years working, his:

> … first agency job was a massive shock to the system, because the degree was not commercially focussed enough … because where I'd been used to weeks dreaming up a project, I had a deadline for the creative director that afternoon!

Over 14 years he worked his way through the 'agency hierarchy, the pecking order', progressing from 'studio junior to senior art director', eventually becoming 'too expensive to keep on'. At which point he took redundancy and set up with another designer as an independent studio. When he worked in agencies, 'everything single thing I did was print', but now it's all digital, of which he says 'It wasn't a steep learning curve: it was like hitting a wall and getting over it, and it's a wall that keeps building and you keep climbing.' They do not employ people directly, but use 'dedicated freelance suppliers, specialists building digital formats'.

Nonetheless, he is adamant that his education and experience, his 'grounding' is essential.

> Don't rely on the technology, don't rely on the programmes. You need to draw on the craft, because no matter how sophisticated the computers and programmes get, they're not typesetters, you are.

He finds he is constantly drawn back to his foundation course:

> Every day. Every day, it's a treasured time, it's something I keep hold of, it influenced me. So I'm still always drawn back there, whether it is something I learnt, something I experienced, or something that changed me in some way. I'm always going back to that course.

His image of who he is now is a pebble, which he says is 'symbolic of a great many things' and that 'the immeasurable difference between the two objects is very, very relevant to me, personally'. He describes finding it:

> That particular pebble comes from a place that one day, on foundation course, we went out to work in the environment. I saw that [pebble] and to hold it in my hand, it's like the shape of a heart, with the veins going through it, and it just connected with me to think, actually this is what I love now and that directly links me now and on foundation course, through holding that miraculous looking pebble from a beach that people would have walked past thousands and thousands of times, but I saw it and it had to come back with me because it meant something, and it ties me back to that time when I experienced those things.

Figure 30. Mervyn's now image.

He relates the pebble directly to his situation now, and accepting who he is and what he does:

> What is important about the pebble is that [pause] it has now… it's constantly going through a process which has turned it into something where all the hard edges have been knocked off. It's perfect for the place that it is. The environment has taken its toll on it, but it is still what it is. It's rounded, it can take it, it will take those cycles of the tides and it can't affect it, because it's perfect for the job that it's in.

4.9 Narbi

Narbi is a painter and lecturer, winner of the Contemporary British Painting Prize 2017, he featured in Phaidon's Vitamin P3 - New Perspectives in Painting and was a prizewinner in the John Moores Painting Prize 2012. He has exhibited extensively in the UK and overseas. He chose not to be anonymised.

Narbi says 'I was always the kid who was "good at drawing" at school, and in secondary school, drawing almost functioned as a form of currency for me', when he would swap drawings for records and games. From then there 'was never really a question that I would be anything other than an artist, although of course, I didn't really know what that meant'. Reflecting on that he says:

> I guess I imagined some kind of romantic ideal of painting all day in the studio, or outdoors or something. Something quite apart from the realities of piecemeal part-time employments, teaching, writing, writing proposals and applications, interviews, and attendant admin that takes up a major part of an artist's time.

He took A level art with the intention of going on to a degree course, and at the time:

> I didn't know what a Foundation course was, or of the requirement to do one as a necessary prerequisite to get into Uni at that stage. And nor did the Careers Advisor at my 6th Form College, it was my A-Level tutor who told me that Foundation courses were a thing, and that I needed to do one.

He describes the transition onto foundation as ‘It was quite painless, and I enjoyed the rotations of different disciplines, although I was sure from the beginning that I would be specialising in Fine Art’. In particular ‘access to a better library introduced me to contemporary art in no small way’.

The work of one of the artists he discovered, Chuck Close, leads to the image he used for himself at that time.

> I resonated with how his work looked like photorealism but really wasn't about that at all. This conceptual leap really opened a more cerebral engagement with art for me. With that in mind, I think this would be appropriate...

Figure 31. Narbi's foundation image. Chuck Close, Big self portrait, 1967-8.

Narbi says his time in the library helped his understanding of ‘what art was, where it fit temporally, socially, economically etc. How one art historical movement informed another,

how reactionary responses could be positive'. Beyond that 'In a lot of ways, foundation is a blur, it was such an intense time personally, that I barely remember specific events'.

When he started his degree he 'expected to be blown away by the quality of work from my fellow students but that didn't happen'. He enjoyed spending the majority of his time in the studio, and he 'developed a work ethic that has stuck with me'. Asked how his foundation prepared him for his degree he says:

> I wouldn't say my Foundation had had a majority effect on me in a lot of ways, but it did lay the "foundation" (pun intended) for an interrogative approach to positioning my work within a canon.

During his degree his ambition to be an artist 'was probably coloured by media coverage of the YBAs.' [Young British Artists] and as a result 'My perception of what an artist is and does certainly changed. I don't think the aims or ambitions did though. I still want to be an artist'. His degree course gave him little preparation for life beyond university

> "Professional Practice" was simply the name of a module, the contents of which could be summed up in "take pictures of your work", "go to exhibitions", "apply for things". There was virtually no real world preparation for things like being self-employed, negotiating a portfolio career and so on.

When he finished, he says it's 'Now what?', up until graduation there's a path, but then it's 'like you're turned out onto the streets', and left to ask:

> Where is it I want to go? So what does it mean to be an artist? What do I need to be an artist? Oh, right, I need a studio – that hadn't really occurred to me!

To support his practice Narbi has worked in an art materials shop, taught on BA and MA courses and works part-time for a-n [Artists News], which 'covers the bills, and doesn't take up too much time (3 mornings per week), and is useful for keeping abreast of sectoral issues' and also provides him with Public & Products Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance.

Figure 32. Narbi's now image. Studio 2020 (empty). (Price, 2020)

Of his Now image he says:

> I'm not going to engage in pseudo-psychoanalytical self-profiling, but the studio is fundamental, to the practice, which is in turn fundamental to any notions I might have of 'being an artist'.

4.10 Tess

Tess chose not to be anonymised. Following foundation, Tess took a degree in TV and film set design, then went on to work in museums, galleries and TV. She taught on a foundation course, and now describes herself as a ‘physical performer/puppeteer/mask performer and a visual artist/designer/maker, community artist and trainer.’

From an early age, Tess says:

> I loved anything arty, enjoyed drawing, painting and at home I'd endlessly make "things" out of cardboard boxes, scraps of material, etc. Like most children I played with my dolls & teddies, but I would make rich & detailed background narratives for them & characters (maybe this was a sign of my later interest in puppetry?).

Art at secondary school proved to be a disappointment, her teachers were not ‘particularly inspirational’, and like many pupils, ‘We did a lot of still lives & copying pictures from magazines. None of it was very exciting.’ In spite of this, Tess still loved art and ‘knew I wanted to continue studying at A level. I'd seen a series on TV about commercial art so I thought maybe I'd like to do that for a living’.

Tess left school and did A levels in FE, although this meant taking art in a second college. Although the extra travelling ate into her time, she says she ‘had a skilled and lovely teacher

for A level art, she was a fine artist and the syllabus seemed to be purely 2D fine art, so I learnt to draw and paint, and she was interested and interesting'. At the end of her A levels she applied for the foundation course at a large polytechnic, as she could only imagine herself continuing with art 'as that was where my passion was'.

Although Tess found the transition into foundation to be 'reasonably straightforward', nevertheless:

> It was quite a shock/exciting to go from a part time A level course to a full-time [foundation]. It was an immense buzz to be around all the degree students. Also being city centre based meant we had access to lots of resources (libraries, galleries, museum etc), which hadn't been as easily accessible to me before

The course was intensive, and Tess fells that coming from FE it was less of a shock for her than for students coming from sixth forms. In spite of that, she remembers:

> a change in 'identity', suddenly becoming a full-time art student. There was a lot to take in during the first term of the course, the bar was set higher than A level, much more independent study, multiple self-directed projects to juggle and deadlines to meet.

Figure 33. Tess's foundation image.

Tess describes her identity on her foundation as 'Scattered, waiting to explore, to extend, to become clearer, to become structured, to accumulate experience. Hungry for knowledge, growth & direction'. She started the foundation with no specific ambitions, other than 'I knew that I loved "creating", that I had some skill in this area and I wanted to pursue it.' Tess says foundation changed her:

> My thinking became deeper, I applied it more widely (does that make sense?). I was

> hungry for experience, the opportunity to try materials, techniques. I had access to bigger spaces, better resources, more varied input and specialist libraries. I critiqued and was critiqued. I was excited by the experience and future opportunities. ADF was pretty cool, wish I could do it again as a mature student.

On a course trip to London they went on a backstage tour at a theatre:

> I was entranced with the set design department, creating ephemeral environments. I thought I'd like to delve further into these techniques. Whilst on the tour I chatted with two designers working there who told me there was no money in theatre work and I would do better studying set design for film and TV!

Tess discussed this with her tutors and her mother, who happened to have a friend who worked as a set designer for TV, so Tess went to speak with her. She decided to apply for this as a degree, but says:

> In retrospect I think I'd have had a more creative, varied experience studying set design for theatre, but I chose a film and TV set design degree.

She feels her foundation helped her to choose the area of specialism 'by offering me a pretty broad taster across most types of design and fine art' which enabled her to 'narrow down to what I might be interested in and what I definitely didn't want to do'.

When Tess started her degree course her ambitions were 'To learn the skills for being a television set designer, and work in this industry afterwards'. Two of the students expressed a particular interest in designing and making puppets, and Tess says her 'interest in puppets certainly started at this point but wasn't pursued until much later in my career'. The design degree was housed with the drama degree, 'and although I wasn't wanting to be a performer at that point I was certainly intrigued and was very much soaking up the atmosphere around me'. She also became interested in 'the wider application of set design within thematic design in exhibitions and museums, and this is what I wrote my dissertation on'.

They were encouraged to seek placements during the holidays, and Tess had a number with TV companies and with a prop and exhibition design company.

> We had portfolio prep sessions but I don't remember any interview prep. I don't think we had any CV advice either. Unfortunately we had no advice or support on how one works as a freelancer (which invariably we all were as we had short contracts with TV companies), so nothing to prepare us for freelance life/fees/expenses/accounts etc.

She found the most useful thing was talking to people in the industry who were invited in to the degree shows.

Starting work was 'An enormous learning curve, it was pretty much sink or swim!'. Tess faced more difficulties than many in her first job.

> This was back in the early nineties, the construction workshops and design studios had

> "Page 3" and Penthouse pictures and calendars liberally pasted around the walls, it was a very sexist environment and as a young woman entering the television industry I was given a really difficult time. During that first job I hated working in television; I was offered an extension to my contract there but declined.

Her next job was a completely different experience, which restored her desire to work in the industry:

> I went to work on Spitting Image at Central TV, the production designer and artistic director were great mentors and taught me loads. They were union members and gave me a lot of really useful advice about fees, contracts, freelance work and how to manage the financial side of the work. Work wise they had high standards for themselves and expected nothing less of me.

Tess carried on sending her CV to other TV companies, theatres and exhibition designers, and she 'consequently ended working on a number of short-term contracts painting scenery, making props and designing thematic exhibitions', which made her realise she was happiest working in theatre and exhibition design. Eventually she took a PGCE and went into teaching in sixth form and FE colleges.

After several years' full time teaching Tess moved to Australia and began volunteering with companies that worked in the community arts and crafts sectors. After a few months one offered her some work, but she eventually moved back to Britain.

Apart from her teaching, Tess has mainly been freelance, and now works as a sole trader on various projects. She has a community arts and street theatre company, performs with other street theatre and traditional theatre companies, and teaches puppet making and puppeteering skills as a guest lecturer in HE. Tess is also 'training as a Giggle Doctor, working on children's wards in hospitals'.

Figure 34. Tess's now image.

Asked to describe her identity now, Tess says:

> I'm still evolving creatively and continue to draw from the various strands of my previous creative work (making, construction, teaching, performing). I've amassed knowledge & experience in a range of jobs. I've got a lot of "strings to my bow"! I have structure, strength, versatility & flexibility.

Reflecting on any influence her foundation course still has, she says:

> I think it does. On my ADF I experienced working in diverse areas, use of varied techniques and media, juggling multiple projects and deadlines, presentation skills, the need for flexibility, to be imaginative and have an enquiring mind, etc. These are all skills that I continue to utilise in my current working life.

During her PGCE Tess did some teaching on a foundation course, and later taught on two FE based ones. The first one had a small number of students, but had:

> Very dedicated staff and we also pulled on our contacts in the art and design industry to supplement our delivery. Because it was a small student intake we were able to give the students a lot of guidance and support throughout the programme.

The second one was a larger course, with more facilities and more staff.

> we almost always 'team taught' with 2 lecturers on each project. It was interesting working with a bigger team, experiencing new techniques and skills that those staff brought with them.

Tess says that teaching on these courses ‘really pushed me to develop my creative skills further’. She still does some visiting lecturing and runs workshops in FE and HE, but now based on her puppetry. She still keeps sketchbooks, which are:

> definitely informed by my experience on foundation courses as a student and a teacher. I document my process, photos and notes of each stage.

4.11 Summary

Having given these biographic accounts of each participant's narrative, the following two chapters discuss this data, and present the analytic themes and subthemes which emerged across the individual accounts. Chapter 5 looks at their experiences of education and chapter Six at their career experiences.

Chapter 5. The participants' educational journeys

Figure 35. Students on the basic design course, Newcastle University, 1964.

Derek Morris, a student at Newcastle from 1958 to 1963 recalls his experiences:

> My years at Newcastle were the most stimulating and formative years of my life. In retrospect, I did not understand in the beginning what was going on in the Fine Art Dept, being not much more than a schoolboy when I arrived … my experience of the basic course and its rather high-flying intellectual content was a difficult one and made little sense to me at the beginning.
>
> One of the problems was that, particularly with Pasmore, there was little explanation of why we were to do what was asked of us. For example, when asked to buy a roll of lining paper and draw "related shapes" continually until we began to feel they were "working", at the time I could see little point in doing the project. (In: Headley, 2020)

5.1 Introduction

Following the accounts of the participants' stories in the preceding chapter, this chapter and the next one analyse and discuss the issues arising from their narratives; their educational journeys including their art foundation courses and their subsequent career trajectories. This discussion is based on sections of the participants' accounts, this process of selection took place against a background of constant reflexive questioning about my rationale for choosing particular quotations, the inferences I made from these and that I was not misrepresenting the participants or their voices. The participants' paths from school, through art foundation, then on to degree courses and careers can be seen as journeys of self-discovery and identity development, against a backdrop of an increasingly neo-liberal political discourse, with the diagnostic element of foundation often playing a key part in their journeys. Along the way they have dealt with changes, transitions and challenges, and the tensions of staying true to themselves while also navigating ever-shifting contexts and demands. Like a journey, for Aristotle a story has three parts, a beginning, a middle, and an end; the participants' accounts, however, are not all so linear. Some of these stories do reach their anticipated destination, others have more interim positions, some change direction along the way, and one arrives at the expected destination but then sets off again in a different direction. As Mervyn (one of the participants) says, reflecting on the two decades of his career, 'I always come to the conclusion that the person I have become had a journey to undertake first that led him here'. Another participant even chose "Journey" as his pseudonym.

This chapter follows the participants' journeys from their schooling, through their time on their foundation courses, and their experiences on those. These are grouped into a number of themes developed in the data analysis process: the course itself and what it does, how it socialises students into full time art and design, the personal transitions students go through as they adapt and the transformations they make as they develop through the course, how the diagnostic element of the course enables them to 'try on' various provisional selves in the variety of specialist areas, the development of their individual potential identities as artists or designers, and how they consolidate their ambitions, their illusio, in their specialist areas, and how they develop independence as learners and as creatives. The next chapter follows them into their careers. Both these chapters apply Bourdieu's linked concepts of habitus, capital, field and illusio to the participants' stories, and apply these as an explanatory framework to account for their continuous efforts to progress their careers and develop their identities.

As capital, field and illusio combine to bring about a gradual change in habitus, the developmental steps of provisional selves (Ibarra, 1999) afford participants opportunities to try out self-images of their not yet realised professional identities as creative professionals,

allowing them to bridge between their current habitus and their images of who they wish to become. As described previously, illusio is used as the link between the other concepts; importantly illusio is equated to interest rather than illusion and 'The concept is a vital one, which expresses the commitment of 'players' in any field to invest in its stakes, that is to say, its objects of value' (Colley & Guéry, 2015, p.117). One aspect that emerges from the analysis in this chapter and the next in terms of the participants' illusio is how it has led to their commitment to invest themselves in their respective fields, and to pursue what Hogan calls 'consequential goals' (2011, p.126), a term Hogan uses to refer to goals whose achievement is expected to lead to emotional wellbeing and satisfaction, as they work towards achieving their ambitions.

In the course of the research it became clear that the political climate was growing increasingly hostile to art (and arts) education, and increasingly emphasising the neo-liberal discourse of vocational education, where all learning is expected to lead to specific employment related outcomes. (There is an important distinction to be made here between "vocation" as discussed by Barbara (one of the participants) a sense of passion, direction or purpose, and "vocational" in the context of employment ready education policy.) This, in spite of the lip-service paid to careers in ADF information, provides a stark contrast to the ethos and practice of foundation courses, which would appear to leave the foundation course as a surviving (and endangered) example of liberal education within the wider landscape of vocational education, in which the word "education" could easily be replaced by "training".

5.2 The characters (the target group)

The participants work in the creative arts, with one exception who works in healthcare, most of them in their early to mid-forties at the time of their interviews (with one somewhat older), all of whom had positive memories of their experiences of art in their early years and (with one significant exception) went on to have a largely positive experience of art in their secondary schools. Three participants, Barbara, Barry and Egon, went to comprehensive secondary schools and stayed on into their sixth forms, Cath went to a grammar school and its sixth form, a further three, Luke, Mervyn and Tess transferred from comprehensives to FE or sixth form colleges, and Journey returned to learning later after leaving school at 16. Following this they all went on to art foundation courses, some in large HEIs or specialist art colleges, some in smaller FE sector colleges.

5.3 Early life, school and developing habitus

All the participants had an early interest and enjoyment of art activities, which will have had considerable impact on their developing habitus. Barbara, one of the participants, says 'Loved

it, naturally drawn to it … It was the lesson that I always looked forward to'. Many have also had considerable parental and/or school approval. For Barry, even though his secondary art lessons were 'pretty standard - draw this boot, half a cabbage', art 'was always the subject I was most enthusiastic about … crucially it was the one area I garnered praise'. Luke had considerable encouragement at school and at home, 'from being little, everyone told me I was really good'. At school he recalls that 'I was always just encouraged', and at home, from a very young age, everyone told his father 'Oo, your boy's going to art college'. Narbi 'was always the kid who was "good at drawing" … in secondary school drawing almost functioned as a form of currency' when he would make drawings for his peers in exchange for games and records. For both Luke and Narbi this acknowledgement represents a form of capital based on knowledge and skills acquired through practice (Bourdieu, 1986). For Journey, unfortunately, his enthusiasm for art meant his other subjects suffered and by secondary school he was 'labelled as stupid'. This made him rebellious, and he turned away from school, including art and design, and 'consequently didn't develop any further for many years.'

Some were also building significant cultural capital; Tess talks of her mum taking her on theatre and gallery visits and says, 'in retrospect I realise how lucky I was'. Cath's mother was an artist and musician and her grandfather was also an artist, and she grew up 'surrounded by contemporary pieces of ceramic and art' (familiarity with objects such as works of art can be seen as objectified capital (Bourdieu, 1986), which also includes the ability to appreciate and discuss those objects). This cultural capital acquired through her family background and her resulting 'ease' allowed her to persevere in spite of being turned down in Paris and again at her first application to foundation in the UK. This sense of ease is described by Bourdieu as:

> …the privilege of those who, having imperceptibly acquired their culture through a gradual familiarization in the bosom of the family, have academic culture as their native culture and can maintain a familiar rapport with it that implies the unconsciousness of its acquisition. (Bourdieu, 1996b, p.21)

Others had less of these experiences, and so less capital to bring to their foundation courses; Mervyn says he had had 'little exposure to things from the art world', and Egon says, 'I really regret not getting a taste for the plethora of exciting art out there'. Luke talks about being 'geeky' about the limited range of things he liked and says he 'didn't realise how small minded I was until I went to foundation'. Although not sharing Cath's sense of ease, Luke's illusio and a strong vision of himself as a professional cartoonist, 'that laser guided thing', and his commitment to invest himself in his field, gave him the determination to carry on when he wasn't accepted for foundation at first.

> I didn't get in first time round and it really was — I imagine it was like someone really religious finding out that God's not real, someone reading Richard Dawkins and

> questioning their faith. … I was just "Everyone told me I was going to go to art college!".

Rather than give up on his ambitions, Luke's commitment and resilience meant that while he worked in a print studio for a year he managed to get some cartoons printed in student magazines, then he re-applied and was accepted.

Some made very early and very specific decisions and began developing their illusio as a result. Barbara says, 'I announced when I was seven (and my mum still says this) "I'm going to be a graphic designer", and that was it, I never faltered off that course really'. For Mervyn it was 'upon meeting my first proper art teacher at nine years of age, something switched on in me where I knew I was going to be doing this, in some form, for my working life'. Luke says that from being about five or six 'I always assumed I was going to be a cartoonist – which is a weird thing for a kid to think'. Narbi recalled that there was 'never really a question that I would be anything other than an artist, although at the time he says, 'I didn't really know what that meant'. For the majority their interest and drive, their illusio, towards the field of art and design was strong (what Luke describes as a laser guided trajectory) and in some cases, to very specific sub-fields. The exceptions to this are Egon, who wanted to be an engineer, and Journey, who recovered his interest in art later. This early building of illusio, and its concomitant impact on habitus, was maintained to a significant extent throughout their school years by all except Journey.

For some the field of school had been a comfortable experience, described by Barbara as 'that comfort zone, the school environment that I'd been nurtured in', for others, less so. Barry says, 'The atmosphere at my school fostered a kind of humourless competitiveness, and a conservative attitude, which I often didn't fit into'. Journey goes even further, 'I hated senior school and became somewhat rebellious'. Their experiences of art at school bear on the habitus they brought to foundation. Many speak of their enjoyment of art lessons, and of a different relationship with art teachers than with other teachers. Barry 'always enjoyed the dishevelled, democratic atmosphere of the art rooms', and for Barbara, 'It was the lesson that I always looked forward to, I didn't have any fear about it, I was always excited. It was somewhere I knew I could explore, and it was freeform, it wasn't as structured as the other subjects were.' Mervyn 'really, really enjoyed' his art education, partly 'Because there was something different about an art teacher … these people were kind of different from the scientists and the academics, and it was more of a relaxed class to be in'. Although Tess's experience of art in secondary school was uninspiring, her A level classes were far better, and she says she 'could only imagine myself continuing with Art as that was where my passion was'.

Many of the participants, like Barbara, Luke and Mervyn, had strongly developed images of their future professional selves, which enhance and strengthen their illusio. These ambitions for themselves 'get vital parts of their meaning in interplay with the self-concept, which they in turn moderate, as well as from their social and cultural context.' (Erikson, 2007, p.356), allowing their habitus to develop as they begin to see themselves fitting into their particular professional fields. This important envisioning is exemplified by Mervyn when he speaks of visualising:

> … what a wonderful future there could be, the things in my career and what I'm going to gain from it, and I'm going to be the creative director of a wonderful agency and I'm going to get loads of awards.

Furthermore, this ability to envisage their future selves brings motivation and sustains their potential and development, and as Daniels and Brooker (2014) point out, this encourages further success and achievement. Having examined how the participants' familial and school experiences influenced their ambition and desire to pursue art and design, the following sections analyse and discuss their experiences and development on the course.

5.4 The setting, the course and what it does

As mentioned previously, foundation courses are not only sites of learning but also fields in which students and lecturers interact in pursuit of cultural and symbolic power. For the lecturers this includes the kudos, the distinction, of placing students onto courses at prestigious institutions and of having their students achieve high grades. For students this includes the acquisition of knowledge, skills, practice and dispositions which enhance their agency, and which are manifested in their portfolios, the capital used for their degree course applications. The structure and organisation of the course is shown in Table 1 in section 1.5.

The following section develops the key themes arising from the analysis of participants' accounts of their experiences on their foundation courses. It examines how they moved into the culture, practice and field of art and design, and at how the course allowed them to make the transition from school to full-time study, from general student to art student. It goes on to consider the transformations they make in the process of becoming (at least potential) artists or designers, and at how the diagnostic element of the courses allows them to explore the broad field of art and design with its myriad specialist areas. Following that it considers how the course allows them to consolidate and confirm their early ambitions or move on to new areas and begin to establish their identities as artists. Finally, it looks at their developing independence and self-direction.

5.4.1 Acculturation into art and design

Although foundation has been described as 'a cross between an art laboratory and an art and

design assault course' (Leeds College of Art, 2015, p.5), one of the course's gentler, more pastoral roles is the socialisation of its students into full time art and design (Wayte, 1989), then on into specific specialist areas and then as aspiring professionals (Adams & Kowalski, 1980). Students enter foundation with a habitus acquired from their home background and from their schooling, and the course gives students space to explore and build illusio and awareness of field, and to build capital (primarily in the form of the portfolio rather than the qualification). It provides a form of structured freedom (this is commented on by a number of the participants) through the use of themed but open-ended projects in the early part of the course, providing students with a springboard to initiate their own responses, with licence to explore, and for students to find themselves and their identities as creatives in a time limited community of practice. The intensity of this time limit is mentioned by several participants, including Barry, who says 'that year sped past and half way through you were planning where to go next'.

This socialisation into art and design means that foundation can be seen as a process of cultural acquisition (including an element of directed change through the structure and pedagogy of the course), and this process of acculturation is dependent on the students 'trying on the identity of artist or designer' (Budge, 2016, p.244), their provisional selves (Ibarra, 1999; Roberts, 2005), in which 'designers-to-be … are encultured into design while studying' (Strickfaden & Heylighen, 2010, p.121), and by the open nature of the studio environment, which is commented on by Egon:

> It was also good to be with a small cohort of other students, many of which were recognisably talented in different areas of the foundation course - it built up an atmosphere of friendly collaboration and a certain level of competition.

This 'certain level of competitiveness', occasioned largely by the studio setting in which students are aware of each other's work, is also mentioned by Barry:

> I had so much admiration for my friends' work, that I tried to push myself as much as possible. This was a much more conducive, productive form of competitiveness, as we were all working in our own ways, no-one's work alike at all.

This 'productive' competitiveness is far removed from rivalry or antagonism, but is based on collaboration and the admiration of colleagues' work, what Cath describes as the importance of 'seeing what other students are doing on the course – that was terribly important, feeding off each other'. The communality of open studios, where students can see each other's work, and where conversations between students and with teaching staff are a feature of that setting, is seen as one of the strengths of art education (Shreeve & Batchelor, 2012; Shreeve, Sims & Trowler, 2010; Wilkinson, 2020). This is akin to Freire's process of collective discovery (Freire, 2000) in which 'teacher and students are together immersed, as companions and

fellow travellers' (Ingold, 2017, p.72). In contrast to the neo-liberal discourse of individuality, this mutuality (Nixon, 2011, p.22) of learning in a social environment is seen by Nixon as an essential part of the connection between 'education and becoming – human flourishing' (2011, p.25) in which knowing, being and becoming are inextricably linked. Although the course's emphasis and focus are on the individual's development as an artist or designer, this development takes place within social and collaborative pedagogies which are radically different from the competitive self-centred concept of individualism in neoliberal discourse. This distinctive social, co-operative ethos of the various courses in the participants' accounts appears to have exerted some influence on their development. Barry was impressed, not only by the ethos of his course, but particularly by there being 'Interest in your ideas more than your skills', and for Journey it was the feeling that 'it gave me permission to call myself an artist'.

> I had definitely taken on board the notion of trying to develop "my style" of work. As an artist, what was I trying to say? Who did I want to be? When I produced my work how would it distinguish me from other artists?

Mervyn found himself drawn into an area of design that was to remain almost an obsession throughout his career:

> We were learning about how to hand render typography on the foundation course, and my tutor pointing me in the direction of a copy of McLean's typography book, and it's about, you know, the worship of the typographic form and the understanding of it.

This sense of discovery, expressed clearly by Journey and Mervyn, and the productive competitiveness mentioned by Barry and Egon, serve to enhance their illusio, their drive to develop as creative individuals.

5.4.2 Personal transitions

As they become increasingly socialised as art students, they begin to internalise their developing identities and adapt to new ways of learning; these transitions are the focus of this section. The main validating body for art foundation courses, the University of the Arts London (UAL) describes the course as 'a pivotal qualification which supports students in the transition from general education to specialist art and design education' (UAL, n.d., p.3). It provides a bridge, a transition into full-time higher education, which, although it has regular formative assessment through crits (open discussions of students' work involving staff and fellow students) and tutorials, it does not have the pressure of graded assessments. Mervyn acknowledges this gentler transition when he says:

> The stabilisers were on the bike at that point, and dad's hand let go of the seat, but I could go forward, wobbly, and carry on. If I would not have had the stabilisers on the bike at that point, I think I would have fell flat on my face when I went to university, personally.

Similarly, for Egon foundation was ‘a more gentle transition than simply completing A levels and then heading off to university, and one that proved to be beneficial when I finally moved away and attended university’. A number of participants spoke of the step change between A level and foundation. Barry recalls the transition from a range of A levels to:

> All creative subjects, all day. Teachers called by their first names. No more still-life studies. Computers for creative purposes. No uniform. Art and design magazines. Interest in your ideas more than your skills. And maybe much more like the real world (all social classes and skills and interests).

Journey, who did A level art alongside his foundation sees the difference very clearly, he also hints at the ‘cleansing’ element (Williams, 1998) referred to in chapter one (1.2).

> I felt 'A' Level work was really a step up from GCSE, whereas foundation was a step up from 'A' Level. … I think the transition from 'A' Level to foundation is really about becoming less rigid in your working style and learning to be freer and more experimental.

In spite of his rebelliousness at school and his desire to be ‘rebellious and shock and question the system’, Journey was more comfortable with the constraints of his traditional A level course than with the freer, experimental nature of his foundation, potentially because he had not had the normal two years of an A level course to acquire the specific capital to cope with the transition. As Yang points out:

> the inclination to invest in a particular field, taking educational field as an example, depends not only on the amount of cultural capital alone, but also on the weight of cultural capital in the total volume of an individual’s capital (Yang, 2014, p.1528)

For students coming straight from school, described by Barbara as the ‘environment of a protective school, with your friends and everything’, and particularly from more traditionally disciplined schools such as the one described by Barry, this new regime can represent a challenge. Barry describes it as ‘a huge step up from my A Level Art experience … the transition was a huge shift, entirely different in so many ways’. For those coming from FE (including sixth form colleges), who have already made a transition at the end of key stage 4, it can pose less of a challenge. Tess did her foundation in a large polytechnic art school and says, ‘Because I'd come from an FE college environment it wasn't too big a shock for me, I think the experience would have been different for someone coming from a school sixth form.’ Even so, she does go on to comment that it was still ‘quite a shock/exciting to go from a part-time A level course to a full-time art foundation.’ Along with many of the others, Tess speaks of the adjustment to independent working and meeting deadlines:

> There was a lot to take in during the first term of the course, the bar was set higher than A level, much more independent study, multiple self-directed projects to juggle and deadlines to meet.

In spite of his focus on becoming a cartoonist and the confidence he had acquired from the praise he had garnered at school and at home, Luke had a shock and something of a wakeup call when he started foundation:

> So I was always just encouraged; it was always showing off as well, it was always being presented in front of the school. So no, it was brilliant, it wasn't until I went into proper art education that I got, you know, a slap across the face, and realised I wasn't as good as I thought!

Although Luke expresses the shock of transition from school art lessons to foundation more forcefully than some participants, the same response is evident in many of the other accounts. In addition to the shock, Luke's somewhat romantic image of art college led to a degree of disappointment:

> I was really disappointed when I got there that everyone was a bit straight […] So I remember it not being as arty, the people not being as arty as I thought.

But he recognises that, in retrospect, exposure both to the climate of the course and the talents, abilities and interests of his fellow students was probably a good thing:

> … because there were lots of different – there were people posher than I'd ever met before. Yes, so I just think that hot-house environment, there were people who'd been really good at school who weren't that impressed if you could draw Batman.

Foundation begins to trigger a change in habitus, in part through discovering new ideas and new interests, and also through expanding cultural capital, not only in art and design but in tastes and culture more generally. In Mervyn's case:

> I met some people who changed my taste in music, some people who started to change my taste in films and things like that, and I felt I was becoming kind of more of a rounded person on that course …

Change is also created through interaction with staff on the course, what Bourdieu and Passeron describe as:

> Pedagogic Action, (PA) entails pedagogic work (PW), a process of inculcation which must last long enough to produce a durable training, i.e. a habitus, the product of the internalization of the principles of a cultural arbitrary capable of perpetuating itself after the PA has ceased. (1977, p.31)

For Bourdieu and Passeron this PA is seen as a form of symbolic violence involving the imposition of the dominant culture from a position of power, and indeed, the early phase of the foundation course with the staff in positions of power, and setting projects for the students, can be seen as imposing the culture of the art school on the students. In the later stages, as students begin to take more control, become more self-directed, and as the group becomes a collaborative community, this is considerably, if not totally, reduced. However, for this pedagogic action to take place, the learner has to recognise and accept the authority of

the person delivering the information or instruction. Bourdieu and Passeron call this Pedagogic Authority (PAu):

> In real learning situations... recognition of the legitimacy of the act of transmission, i.e. of the PAu of the transmitter, conditions the reception of the information and, even more, the accomplishment of the transformative action capable of transforming that information into a mental formation (training). (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p.19)

It has been suggested that part of the process of becoming an artist or designer is through association with teaching staff who are themselves practitioners (Budge, 2016; Danvers, 2003; Dineen & Collins, 2005; Orr, Yorke & Blair, 2014; Shreeve, Wareing & Drew, 2008), whose expertise and experience gives them this pedagogic authority. This is a reflection of the Coldstream Committee's original intentions that their Dip A.D. programmes should be staffed with artist-teachers. This acceptance of PAu can be seen in Luke's description of one of his foundation tutors, who had 'worked on Blade Runner, which I was mega impressed with' and his advertising lecturer who he still quotes today, and also in Mervyn's description of his young tutors who 'had such profound effects on what you think is possible from yourself'.

This internalisation develops through the stages of the course, from the diagnostic period to the specialist phase, at which point the students are beginning to identify themselves as (at least potential) artists and designers, and to strengthen their illusio. Barbara says the course 'certainly made me assess who I was' because 'it felt like a reality, that there was a career becoming available, and here's your chance to focus on it'. Similarly, Mervyn sees foundation as enabling him to 'have a soft re-boot on myself as I went forward' and that as a result he 'had become something that I needed to become to get out there in the commercial world'.

5.4.3 Transformations / becomings

Some of the participants had had little opportunity to build cultural capital before starting their foundation courses, and even for those that had, foundation opened new opportunities to develop this capital. Mervyn and Narbi both speak of discovering other forms of culture on their foundation courses. Narbi speaks of making 'many pivotal and character defining discoveries in terms of art, music, literature and so on', while Mervyn says:

> my relationship, not only with my profession, but with the things that I love in life, a lot of it actually changed on that foundation course…

Mervyn indicates not only the acquisition of cultural capital, but also a modification of his habitus as well as his understanding of the field. When he started his course, Luke knew a lot about a limited number of artists that appealed to him, including Salvador Dali, Egon Schiele and M.C. Escher, and he says:

> I was geeky about the stuff I liked, and that was cartoonists, newspaper cartoonists and comics artists, and animation and graffiti, and I was pretty nerdy and pretty

> expert-y about a lot of those things.

He admits he had not really looked beyond those, and as a result had a narrow, limited cultural capital to draw on until he discovered other artists in the college library, at least one of whom has had a lasting influence on his practice:

> … that's when I found Basquiat, and Basquiat is still my favourite painter, and that DNA's still in my work, it's about trying to make marks that are expressive. It doesn't look like Basquiat, but it's the idea that energy is more important than an accurate drawing, a drawing with a bit of life. So without those types of influences I would be a different type of creative, that's the thing that's really stuck with me.

The process of becoming, of learning to be a designer or artist, is assisted by both the skills and the experiences encountered during their programmes.

> Identity formation is an ongoing process … the knowledge and skills that art and design university students develop are a critical part of their experience as emerging artists and designers, so too is the process of identifying as an 'artist' or 'designer'. This 'learning to be' process is a complex, many-layered, multi-influenced experience. (Budge, 2016, p.243)

Journey echoes this very positively, remarking on both the developing skills as his range begins to expand, but also the development of his identity as an artist, his 'learning to be':

> More than anything, it made me realise that art could be taken seriously, and it came in many forms. It was no longer just about still life and painting on paper in acrylic paints (even though some of my work still did not drift too far from this). I had seen what could be done. It shaped me and what I wanted to become. Although I was still slightly naive in my style, it gave me greater vision and said it was alright to use it.

For Barbara the freedom of the interim year between A level and degree 'was actually a really great transition point, because of … having to manage your own time, choose how you apply that time, the freedom that comes with it'. Furthermore, 'what was happening at that point, was that there was experience seeping in and there was a process going in which I wasn't consciously aware of at the time, but that I was being challenged on during that foundation'. Egon's foundation course gave him the 'first taste of design by the 'investigation - interpretation - response' process that I continue to this day'. The transitions and transformations experienced on the course are not necessarily only to do with identity as an artist or designer but can also be about personal identity. Having described himself as an introvert and how he used to use his Walkman headphones to isolate himself, Mervyn says:

> I started to change at that point, because it allowed me to come out of my shell a little bit. A shell that I'd been in pretty much all of my life, because of the kind of person that I used to be. It kind of put me in at the deep end with getting on with other people, some of whom were a lot like me, others were very different to me.

Journey also experienced change as a result of his course and says he would 'go as far as to say

it changed me, not necessarily whilst doing the course but certainly afterwards'. For Mervyn and Journey the course has clearly provided 'opportunities for renegotiating both private and public views of the self' (Ibarra, 1999, p.766).

These more personal developments may be a normal part of maturing during the year of the course, and are probably common to most young people going through similar changes in circumstances, although becoming an artist, like becoming an architect requires, as Stevens notes, 'not only knowing something but being something' (1995, p.112). Hollands notes that the progression 'from school art to art on a foundation course has traditionally been based on an ethos of liberation' (2001, p.54). This is evident from the difference between the more formal classroom based education and the open nature of the studio environment, where teaching and learning is 'a lot more around the individual rather than a laid out "text book" of subjects that one must get under one's belt' (Fortnum and Houghton, 2009, p.10), and where interaction with other students is at least as important as tutorials by staff, what Danvers calls 'the collective enterprise of learning' (2003, p.51). The organisational habitus (Payne, 2015) of the open studio environment where everyone can see everyone else's work, the formal and informal conversations between students and between students and staff and 'the reliance on public presentations for student evaluations' (Payne, 2015, p.11), or "crits" as they are usually called, mean that students constantly have their habitus and their capital on display, and can track the development of these through reviewing the work in their portfolios.

5.4.4 Exploring fields of art, the diagnostic element

Foundation is not only an introduction to full time study in art and design, but it is also an introduction to the field of art and design and to its various specialist sub-fields. One of the primary purposes of the course is diagnostic, so that students experience working within a range of art and design disciplines to enable them to make an informed choice of specialist sequel degree courses. This diagnostic element of the course aims to find out not only whether they have the ability to continue into specialist study, but also 'what they have the aptitude and inclination to study further' (Robins, 2003, p.41). As the UAL programme specification expresses it:

> It is anticipated that centres will resource learning within the areas of art, graphic design, 3D design, fashion and textiles and media. This list is not meant to be exhaustive but a guide to the general areas of activity which will meet the aims of the qualifications and ensure a genuine diagnostic experience. (UAL, n.d., p.5)

This opportunity to sample and explore various specialist areas leads to students building awareness of their potential professional fields. As Luke puts it, 'isn't that the point of foundation that you find out, that you try it all on, and you find out which bits … you'll take into your practice'. Cath did her foundation course while colleges were validating their own

programmes, so whilst her course did not follow specifications such as UAL's, nevertheless she says:

> All the different disciplines that you learnt on foundation were fascinating. Vacuum forming had just come in ... Silversmithing, we did some iron, metal work, fine art, we did figure drawing – oh well, you name it. We did ceramics obviously, glass, it was just fantastic. And it was like over three week tasters, and then at the end, if there was any time left, which I think there must have been, you could actually choose.'

When it came to making a choice, she says,

> I don't know, ceramics – I just fell in love with it. I think silversmithing was probably my second choice, although I did like welding. But no, it was definitely going to be ceramics.

Both Tess and Luke comment specifically about the diagnostic element of the course. Tess says 'I got to explore a fair bit on foundation. I learnt the areas I was less keen on/able for and moved towards the projects and techniques that excited me.' Luke is more forthright, 'the other things were finding out what you're crap at, 'cos a lot of modules I was just awful at'. Even for students who had already decided on their future specialisms, the broad sampling experiences were useful. In Narbi's case, 'I enjoyed the rotations of different disciplines, although I was sure from the beginning that I would be specialising in Fine Art'. Similarly, Barbara, who aimed to be a graphic designer from seven years old, says:

> The foundation gave you the opportunity to really explore the other aspects, the other areas that you might move into, so pottery, and silk screen printing, and furniture design, product design; there was a whole range of things that you could test out, explore, apply yourself to, and just see what really sparked your interest and fired your imagination. And again, it just cemented the fact that I knew that the design world was my calling, it reinforced that. But it was great having to do all the other stuff as well.

This reinforcement of her identity as a designer added to her illusio, her drive to succeed. In spite of her long-term interest in graphics, Barbara says these experiences led her to consider a change of direction:

> I'd designed some cutlery in art foundation, and really enjoyed that process – and it's not a million miles away from the process that you go through in graphic design of answering the problem and coming up with designs. And I did dabble with the idea of finding myself more drawn towards product design, but … when it came down to it, I was still more drawn to the graphics side.

Similarly Mervyn, who had also decided on graphic design at an early age, and when he started the course aimed 'to be the best and to get this under my belt and solidify what I needed to be this graphic designer that was going to go on to the wonderful things he had planned inside his head', recalls that 'I did have a wobble in the middle of doing that course' because exploring some of the other areas made him wonder if he might change and study something else. Nonetheless, like Barbara, his original ambition was 'galvanised' by his experiences on the

course.

> But then again, that's a wonderful thing, to have your resolution challenged; something that I'd had for seven years, fixed inside my head, and actually, look what could be getting done here, and I'm glad it actually galvanised things inside me. … And the good thing about the foundation course was experiencing other specialisms that challenged me, but also in the end ultimately galvanised that I knew what I was, and I knew what I wanted. Yeah, it was perfect for that.

Egon, who was not sure of his route, describes not only experiencing different areas but also different ways of thinking:

> The course provoked responses through a wide and varied set of art and design tasks, we were encouraged to pursue a variety of methods of potential creative responses […] the variety of methods of investigation we were encouraged to pursue - whether through two-dimensional representation in a variety of media, or through form generation in three dimensions, the approach was to explore a wide range of investigative styles through a wide range of design topics.

He says he was 'searching for some direction in my foundation course' and that during the course 'I found the right path in the road in the direction of architecture'.

Luke's earlier comment about the impact access to an extensive, specialist library made to his thinking is echoed by Narbi.

> Access to a better library introduced me to contemporary art in no small way. […] Spending extended time in the library helped my conception of what art was, where it fit temporally, socially, economically etc. How one art historical movement informed another, how reactionary responses could be positive.

Luke is quite candid about his experiences on foundation:

> a lot of modules I was just awful at. I remember the sculpture one, and it was chicken wire and plaster … and I remember feeling just really out of my depth. … So I remember there were a lot of modules like that, which in a good way – isn't that the point of foundation that you find out, that you try it all on.

Luke's summary points out the purpose of the diagnostic phase, that students try out all the various specialist areas in order to make informed decisions about their progression. Some of these decisions follow students' initial intentions; others follow discoveries made on the course, specialist areas which they would have been unlikely to have experienced at school. Luke also hints at the lasting effects of the course when he talks about elements which he carried on into his subsequent professional practice.

5.4.5 Exploring and discovering identity as artists

This section examines the participants' experiences of exploring and developing their identities as individuals and as potential artists and designers. As well as introducing them to full-time study in art and design, and to the various specialist disciplines within that, foundation courses

also allow students to "try on" their provisional selves (Ibarra, 1999), their identities as artists, designers or craftspeople. These are provisional, as whilst the course provides:

> opportunities for the student to determine their own authentic creative identity through the act of making and reflecting on their work. […] It is important to note that this is a process—which, by its very nature, is not finalised. Creative authenticity is not about creating a fixed, unchanging identity, but continually adding layers of understanding to one's sense of self. (Vernon & Paz, 2022, p.3)

These steps towards their provisional selves are indicative of how art students are free to follow their habitus and their illusio, their interest, into whichever specific areas of art and design which attract them as their practice, rather than being constrained to follow the discrete, prescribed (and circumscribed) performative components (Drummond, 2003) of neo-liberal vocationalist education.

What these participants describe taking place on their courses reflects Wenger's view of what education should be about:

> Education, in its deepest sense and at whatever age it takes place, concerns the opening of identities - exploring new ways of being that lie beyond our current state. […] It places students on an outbound trajectory toward a broad field of possible identities. Education is not merely formative — it is transformative. (Wenger, 1998, p.263)

Education would then be 'more like an itinerary of transformative experiences of participation than a list of subject matter' (Wenger, 1998, p.272). Moreover, Wenger's conception of communities of practice clearly accords with the experience of many of the participants. A number of them comment on a sense of community on their courses, of learning from other students (Egon's 'friendly collaboration', Mervyn's people who changed his tastes, Cath's 'feeding off each other'), making the course effectively a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger 1998).

In communities of practice, 'the process of identity formation in practice takes place on two levels' (Farnsworth, Kleanthous & Wenger-Trayner, 2016, p.146). The first being how you locate yourself as a participant, both how you express your competence and how others accept you as a member, and secondly how your participation influences your identity both as a member of the practice and as an individual. They go on to identify three forms of developing one's identity within a practice. Firstly imagination, imagining oneself as a member, which we see in Barbara's early choice of graphic design, then alignment, the processes that lead to the development of that identity, in this case the course and subsequent study, and lastly engagement, the process of becoming a full participant in the specific practice. These processes of 'experimenting and exploring possibilities, reinventing the self' (Wenger, 1998, p.293) begin in the safe space of the foundation course. This safe space is commented on by

Chittenden:

> While a large part of any art course is about the teaching of technical skills, and learning from tutorial and peer group crits, a larger part is about the facilitation of a 'safe' and structured space in which students gain the confidence to experiment with personal ideas, to hone a self-critical reflection and understand who they are as individuals, before being cast out into the world as 'artist'. (2013, p.55)

Part of this growing confidence comes from contact with staff who are also experienced professionals in their respective fields who hold pedagogic authority and are 'living examples of embodied cultural capital' (Stevens, 1995, p.117), described by Mervyn as 'tutors who were not actually that much older than us, but had such profound effects on what you think is possible from yourself and what is possible out there for you to do', which echoes elements of the earlier discussion of Pedagogic Authority. This interaction is what Gopaul refers to as one of the principal requirements for students to acquire field specific capital:

> students need to develop the capacity to engage in fruitful relationships and demonstrations of competence with actors who possess, and therefore moderate, particular forms of capital. (Gopaul, 2011, p.16)

Furthermore, as Mervyn also points out, this takes place within a safety net when 'the stabilisers were on the bike at that point'. This concept of a safe space is echoed by ElDahab who describes the art studio as 'a space where the freedom to experiment, to negotiate ideological positions and to fail are not only accepted, but defining' (2007, p.21).

Egon talks about a process of maturation, which is common to anyone going away for tertiary education:

> As far as identity goes, this relates directly to my personal emotional development and my first moves away from home. I took my first steps beyond the school I had attended and the immediate local area I had lived in for the majority of my life.

Barbara also refers to maturation and being with a new group of people.

> It certainly made me assess who I was because I was out of that comfort zone, the school environment that I'd been nurtured in … and thrust me out into a new group of people, where you're more consciously aware of who you are as a person, so I grew up a little bit during that phase. There was also more responsibility to take ownership of what you were doing.

Tess and Barry describe their identities changing as a result of the changing demands of the work and the change in the learning environment of the course. In Tess's case she recalls 'a change in "identity", suddenly becoming a full-time art student.' Barry mentions the shift in how art was taught, and that:

> I think that then shifted my sense of myself proportionately, as the thing I cared so much about was changing in front of me. It was broader, more interesting, surprising, but also more demanding. The work asking more of you. … It was also the first time I

> hadn't worn uniform, so a general sense of exploring my identity as an adult began.

These shifts in identity, these steps through provisional selves towards realising their creative identities, are related to an interweaving of the pedagogy of the course with its collaborative learning environment, its exploratory and participative ethos, its encouragement of self-critical reflection, and through contact with staff as role models.

Barry's comment that not wearing a uniform contributed towards developing his identity links to a remark by Vladimir, one of the foundation course tutors interviewed, who pointed out that ironically there was still a uniform for his foundation students, but consisting of jeans and t-shirts. Similarly Luke talks about it being 'weird how the girls that I teach look like the girls I was at college with. They're wearing Pixies T-shirts and Doc Martins and it's sort of, it's a loop of the same thing'.

Luke, who describes himself as having been 'geeky about the stuff I liked', says he didn't realise 'how small minded' he was until he went to foundation, which was:

> … like splitting someone's head open and watching things go off in different directions, and I still think that's probably the great thing about an art college environment, you get those kind of moments. That's the bit that sticks with me.

Having left school with limited qualifications and no ambition, and after several years working in basic jobs, Journey went to a college to take A level art. Although this was because 'half of me thought this would be an easy way of obtaining a qualification, a laugh', he says 'It was at this point that I rediscovered my passion and ability'. This enabled him to move away from the negative image of himself as, in his words, stupid and rebellious and to rebuild his illusio, his ambition, which he describes as:

> I dreamed of being able to say that I was at university studying art. I would often think what it would be like in the future to say I have a degree in Art and Design, what credit this would give me!

This more positive vision of himself aligns precisely with the view of Cantor et al., (1986, pp 99-100) that 'An individual does not just have an abstract goal of "getting a BA." What this means cognitively for the individual is that she has a distinct representation of herself getting a BA or having a BA.' The college allowed Journey to take his foundation course alongside his A level art to assist him in fulfilling his desire to do a degree in art and design, although he says 'It was certainly not about a career pathway at this stage, I had found a passion and I was young so who cares'. He describes himself on foundation as feeling like 'a blank palette of different tins of paint that needed to burst out; be thrown around to see where they landed and what this created.' In spite of the difficulties of combining the two modes of study, he says that his course helped him 'to see how I needed to open up with my work and probably within myself'.

> The course still had an impact on where I was going and reinforced what I wanted to do. Whilst I wish I had embraced it better at the time, it still influenced me and assisted me in deciding where I needed to be.

Many of the participants speak of making lasting friendships on the course, and the changes made both by these relationships and by the general atmosphere of the learning environment. Mervyn says these friendships made him become 'more of a rounded person on that course'. He goes on to say that there are 'people on that course that I'm still in contact with after all these years. One was a fellow student, one of them was a tutor, and I've actually professionally worked with one of my other tutors on a project'.

5.4.6 Consolidating ambitions and discovering new possibilities

The exploratory and diagnostic function of the course allows students to either confirm and consolidate existing ambitions, or to discover areas they had not encountered or considered previously. As Barry points out, it also allows students to test themselves and their abilities, 'Applying to a foundation course was probably partly ambition too, to see if I was good enough, like taking your next grade in music'. He goes on to describe how his foundation helped him decide on fine art as his specialist area.

> I was still hedging my bets as I could have gone into graphic design, architecture, or even fashion. But although the other subjects were fascinating nothing still engaged me like the art course, and foundation art teaching was also now a huge step up from my A Level Art experience - going to galleries; thinking about contemporary art and artists; crits; art magazines; and utilising new methods beyond simply drawing, painting, and modelling with lumps of clay that I was used to.

This initial uncertainty is echoed by Egon, who 'felt that I was always searching for some direction in my foundation course'. Having previously applied to and been turned down by the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris for a fine art course, Cath discovered ceramics on her foundation, 'Out of everything I tried, I think ceramics was number one, I enjoyed making three dimensional pieces and I enjoyed throwing on the wheel, although we didn't have enough time to learn how to throw properly'.

Students do learn and acquire skills on the course, such as Cath's throwing on a potter's wheel and Mervyn's typography, but this is very far removed from the model of competence based education and training (CBET) which is concerned only with practical performance, the 'assessment of observable behaviour rather than with the knowledge, understanding, values and attitudes required to generate that behaviour' (Hyland, 1993, p.92). The development of knowledge and understanding missing in CBET can be seen not only in Mervyn's practice but also in his foundation personal study essay, which looked at how typography can assist or hinder the readability of texts.

Tess says her foundation helped her choose her specialist area by offering her a broad taster

across most types of design and fine art, and ‘Through this range of projects and techniques and experiences I was able to narrow down to what I might be interested in and what I definitely didn't want to do’. A college trip to the National Theatre ‘was invaluable as I learnt a little about the world of set design and was very much drawn to that’ and she went on to study set design for film and television.

At an extremely deterministic interpretation, Bourdieu’s game analogy (1977, 1984, 1990a) can see individuals rather like chess pieces, only able to travel within the rules of the game (doxa), and only able to move in their predetermined pathways (habitus). However, when players believe themselves to have sufficient capital and a strong feel for the game, through reflexive thinking they can make what appear to be risky or unexpected moves, and acquire a secondary habitus', further elements of the habitus which become ‘grafted subsequently’ (Wacquant, 2014, p.7) onto the primary habitus through education or experience:

> through intentional and strategic learning combined with practical familiarization, as a result of reflexive thinking, a secondary habitus, which is significantly distinctive from the primary habitus […] can be acquired. (Yang, 2014, p.1532)

This enabled Luke to make a somewhat surprising decision about his degree course:

> I did graphic design and advertising for my BA. So weirdly, I’d decided by that point I had no intention of doing an illustration degree. There was a cockiness that thought I’d learnt enough on my own, and I couldn’t see what they were going to teach me for three years, because I could figure draw, and I’d taught myself the language of comics and the layout of the old school, done a little bit of animation. I remember thinking I should do graphic design because there was a big gap in my knowledge.

This decision, allowing him to develop a secondary habitus, accords with Wacquant’s view that ‘By deliberately acquiring specialized dispositions they did not have, dispositions that are constitutive of a bodily trade and philosophy, they spotlight the malleability of habitus’ (2014, p.7). In spite of Luke’s ‘laser guided’ determination to be a cartoonist, when it came to applying for a degree course he was sufficiently self-aware and reflective to decide to study an area where he felt lacking.

5.4.7 Developing independence

The often self-directed aspects of the course allowed many participants to develop greater independence. As Orr, Yorke and Blair point out, briefs and assignments offer students ‘a means to conduct their own learning and development’ (2014, p.35). Many participants commented on the way in which the individualised learning style of foundation, the structured freedom referred to earlier, began to build their own independence. Tess recalls ‘much more independent study, multiple self-directed projects to juggle’. Barbara says that ‘the one thing that caused me to grow up suddenly on the art foundation course was that it wasn’t structured. We were trusted as adults to utilise the time and apply ourselves in ways which we

chose', in contrast to schools' closer monitoring and more prescriptive curriculum, with its lack of scope for choice and for exercising independent judgement.

Egon feels that 'The exploratory ethos of the foundation course and the general permissiveness in terms of disciplines and types of approach that were promoted' prepared him well for an architecture degree because he had 'the ammunition to approach the architecture course design briefs with an open mind and a variety of forms of expression that proved beneficial to investigating potential architectural approaches and solutions':

> The brief based approach to the tasks set on the foundation course were more in depth than those I experienced in school, they were very similar to the briefs issued on the architecture course. This foundation cast during the foundation course could easily and very straight forwardly be built upon within the degree course, giving me an immediate understanding of how to approach design problems when carrying out my academic studies, and a head start on the course.

Luke thinks his foundation course was 'the proper, what would you call it - it was the launch pad'. As well as developing the confidence to challenge staff to let him critique their work ('Can you bring your stuff in, so we can criticise yours, that's only fair.'), Luke also says of his own work:

> You were more interested in if your peers rated it than the staff, and that's the beginning of independence, isn't it, rather than "Teacher, what do I do?". So I guess that's a big shift in thinking, isn't it, as a practitioner, so that would have come from foundation.

Journey's earlier reflection on how the course changed him by helping him to 'open up with my work and within myself' is emphasised when he says:

> I knew I was a gay man and had known for many years and whilst I still was not ready to come out, the freedom and acceptance first considered and born on the foundation gave me the confidence to produce work that freely and overtly questioned gender, self-identity, image and sexuality.

Luke's sense of self direction from his early years, his illusio, became more focused by the end of his course, 'I wanted to draw comics, I was really adamant that I wanted to draw comics, and I wanted to design record sleeves, and around that time I wanted to work for the NME.' [New Musical Express]. Eventually he achieved all these ambitions.

The illusio and the independence developed in this initial year of art education is manifest in the careers of the participants as they develop their professional practices in their specialist areas, and also in the ability to transfer their accumulated knowledge and skills when Mervyn and Journey change careers.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has followed the participants' accounts of their journeys from school into their art

foundation courses, the key themes arising from the participants' accounts of their experiences on their foundation courses, and explored how they moved into the culture, practice and field of art and design. It has examined how the course contributes to the transformations they make in the process of becoming, of learning to be (at least potential) artists or designers and to the resultant modification of their habitus. It has identified how the diagnostic element of the courses allowed them to explore the broad field of art and design, trying on a variety of provisional selves, and how, in contrast to an individualistic, performative neo-liberal education, its collaborative, social ethos and 'productive competitiveness' assists them as they begin to explore and develop their illusio and their identities as individuals and as potential artists and designers.

To develop the theme about laying the foundations for creative careers, the course can be seen to have carried out the groundwork, clearing away the constraints of a prescriptive school examination syllabus, and then gone on to prepare the foundations on which the participants can build their careers through modifying their habitus and developing their identities and allowing them to invest their illusio into their chosen specific field. The following chapter examines their development as professionals, the development of their careers in a neo-liberal economic climate, and the continuing contribution of the course.

Chapter 6. The participants' career journeys

Figure 36. Tom Hudson teaching at Lowestoft School of Art.

Hudson was painting master at Lowestoft from 1951 to 1957.

6.1 Introduction

Having discussed the participants' educational journeys in the previous chapter, this chapter is concerned with analysis and understanding of the participants' professional career journeys. Again, this analysis required constant reflexivity on my part, as described in the previous chapter. Concepts from Bourdieu are applied to illuminate their experiences and how their habitus and illusio enabled them to continue in their commitment to take their places and succeed in their various fields. It begins by exploring the challenges they faced as they begin their careers, and the precarity experienced by those with freelance or fine art practices. It goes on to consider the resilience they require to establish themselves and begin to find some degree of success against the backdrop of an increasingly neoliberalised political economy. Next it examines how they develop and adapt to their roles in their professional practices. It continues by investigating their developing identities as they take up their positions within their particular fields, and cope with any conflicts these positions may throw up. The chapter ends with the participants' reflections on their foundation courses and the enduring influence these have had.

Bourdieu's concept of illusio denotes the willingness of individuals to engage in, to invest themselves in the particular set of practices within a given field, a commitment which is strongest when an individual's habitus, their dispositions, align closely with the field. Inevitably this can lead to tensions; although Mervyn's habitus and his field of graphic design had been closely aligned from his youth, the tension between his practice as a designer and the demands of clients for more basic work combined with the problems of running his own business reduced his illusio to the point of changing careers. Barry's habitus as an experimental artist has created tension with his need to produce enough commercial work to make a living, a tension which he has come to terms with. Even for Barbara, who has settled comfortably into her managerial role, she still feels a need to do some design work and 'sometimes lock myself away when I know I have to just exercise some of that'.

While many of the participants, like Luke, refer to their creative work as their practice, for Bourdieu (1977, p.82) practice is the relationship between the structure of the field and the structure of an individual's habitus, a relationship "between the objective structures and the cognitive and motivating structures which they produce and which tend to reproduce them", and also involves an individual's cultural capital, the extent of which determines the possible strategies the individual can use in pursuit of their own interests. Bourdieu (1990) sees practice as social, taking place within a specific field and within the social organisation of the field, its structure and boundaries, but also within the other fields which impact on that field. So, for example, practice within the field of graphic design, where individuals are seeking to

accumulate not only economic capital through commissioned work but also cultural and symbolic capital in the form of a prestigious client list, peer recognition, published work and awards, is constrained by the power of their clients to accept, modify or reject their work. An example of this desire for cultural capital is given by Mervyn, who talks about spending his teens 'daydreaming' about how 'I'm going to be the creative director of a wonderful agency, and I'm going to get loads of awards.'

6.2 Challenges and precarity

The old social structures and collectivist allegiances, including the nuclear family, the trades unions and indeed the welfare state (Morgan, Wood & Nelligan, 2013) are increasingly being replaced by a neoliberal competitive individualism in which success or failure is entirely the individual's responsibility. The previous ideal of a job for life and the security which that brought has been replaced by a requirement for occupational flexibility, leading to the precarity of short-term contracts, zero-hour contracts and periods of unemployment with limited access to state support benefits, what Bourdieu (1998) calls flexploitation. This is particularly so for people aspiring to work in the creative sector, where 'the expectation of insecure employment conditions has become normalised' (Morgan, Wood & Nelligan, 2013, p.397).

Although the participants in this study did not face many of the problems facing more recent graduates (discussed earlier in the literature review), for most of them the move from the field of education to the field of employment (Haukka, 2011) presented a number of challenges. These included the challenges of building up a portfolio to support a freelance career, coping with the change to a far more demanding working environment and establishing and maintaining a practice as an artist. For some these challenges were felt to be exacerbated by a lack of preparation for transition into employment on their degree courses (Aston, 1999; Hunt, Ball & Pollard, 2010; Jeffreys, 2004); both Barbara and Mervyn say their design courses were not commercial enough, and Barry and Narbi both speak of being unprepared for life as fine artists. The retrospective views of the participants match the 2012 report by the Precarious Workers Brigade (a group of workers in the creative industries and in arts education who carry out research into the relationship between the cultural economy, education and precarity) on the need for some element of business skills in art education in a time of precarious employment.

All the participants felt unprepared for the realities of practice within their fields. Barbara relates her experience starting in a design studio to the experiences of new graduates joining her agency now:

> It's a shocker, isn't it? Full-time, 37½ hours a week, nine to five … You know, long intense days which the educational system is quite different to. They're quite intense, aren't they? We know that from when we get new staff in here, new graduates coming to join us. Being able to concentrate for the entire eight hours of the day and bounce between as many different things as you need to, is actually a bit of a culture shock, takes a bit of getting used to.

Similarly, Egon found 'the hours expected and maintained by the staff were long. … It was something of a roller coaster going straight from university to design production … the regular 10-11pm finishes and weekend working hit me quite hard.' Mervyn also says his first agency job was a massive shock to the system because his degree course:

> … was not commercially focussed enough, it was very institutionalised. And like I say, I had a great shock on my first day on my first job as a junior designer in a studio, because where I'd been used to weeks dreaming up a project (when really going out instead), I had a deadline for the creative director that afternoon!

Barry regards art school as 'a kind of abstract, detached place … where we got no advice about how to cope outside of college, except for applying for MAs. Everything else you had to find out on your own'. On Cath's ceramics course, however, she did have 'some lectures and information given about setting up your own studio', but:

> when I left it was obvious that an art student cannot just set up a studio, and I think a couple of us got together and tried to apply for some grants which were available at the time … but we didn't know where we wanted to live, you know, what we actually wanted to do, what did we want to make at the end of all this?

Cath and her partner eventually used their economic capital to buy an old chapel as a workshop where he began to make furniture, and where she could set up a pottery that would complement the woodwork.

Luke's advertising degree course was near London, and he started taking his student portfolio to magazines in London:

> So I was ringing up magazines on my second year, I was ringing NME and a new magazine, Dazed & Confused, Time Out, and try to get appointments. So I started working for the NME when I was in my second year.

Because he 'managed to sort of hustle work as a student', Luke was able to build up cultural capital in the form of published work to add to his portfolio during his degree course.

> I didn't do a massive amount, I did three or four jobs, so then by the time I was in London [after graduation] it was with a student portfolio but with a couple of pieces that were published, and that makes a massive difference, and I spent the first few months just knocking on doors. This was the early 90s, when you could walk up to magazines and newspapers and go "Can I draw a picture for you?". Doesn't exist — now. So it was the right era to do that. I was really lucky, I went straight into work.

Luke's ability to look ahead and accumulate this artistic capital before embarking on his career

is an example of what Bourdieu refers to as ‘A player who is involved and caught up in the game adjusts not to what he sees but to what he fore-sees, sees in advance in the directly perceived present’ (1990,p.81), like a tennis player being aware of and moving to where the ball is going to be, rather than where it currently is. After graduating he was able to use his awareness and understanding of the field and of his position in it, combined with the drive of his Illusio, his drive to enhance his position and his standing within the field, which encouraged him to privilege his reputation and his cultural capital rather than his fiscal capital (especially as his degree in advertising gave him ‘a mind that’s more like an ad man and a hustler’) by strategically taking on free work at the start of his career:

> I’ve had to do a bit of free work – which everyone has to do – but I used to be cocky about that. If someone said, “Can you do some magazine stuff”, I was always like “What’s going on the cover?” So I’d do a cover for free, ’cos that was a brilliant way, in those days, to get your name about.

Luke went on the discuss the challenges of maintaining a career as a self-employed designer facing the precarity experienced by many freelancers in the creative industries (de Peuter, 2014; Sandoval, 2016):

> I’ve always been self-employed, and weirdly there was no plan, it was just work, I kept getting work, and suddenly I’m 45 next year and I’m still jumping from lily-pad to lily-pad, which is not a secure thing.

More recently Luke has been able to supplement his freelance income by some part-time lecturing, an example of portfolio working which many creatives need (Adler, 1979; Ashton, 2015; Bridgstock, 2013; Throsby, 2007), and as the economy has changed he says, ‘the teaching thing has actually been a little bit more like “Yes, I’m glad I’ve got it”, and it wasn’t like that at the beginning’. Tess also does workshops, residencies and some lecturing to supplement her income from her creative practice, and Narbi works part-time for an artists’ organisation.

Having always been self-employed, Luke is well aware of the precarity of the commercial field. In his first lecture to design students he pointed out one of the pitfalls and showing some of his work he told them ‘See this job, it looks amazing. Got ripped off, never got paid for this one. I sort of gave them a reality check’. This experience is common to many freelance creatives who can be seen as examples of what Schram (2013) identifies as the “precariat”, a new class which includes not just the working poor of Marx’s proletariat but also the professionals, the self-employed, the middle managers and executives, working in unstable or time limited employment. As a studio potter, Cath has also faced precarity due to commercial problems selling her work through galleries, since with high commission charges ‘it’s not worth getting out of bed’. Cath’s experiences support Bourdieu’s view that the field of art and design is a

field of power relationships, which includes not only the creatives, competing for recognition, prestige (and income), but also the commercial elements such as the galleries, the patrons, the critics and the collectors who hold the positions of power in the field, being able to grant or withhold their approval and access to audiences (Bourdieu, 1983, 1984, 1993; Cook, 2001; Grenfell & Hardy, 2003).

Over the years Mervyn improved his position within the field of graphic design, progressing through 'the agency hierarchy, you know, the pecking order as it is, from the runners to the too expensive to keep on'. Eventually he took the offer of redundancy and started his own small agency. Not only did this change his commercial field but his practice within the design field was changing as well:

> When I was in an agency – it feels like a lifetime ago – everything I did was print, every single thing I did was print. Now nothing I do is print. I exist inside the internet. It wasn't a steep learning curve: it was like hitting a wall and getting over it, and it's a wall that keeps building and you keep climbing. It changes so fast now that we're constantly evolving the terms of what we tell people we are and what we can do

This speed of technological change is identified by Frayling (2011) as one of the major issues facing workers in the creative industries. Mervyn has faced other challenges rising from changes in the field, which began to challenge his illusio:

> What we do is no longer magic, it's no longer the dark arts, because you could learn something for years, but it's good enough now that a client will just get lots of free images and put them in. [Clients say] "I'm not paying you to create these shots for me, just get it off royalty free, get this copy and get it sorted out. And I'll send you some visuals that I've done on my Mac, in my office. Can you just make these work?" I think, to be faced with that at 21, 22 years of age, would break my heart. It would break my heart!

6.3 Resilience and the neo-liberal subject

The term "resilience", toughness, the capacity to recover from setbacks or difficulties, can also be 'described in different ways and as different kinds of things.' (Anderson, 2015, p.60), including state security, disaster and emergency planning, ecological systems, and business contingency planning, as well as 'an individualised subject charged with the responsibility to adapt to, or bounce back from, inevitable shocks in an unstable world.' (Anderson, 2015, p.61). It is this requirement for the neo-liberal subject to be self-managing and self-improving, reliable, responsible, accountable and "always on" (Chandler & Reid, 2016) which impacts on the participants in this research who are required to be adaptable and 'to thrive in the face of challenge [and] to adapt to changing conditions through learning, planning, or reorganization' (World Resources Institute, 2008, p.27). Indeed, Sandoval sees the cultural sector as 'an ideal field for introducing insecure and precarious working conditions, and for constituting the

creative worker as an ideal entrepreneurial subject of neoliberal capitalism' (2016, p.51). An example of the personal qualities demanded by this can be seen in Lord Young's 2014 report for the government on enterprise in education, Enterprise for All, which begins by saying 'Enterprise means more than just the ability to become an entrepreneur. It is that quality that gives an individual a positive outlook, an ability to see the glass as half full rather than half empty, and is a valuable attribute for the whole of life' (Young, 2014, p.1).

This neo-liberal focus on the purpose of education being to foster an enterprising attitude has changed 'the conception of higher education from a common social good to a private commodity measured largely in terms of financial returns on investment' (Kenning, 2019, p.116). This might be seen to be both inimical and irrelevant to art & design students, especially within the field of fine art (less so for design students), yet a study by Fanthome lists 'current professional practice demands' as 'Producing regular applications for funding and commissions; developing self-marketing and proficiency with social media; networking with agencies and arts organisations and circulating at arts events' (2013, p. 283). This form of 'professional practice' has no reference to the production of actual art works but is about what Kenning calls the accumulation of 'art world capital – forms of symbolic capital specific to the contemporary art world' (2019, p.120), and the intangible cultural capital which:

> exists in the cultural networks and relationships that support human activity, and in the diversity of cultural manifestations within communities: that is, in cultural 'ecosystems' (Throsby, 2001, p.168)

The dichotomy of making themselves visible to the power brokers of the field, the gallery owners and curators, the critics, described by Bourdieu as 'the producers of the meaning and value of the work' (1983, p.319), the collectors who purchase the work, and the arts organisations who control grants and funding, while not appearing to sell out their integrity by seeming to be economically motivated is summed up by Fowle (n.d.) 'it's a challenging balancing act to try and promote your work, yet maintain its authenticity and validity within the same arena.' To exist and survive in the artistic field individuals need 'to occupy a distinctive position, they must assert their difference, get it known and recognized, get themselves known and recognized ("make a name for themselves")' (Bourdieu, 1983, p.338), because:

> In this market-savvy entrepreneurial role, artists are encouraged to exaggerate and exploit their individuality and to feed into popular myths to reinforce their occupational authenticity. (Bain, 2005, p.29)

This is exemplified by Damien Hirst, who can be seen as representing a 'new kind of entrepreneurial market orientated artist' (Cook, 2001, p.171). For many early career artists, acquiring this artistic capital and reputation as they begin their practice as full-time fine artists

was a slow process (Daniel, 2010), as it was for Barry:

> I suppose I gave myself time to find my feet, and each little bit of success (a work turning out well, something in a group show, being taken seriously by someone, making a good contact) helps you on the way if you let yourself appreciate them. Key moments for me were probably getting my first studio space not at home, and taking part in a group show internationally - something about proving I could work outside of my usual day to day circumstance perhaps. But it's a slow process, one I'm still on, and by no means a linear, steady progression - with plenty of moments of stasis, setbacks, or reroutes on the way.

Provisional selves can be seen as steps on the way to achieving a career ambition, as individuals try on aspects of their professional identities and the 'styles, skills, attitudes, and routines available to the person for constructing those identities' (Ibarra, 1999, p.764). Barry's quotation above describes a number of these steps. For early career artists like Barry, trying to make their way in the art world, the need to manage the tension between their habitus as artists and their personal practices with the increasingly neoliberal field of the creative industries, which although based on individuals' talent and creativity is primarily concerned with the 'potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property' (DCMS, 1998, p.3), is matched by the tensions between the liberal art education they experienced and the current focus of much art education on producing what Loacker (2013) calls culturpreneurs, better prepared to market themselves and their practices.

Since, as a number of surveys have shown (a-n, 2011; Kretschmer, Singh, Bently & Cooper, 2011; Cox, van der Maas & Hallam, 2013; Art Council England, 2016) fine artists are very unlikely to achieve any great financial benefit from their practice, their illusio depends on other rewards within the field, described by Harper as:

> … a system of non-financial validation, with exhibition opportunities, feedback, the approval of peers, art world institutions and the general public all having value in determining notions of success. (2014, p.8)

At the extreme, as Sandoval points out, 'A freelance cultural worker might be free from hierarchical control, but she is also free to starve' (2016, p.54). It is the other rewards, the pursuit of artistic capital rather than financial rewards, which enabled Barry to maintain his illusio and to persevere with his career, in spite of the difficulties he encountered in establishing his position within his chosen field. Having said he had no career advice on his degree, he describes the problems of starting out as an artist:

> This studio time was probably more of a grounding — self-determined, adventurous, inventive, cold, skint and very little outside interest in what you're up to! It gives you the sword but not the shield, if that makes sense. You have to develop that yourself […] if I'm honest it probably took me five or six years to find my feet. To work out how to keep earning a living, finding time, finding space, and also finding any external interest in what you're doing!

Narbi also found problems in starting out as a fine artist and says the first years after the degree are ‘the acid test — but then again, maybe every year you're still doing it is the acid test’. Unlike Barry and Narbi, many of Narbi’s contemporaries have lacked the resolve, the illusio, (or in neo-liberal terms, the resilience) to persevere when confronted with the precarity and the vulnerability of an artistic lifestyle, and he says, ‘I can count on one hand the people who are still at it from my degree’. Like many of the participants, he comments on the lack of preparation for what comes after the degree course.

> After your degree it’s a bit – now what? Until the end of your degree there’s a path – you do this, then you do this, then you do this, and then it’s a little bit like you’re turned out onto the streets; “Go and be an artist, you’ve done that bit now”. It’s a bit like a tree trunk until the end of your degree then it goes off into all kinds of different divergent branches and directions of “Where is it I want to go. What does it mean to be an artist? What do I need to be an artist? Right, I need a studio”. That hadn’t really occurred to me. I painted in the spare room at home, and I got a year’s fellowship at the university, which gave me studio space in exchange for teaching life drawing once a week for three hours. The studios were only open nine to five, so no late working, which wasn’t ideal.

Both Barry and Narbi talk about the importance of the studio to their practice and their identities as artists (Jeffreys, 2004), an importance represented by Narbi’s image of himself now, a painting of his studio. Although the notion that a fine art degree is preparation for a career as an artist can be seen as a form of cruel optimism, an ‘attachment to compromised conditions of possibility whose realization is discovered to be *im*possible’ (Berlant, 2010, p.94, emphasis in original), what drives the participants in trying to establish their professional practice as fine artists, in spite of the precarity and the vulnerability that comes with it, is that their ‘ideas of being successful are not expressed in material terms, but are contingent upon a future where they continue to have the opportunity to invest themselves in their interests’ (Threadgold, 2018, p.157). With their now established practices Barry and Narbi both have long lists of their solo and group exhibitions on their websites, along with Barry’s residencies and Narbi’s awards.

Although not sharing Cath’s sense of ease, Luke’s illusio and a strong vision of himself as a professional cartoonist, ‘that laser guided thing’, and his commitment to invest himself in his field, gave him the determination to carry on when he wasn’t accepted for foundation at first.

> I didn’t get in first time round and it really was — I imagine it was like someone really religious finding out that God’s not real, someone reading Richard Dawkins and questioning their faith. … I was just “Everyone told me I was going to go to art college!”.

Rather than give up on his ambitions, Luke’s resilience meant he went and worked in a print studio for a year, managed to get some cartoons printed in student magazines, re-applied for foundation and was accepted.

Tess describes her first job as ‘pretty much sink or swim’, with the added difficulty of the studios being a ‘very sexist environment, and how, as a young woman, she was ‘given a really difficult time’. She persevered in spite of this and in her second job she had a very positive experience:

> the production designer and artistic director were great mentors and taught me loads. They were union members and gave me a lot of really useful advice about fees, contracts, freelance work and how to manage the financial side of the work. Work wise they had high standards for themselves and expected nothing less of me, I learnt a lot and am so grateful that I had the chance to work with them.

Barbara also speaks of benefitting from mentoring and role models in her first job, when her familial capital in the form of a design agency belonging to a relative retrieved her situation after she dropped out of an unsuitable degree course which was chosen in a rush after she withdrew from her offer on a different type of course.

Cath’s commitment to selling her ceramics in the face of increasing charges by commercial galleries which are ‘charging anything from 40 to 60% commission’, encouraged her to use her physical capital in the form of the old chapel she owns, and she opened her own gallery and ‘made my work for my own gallery, and I sold every single piece.’ In a further example of portfolio working, she also supplements her income by running courses in her studio.

6.4 Development of professional practice

Having progressed through school, foundation and specialist courses, the participants continue to develop themselves and their roles in their professional practices. Barbara’s illusio and sense of vocation develops from the age of seven, and the diagnostic part of her foundation course ‘just cemented the fact that I knew that the design world was my calling’. Vocation in this sense is defined by Dik and Duffy as ‘a sense of purpose or direction that leads an individual toward some kind of personally fulfilling and/or socially significant engagement within the work role, sometimes with reference … to a sense of passion or giftedness’ (2009, p.427). She found starting full time work as a designer a joyful experience.

> I was just loving the work so much. At last, to be doing it, in an environment that I felt – I was just in awe of it. I was in awe of these studio people producing work on computers and answering briefs and, you know, getting grins from clients with their work. I just wanted to be straight in amongst that and performing at a level – at a professional level straight away.

Barbara also had early ambitions beyond being a designer, ‘I always knew that the seed was in my mind that eventually I would like to have my own agency’. Barbara was able to build up her capital as a designer and as a manager in her first job through familial capital, as the family member who ran the agency ‘gave me a lot of opportunity to develop and grow’.

> I learnt a lot about the running of the agency, the financial side, the processes and the systems, the legal side, … and she was very transparent about everything and let me get involved in all of that. So I learnt not just the trade, but also the running, the business running aspects.

The mentoring experienced by both Tess and Barbara allowed them to develop a strategic understanding of their respective fields, and so to acquire a habitus which enabled them to function professionally within those fields (Sommerlad, 2007). Additionally, positive feedback from established professionals provides evidence and validation for individuals that their envisaged selves (Erikson, 2007) are being realised (Kerpelman & Pittman, 2001). Barry has recently started receiving mentoring from a network of London based artists, which offers him:

> 'sessions in professional practice, networking, time management and properly monetising your practice, things I still haven't mastered after twenty years out of art education. I still have difficulties with finding opportunities to present and develop my work, and generate enough income, and this mentoring support has already helped shift my mindset and abilities'.

He goes on to say that 'In many ways it has echoes in the way foundation course jump-started my creative interests and enthusiasms'. Drawing on the benefit of the mentoring she received in her first agency, Barbara says that, after years of hands-on involvement in the creative side of graphic design, since she has become creative director of a design partnership she has been able to switch roles to become:

> … a spark for people, it's not about my ideas really any more, all I do is enhance other people's ideas. My role is to bring other people's ideas to life, or create the opportunity in which they can produce their brightest work … the things that I do day to day are very broad now and they're very much more business orientated rather than the design itself.

Mervyn's illusio in the graphic design field developed early, and on starting his foundation course:

> The big aim was to be the best and to get this under my belt and solidify what I needed to be this graphic designer that was going to go on to the wonderful things he had planned inside his head.

In spite of the steep learning curve of moving into digital design. Mervyn relied heavily on the cultural capital he had built up over his years as a designer, and what he regards as the 'trade' of typography, because no matter how sophisticated design programmes become, 'they're not typesetters, you are. You understand type, you understand how to talk to human beings. These machines are only facilitators', and that you need to:

> look back at these people that were doing this a hundred years before you were, you look back on those things that you were taught, you look back at those things you were exposed to, you look back on the trips to the art galleries and things like that. Those are the things that are informing what you do now, because you need that to

> maintain your point of difference in a world that has just become zeros and ones … you're constantly drawing on the past, you're drawing on your love and your education and your grounding, and the trade that you've learnt.

Perhaps Mervyn's emphasis on his 'trade' of typography is influenced by his time working on building sites, and on the sense of his long and deep involvement in typography and its history being a form of apprenticeship leading him to regard 'his work as part of the exclusive preserve of the members of his trade' (Ryrie, 1975, p.iv). His need to maintain his 'point of difference' is similar to the artists' need to establish their individuality and visibility discussed earlier.

Like Barbara, Mervyn has also had a long and active career in design but had a very different response to more senior roles.

> As you go through your career you climb the ladder and you take the knocks and you learn the lessons, and I'd gained as much as I could have done, working from studio junior through to senior art director. There was nowhere else for me to go within the structure. So I would have probably just become a lifer and took the money and gone at the end of the day, if it wasn't for the fire of redundancy being lighted under my feet. And I took the opportunity at that point to say "How about if I try this my own way".

Some twenty years into his career, having worked his way through the 'agency hierarchy' and then set up on his own, the field had changed so much that he says:

> I wouldn't do this now, given the choice again, knowing what the industry is now, knowing what the demands are on people. […] Now, I know it pays for the life that I choose to have, so its importance has diminished, very, very much so.

After several years running his own small agency, Mervyn decided to change career, a decision which he says was 'not a response to escape from a job I no longer liked', but since gardening had become 'a natural balance for the stress of running my own business', he came to realise 'that my love of gardening, with all its positive impacts on me, had replaced graphic design in my heart'. His illusio has shifted focus into garden design, as he puts it, swapping 'pixels for plants'.

> Looking back, I feel that I achieved all I set out to do, in my design career. Being a mature career changer has armed me with a vital array of transferable skills and an aesthetic understanding that gives me a clear advantage. I'm still designing and creating, I have merely swapped pixels for plants.

He has recently been appointed to a head gardener position, and he says it was his design training and experience as much as his horticultural skills which interested his new employer, and he now describes himself as a "User Experience Gardener".

Luke's illusio set him on what he describes as a 'trajectory' to achieve his ambition of being a cartoonist and illustrator from an early age, 'I've thought about this a lot, it's weird looking

back, I don't understand what that laser guided thing was'. Illusio can be a powerful driver of ambition, but when it breaks down, this can lead to a reluctance to participate in the "game", as in Journey's secondary school period when his 'willingness to try at school had completely disappeared'. Also for Journey, the loss of illusio in his future as an art teacher resulting from his concerns after coming out as a gay man led to his 'suspending the commitment to a set of culturally saturated interests as a result of a crisis' (Chandler, 2013, p.469). It was to take a further crisis and a 'creative, reflective moment' occasioned by helping an elderly lady cross the road which led to a commitment to his new prospective identity as a nurse.

All these participants have needed to exercise their resilience, both in the traditional sense of determination and in the neoliberal sense of taking personal responsibility for their progress, development and success within their fields. Their agency and their actions in the pursuit of their ambitions (Barry's mentoring, Mervyn's adaptation to digital formats, Barbara's focus on having her own business) is driven by their illusio. Even when this drive breaks down in the chosen field (Mervyn) or the intended field (Journey) they are able to re-establish illusio in a different field, and to adapt their identities through the steps of provisional selves as they negotiate entry into a new field. In Journey's case this included volunteering in care work, gaining two nursing degrees and working in a range of different roles before settling on his specialist area. Mervyn closed his design business, returned to college to study horticulture while volunteering at a well known garden, and then became a professional gardener.

6.5 Developing identity as professionals

The participants' identity formations, begun on foundation – as Journey says 'it was where I first started to discover myself and discover my identity' – continue in their professional lives as they become aware of and begin to stake their positions within their particular fields, and deal with the conflicts these positions throw up. These include Barry's issues between his personal practice and his more commercial work, and Barbara and Mervyn's division between artistic freedom and design boundaries, with a more comfortable fit between their habitus and the design field.

As Grenfell and Hardy (2003) point out, an artist's status in the hierarchy of other artists is determined by the prestige of his or her specific field, and by the artist's accrual of social, cultural and symbolic capital, rather than economic capital. Cath experienced this hierarchy on her degree course:

> The graphic design students and the fine art students would wander in with their very smart portfolios and very smart dress – especially the graphic design students, the men in their suits, and they just completely looked down their noses at us, 'cos we were just in overalls and dungarees, just covered in clay. We were at the bottom of the human scale.

Barry is also aware of this hierarchy in the way he used to differentiate between his wire animals and his personal practice, facing the creative artist's dilemma of whether to produce work which is more artistically rewarding but less commercially viable, or more mainstream work which could prove more lucrative (Throsby, 2007). He says:

> I know that when I started I wouldn't mention one side to anyone I was working with in the other. … This separation for me was probably rooted in an idea that it would look like I had abandoned my artistic principles for commercialism, and experimental processes for twee sentimentality!

Barry identifies strongly as an artist with an interest in experimental processes which he initially kept separate from his wire animal sculptures, but as he has become more confident he says he now likes to:

> …mention the animals in art circles, as now more than ever it is important to think about how an art career is possible, viable, I certainly bring it up when talking to art students as I don't want to sell a false dream of artistic freedom. Conversely, I find when I mention my art practice to animal customers they generally glaze over!

Barry's mention of 'a false dream' aligns with Berlant's cruel optimism, a hope which is unlikely to be fulfilled. This personal/commercial dilemma can also have an influence on the agent's position and prestige within the field, as Bourdieu points out:

> the structure of the field, i.e. of the space of positions, is nothing other than the structure of the distribution of the capital of specific properties which governs success in the field and the winning of the external or specific profits (such as literary prestige) which are at stake in the field. (1983, p.312)

In differentiating between the field of graphic design and the field of fine art, both Barbara and Mervyn reveal the fit, the coincidence, between each one's habitus and design as a favourable field, and how they identify themselves as designers:

> …although I say I like the freedom to explore, actually what I discovered is I do need some purpose, some challenge, some boundaries within which that art can be free to move, to achieve an outcome that actually answers some objectives. It can't be completely freeform and have no direction to it at all, no way to judge whether that was a good response or a bad response. (Barbara)

> That idea of communicating things, ideas to people in a kind of commercial sense. I never saw myself as an artist, I saw myself as a designer, and working for other people rather than just merely creating. (Mervyn)

As Barbara's career progressed and moved from design into the field of management she now identifies herself as focused on the commercial aspects of the business. She says, 'graphic design itself was a fleeting moment within that career, because … the things that I do day to day are very broad now and they're very much more business orientated rather than the design itself'. As creative director, she says her role is to make other peoples' ideas for designs

'burn bright as possible' but also to get them to be quicker in their decision making, because 'every hour you spend on something has to be charged for'. Barbara's changing role and changing identity within her practice show how 'workplaces are the crucibles of identity formation' and her matchbox image shows her embodiment of the 'social properties objectified in the form of a role' (Sommerlad, 2007, p.210) since as a manager her role now is to encourage other staff, 'to bring other people's ideas to life, or create the opportunity in which they can produce their brightest work'.

Before moving from the field of education to the field of the design business, Mervyn decided to take a break rather than go straight into a studio. He says, 'I knew people that had done it, and it seemed very closed off, it was like entering a monastery and being a novitiate, and you would go through your days and know nothing of the world'. He spent some time working on building sites which helped him deal with the pressures when he started working in a design studio as opposed to the more relaxed atmosphere of his degree course.

When he came to run his own agency, Mervyn demonstrates an awareness of what Sommerlad calls the 'need to embody the social properties objectified in the professional role in order to give a convincing display of the correct professional habitus' (2007, p.202), when he points out the difference between his professional and social identification:

> In business, people like a title, so I've given myself the only one I ever wanted 'Creative Director'. This is to make it easy for them. To make them feel they are dealing with someone who is 'high up', that they can have confidence in, that they can talk to on 'their level' - as they usually have 'Director' somewhere in their own job title. […] When I'm talking to a real person who asks me what I do, I take the rather more flippant approach and merely tell them that "I colour-in for a living".

Egon identifies himself as having an exploratory approach to architecture and design, an approach which he has referred back to the chair he designed on his foundation where he began to develop the 'investigation – interpretation – response' process he uses today:

> Over the past few years when talking things through with friends and family and after the advent of minimalism as a design term, I have described myself on a number of occasions as being a maximalist, always wanting to see where things could go and see where particular branches of exploration can take me. I am just approaching the point where I think I have some (or a good) understanding, if not mastery of architecture and design. I think the next stage in my path may be stepping out and doing things in practice for myself.

An ambition he has recently achieved, with some commissions being built and others going through planning.

All the freelance practitioners advertise and give evidence for their cultural capital within their various fields on their web pages. Both Barry and Narbi have MAs and Narbi a PhD, Narbi has also won major awards and both list their group and sole exhibitions, Barry also listing his

lectures and his artist in residence positions; he also has a separate website for his wire creations. Tess lists her residencies, workshops and festival appearances, and Luke emphasises his impressive client list along with images from his work for them, as did Mervyn. Having gone freelance as well, Egon also now uses social media to promote his practice.

Although Journey works as a senior health service manager rather than in art and design, he still identifies strongly as a creative individual:

> Although I love my work and it now feels like it's all I really know, the creative is still in me. It's grounded and will never leave me and I firmly believe my journey would not have occurred like it has, had it not started off in the place where it did. I would not be who I am today without my experiences. Once an artist, always an artist. Art is displayed in many forms, and artists, whilst not necessarily practising their passion in its raw form, they still have an ability to think, recreate and regenerate ideas into something else. The creative allows this to occur and as artists, we have a strong ability to see a vision, work with and through the vision and develop it into something different.

Journey's shift from art to healthcare, like Mervyn's move from design to gardening and Barbara's from design to management suggest that their habitus, their illusio, and their investment in themselves and in their field, their practice, may be transferrable from one field of activity to another. In his initial interview, just before deciding to change career, Mervyn used a beach pebble to illustrate his identity, an illustration which still applies after his change in career:

> What is important about the pebble is that it has now… it's constantly going through a process which has turned it into something where all the hard edges have been knocked off. It's perfect for the place that it is. The environment has taken its toll on it, but it is still what it is. It's rounded, it can take it, it will take those cycles of the tides and it can't affect it, because it's perfect for the job that it's in.

Mervyn demonstrates both meanings of resilience, the neo-liberal self improvement of dealing with the transition from print to digital, the 'hitting a wall and getting over it', but also the tenacity, the determination to endure the 'cycles of the tides'.

6.6 Reflections on the foundation course

Having given their accounts of their experiences on the foundation course and in their subsequent courses and careers, the participants were asked to reflect on their foundation experience and whether it still has any influence on them. Many commented on how much they had enjoyed their time on the course; as an example, Cath says 'I mean foundation had been a bit of… well it had all been fun; probably the best year of my life, actually, to be absolutely honest'. For Luke 'it was a really happy, valuable experience'. 'Mervyn describes his course as 'a treasured time, it's something I keep hold of, it influenced me'. He goes on to say, 'I'm always going back to that course'. Egon talks about how 'The foundation course …

provided a framework for understanding my own development and artistic / design preferences'. He goes on to talk about how the course set him off in the direction of his professional journey:

> The foundation course influences me quite a bit. My investigative spirit was charged and given direction through the course, the desire to learn from different aspects of the art and design world has influenced me through my life and still does … the foundation course set me off in the inquisitive, enquiring direction I am still heading in today.

Narbi, however, recalls it rather differently, 'I remember it fondly, but apart from the friends I made, it had little influence on me. I had a single-minded approach from very early on'.

Thinking about the foundation experience in a wider context Barbara says 'I just think it's a really valuable stage in education, that foundation year. I don't know why they only do it for art!'. She goes on to say:

> I've listened to my nieces and nephews talking about what they want to study at university, and still being very unsure, even as they're going through clearing or choosing their universities. I think that year exploring – you kind of know the area but you're not entirely sure what aspect of it you want to focus on, even in say physics or building or, you know … I think it's really valuable.

Having stated that 'Without a doubt, my time [on ADF] is treasured and most definitely shaped me. Possibly the most important and formative time of my life', Mervyn goes on to consider its potential benefit to other academic areas such as science programmes:

> I would have thought it would be of massive benefit to people, even if it's not a year, even if you put camps in this stuff so you could let people go to a science camp and be with people of different specialisms and different experiences. I can't see how it wouldn't benefit people.

Tess talks about the experience of working in different areas, with different techniques and media, and of 'juggling multiple projects and deadlines, presentation skills, the need for flexibility, to be imaginative and have an enquiring mind, etc. These are all skills that I continue to utilise in my current working life.'

Luke says 'I think foundation set me up perfectly actually, …. I can't imagine what I would have been without it. A different type of me, I think'. In particular his enjoyment of discovery in his college library, where 'you'd be looking for one book and you'd go what's this, I'll just check this out … God knows what else we picked up in the library, just from sort of osmosis', remains with him:

> That foundation thing of "Go to the library, go and find some book that you wouldn't necessarily be looking for and see who's in it". That's still there, I think. That willingness to think "I like graffiti and comics, but what else is out there?" Yeah, that's definitely from foundation. That stays with me.

He goes on to comment on how much can be achieved in spite of the short duration of the course.

> So for a year, it's quite a life changing set of parameters, isn't it? Just the life drawing, throwing you out of your depth – and the library. So I've got really positive memories of it.

Looking back at his foundation course and how it prepared him for his degree, Luke says 'I can't imagine how I would have got onto that degree course from sixth form without freaking out in the grown-up world'. With that in mind, he describes how his own experience of art education and of working as a freelance illustrator influences his teaching as a part-time tutor on degree level graphics courses.

> Foundation was very arty, and the way I teach now, it's trying to keep it feeling like art college, but with that component there; the real world's out there. So I talk about it like an airlock now, trying to get a perfect airlock that you can close the rear one so they're not going to get a shock when they get out there, but it still feels like art college.

He is also concerned about students starting degrees without that foundation experience, and talks of one who 'just looked utterly terrified every time I walked in the room'.

> She'd come straight from sixth form and she wasn't the only one who'd come straight from sixth form, and I think without that airlock of that year to grow, it is like "Whoosh", slapping you round the face. … And if that's the way art education is going to go, that you go straight from school or academy to a degree, I don't think that's the greatest breeding ground for confident creatives.

Barry says his foundation course does still influence him.

> You can see from my previous answers that the time, approach and relationships are still vivid for me. Being treated like an adult, with genuine and valuable ideas to bring, and developing the skills to handle them was a real turning point to me, so I would feel I'm still on that continuum. If I'd not had that year to think about my practice and interests I don't know what I'd have done next, and where I'd be now.

For Cath her foundation course 'had all been fun, probably the best year of my life, actually, to be absolutely honest'. She thinks:

> … things like the foundation course and the degree course, they feed your head, basically. With excellent lecturers bringing along their work, the demonstrations, seeing what other students are doing on the course – that was terribly important, feeding off each other. … I mean that's one thing I will say about my art education all the way through, that it was absolutely spot on, in terms of teaching you properly all the skills you needed to know, because there are many.

Like Mervyn, Journey indicates the transferability of his art programmes when he says that 'aspects of my foundation will always stay with me'. Although he currently works at management level in nursing, he says:

> I value my art background as much, if not more than the foundation of nursing practice I learnt from my second degree. Understanding nursing is essential to do my role but understanding art is an added bonus. Why? Because the foundation of art is in everything I do. Without the art in me, I believe my approaches would be different, my understanding and ability to manage situations more limited, my knowledge more basic, because art helped me to understand creativity and opened my mind! Studying art made me a better judge; the skills gained from art foundation are transferable to any role.

According to Luke 'I think I got more out of the foundation than I did out of the degree. It was more intensive and it threw such a different range of stuff at you'. His foundation still influences him, and he says 'there's something about foundation, I don't want to turn into that person that wears blinkers. It's really easy to start getting old and going "Oh, I know I only like what I like".'

Mervyn echoes Luke's evaluation of foundation compared to his degree course:

> It seemed like it was an expanded version of our foundation course, my degree. The trouble was - it just wasn't as good. The degree was not as good as the foundation course. Everything took too long. We had much sharper deadlines and much more focus on the foundation course, which again, says more for the foundation course than the degree.

Having begun this chapter with the metaphor of a journey, it is interesting to note how many times similar metaphors appear in the participants accounts.

'I found the right path in the road in the direction of architecture'

'…searching for some direction in my foundation course'

'all kinds of different divergent branches and directions of "Where is it I want to go?"'

'the foundation course set me off in the inquisitive, enquiring direction I am still heading in today.'

'…by no means a linear, steady progression - with plenty of moments of stasis, setbacks, or reroutes on the way.'

'Until the end of your degree there's a path – you do this, then you do this, then you do this'

'I think the next stage in my path may be stepping out and doing things in practice for myself.'

'I firmly believe my journey would not have occurred like it has, had it not started off in the place where it did.'

'Foundation was about choosing a path.'

'The course still had an impact on where I was going and reinforced what I wanted to do.'

'…the direction I was encouraged to go.'

'…foundation was always seen as the route'

'…the road that I put myself on at 11.'

'The foundation course that I was on was perfect for the next step on my journey.'

'Hungry for knowledge, growth & direction.'

This section ends with Mervyn's strong defence of the foundation experience.

> I could not recommend them highly enough, to anybody. I think they should be fought for, because of what they offer … It was a wonderful time personally and academically, and the breadth of different things I was exposed to, inside and outside the studio; you know we would be taken out to work in the environment to produce things and stuff like that. Never experienced anything like that. Able to work with different technologies, and just come across tutors who were not actually that much older than us, but had such profound effects on what you think is possible from yourself and what is possible out there for you to do, that personally I think that I would have been going into things in a completely different, closed minded… I'd had limited exposure to things from the art world, so without that eye-opening experience I wouldn't have developed the outlook that I did. There are things from that time that have never left me, to this day, and are very important from that time. Not only my relationship with my profession, but with the things that I love in life, a lot of it actually changed on that foundation course. … So I'm still always drawn back there, whether it is something I learnt, something I experienced, or something that changed me in some way. I'm always going back to that course

This extended quotation reflects the enduring influence of the foundation experience seen in many of the participants' accounts.

6.7 Conclusion

The art and design foundation course stands in stark contrast to the current neo-liberal, vocationalist form of education, an 'artificially instrumental' (Bojesen, 2019, p.1) factory form of education which subjugates students into little blocks of learning, into 'performative components' (Drummond, 2003, p.62). This has been created through 'a skills agenda under successive governments that has narrowed the concept of skills to something akin to training' (Crossick, 2011, p.72). This instrumentalist approach leads to what Pring identifies as a:

> failure to respect what it means to be and to grow as a person is reflected in the narrow conception of successful learning, … in the failure to see the arts (or 'aesthetics') as a valuable form of knowledge through which one explores values and what it means to be human. (2012, p.755)

In particular this has led to 'a distrust of embodied, situated and tacit knowledge as other and necessarily inferior' (McGuirk, 2011, p. 218), exactly the forms of knowledge arising from the foundation course, in which students are crafting themselves as well as their artefacts, their practices.

Rebalancing this requires a different approach to how we conceptualise people in education,

to see them as agents in their own learning rather than as consumers of knowledge as a commodity leading to economic success, to re-establish what Dewey has called ‘the organic connection between education and personal experience’ (1998, p.4). That art and design education is experiential, intensely personal and focussed on process and practice rather than on financial returns makes it entirely marginalised in an era of neoliberal education policies.

Nonetheless, it does appear to produce people who are able to establish and maintain their practices in a neoliberal economic regime. That art and design now forms part of what are called the cultural industries, an essential part of the creative economy policy that Tony Blair (2007) presented in a speech at the Tate Gallery, points to the neoliberal perception of cultural production as a revenue generating industry, turning creatives into workers who ‘enter the “sharing” and “contract” economy, where they transform their possessions, time, connections, and selves into sources of capitalization’ (Brown, 2019, p.38). Dealing with the challenges this brings, especially for those with freelance practices, and reconciling the tensions between their habitus and their practices as creative individuals, with the demands of the market and the demands of their clients requires considerable resilience as they become culturpreneurs (Davies & Ford, 1998), expected to balance their individual creativity and authenticity with market requirements and economic uncertainties (Loaker, 2013).

Chapter 7. Conclusion

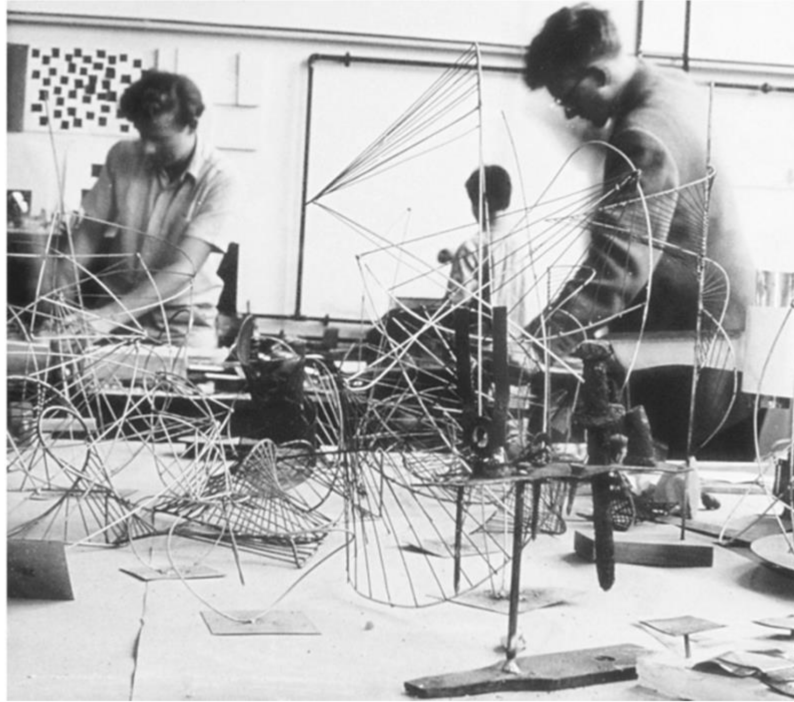

Figure 37. Students on the Pre-Diploma course, Leeds College of Art, c.1958

A photograph taken when Tom Hudson and Harry Thubron were both teaching at Leeds.

7.1 Introduction

In 2011 Friend claimed that ‘an arts degree really is worth less than the paper it's written on’; I could have rewritten this study’s title as “The Foundation Diploma in Art and Design, is it worth the paper it is written on?” as the course leads to a qualification which is almost meaningless. It is post A level but equivalent to A level, so hardly credentialist. It is not, in the current climate, vocational or commercial, since its primary purpose is to prepare students who are already qualified to enter higher education, to enter higher education. So what benefits, if any, does it have for its students?

This chapter brings together the evidence from the findings in order to answer those questions. The chapter begins by briefly recapping the aims of the study and restates the research questions. It goes on to group the main themes from the central chapters together, considers the broader implications of the study in the context of the policy climate in which it was carried out and then establishes its original contribution to knowledge. The chapter ends with a personal reflection on my research journey.

This study has examined the collected stories of a group of artists and designers who have reflected on their experiences and developed narratives from and about them. Their narratives serve a dual purpose; firstly, they continue the process of making sense of experience for each participant, because when we reflect critically about our own experiences they make more sense to us, and secondly, the narratives provide a resource that other artists, designers and art educators can use to inform their own critical reflections and practices.

The study is a snapshot in time, a snapshot taken at a certain point in history and at a certain point in each participant’s career. Furthermore, rather than being immutable and fixed, personal stories represent participants' realities at a given time:

> The respondents might have chosen to tell a variety of stories; but they chose to tell the one which has finally been recorded. This might have been for any number of reasons. We can only say with certitude that at the point of time they told their story, the respondents saw their past in such a way. (Harnett, 2010, p.167)

Additionally, the participants’ images, similarly chosen or made specifically for this study, both illustrate and illuminate particular aspects of their stories.

7.2 Overview

Using a qualitative approach, located within a social constructionist epistemology, this study aimed to reach a deeper understanding of the identities, practices and learning of graduates of the art and design foundation course. It also aimed to raise awareness of the current threats to the foundation course, and to arts education in general, arising from current education policy.

7.2.1 Research questions

The initial question for this research was:

> What are artists' and designers' experiences and views of their art foundation courses?

During the course of the research this expanded to consider:

> Have their foundation courses had any lasting effect or influence on the participants, their professional lives, practices and identities.
>
> How does the course achieve this?
>
> Where and how does the art foundation course fit into the current educational landscape?
>
> How does it differ from the vocationalist, neo-liberal discourse in tertiary education, and what lessons can be learned from this difference?

7.3 The course: transitions and exploring identity

The following section looks at the first three questions (What are artists' and designers' experiences and views of their art foundation courses? Have their foundation courses had any lasting effect or influence on the participants, their professional lives, practices and identities? How does the course achieve this?) in the light of two overarching themes which emerged from the data, transitions and exploring identity. Transitions includes sub-themes of acculturation (becoming full time art students after the fragmentary school or college timetable, and beginning to envisage themselves as potential artists or designers), exploring the fields of art and design (the diagnostic element of the course), and consolidating their choice of specialism, be that the one they intended from the start or a new one discovered on the course. Exploring identity includes the transformations they go through as they develop through the course, begin to mature as art students and as they become fledgling artists or designers, and their developing independence and confidence as practitioners.

7.3.1 Transitions

This theme addresses the initial research question, what are artists' and designers' experiences and views of their art foundation courses?

The role of the foundation course is to facilitate and enable transition into the course, and to prepare its students for transition out of the course. During their time on the course the combination of the students' illusio with the field of full-time art and design expanded their cultural capital and began to modify their habitus.

In this initial year the participants' experiences of the field (both of full-time art and design and of its varied sub-fields), of pedagogic action (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p.31) in their interaction with their tutors and each other, combined with their illusio, their commitment to

the worth of their practice, produced a durable modification of habitus as they began to see themselves as, at least potential, artists or designers. As Sennett points out, ‘people ‘are skilled makers of a place for themselves in the world’ (2009, p.7); these participants were not just crafting artefacts on their foundation courses but were also crafting themselves through modelling their provisional selves as they moved through the course. They became accultured as potential artists and designers, developed independence and began their journeys of becoming.

Foundation students do not only develop cultural capital in the form of their knowledge, skills, understanding and their portfolios, but also as they benefit from the higher level support, information and guidance in their awareness of the available sequel courses, and the process of making choices about these, which comes from specialist tutors rather than more generalist school staff (Pye Tait, 2007). They also build social capital through the friendships and connections they make on their courses. These relationships are vital as they support each other through their progression into the new programme’s expectations and practices, creating and validating a sense of shared identity and of authentic belonging to their new community of practice. For many, these relationships endure long after the programme.

The foundation course’s diagnostic introductory phase provides a planned and structured framework and a safe environment for students to develop and to take creative risks in a supportive environment, to explore the various specialist sub-fields, and provides a ‘launch pad’ (Luke), or ‘strong foundations’ (Egon) to build on without any narrow restrictions of specialisation. Egon’s foundation analogy is echoed by Narbi, who says ‘it did lay the “foundation” (pun intended) for an interrogative approach to positioning my work within a canon’.

The studio becomes a space ‘where boundaries are pushed, and unknown paths are pursued’ (Lofaro, 2016, p.63), which allows for what Vasudevan refers to as ‘unknowing’:

> Unknowing is an act of dwelling in the imaginative space between declarative acts of knowing and not knowing; an invitation to wrest our modes of inquiry and our beings away from the clutches of finite definitions of knowledge and instead rest our endeavours in the beauty of myriad ways of knowing. (2011, p.1157)

The creative cleansing element of the course (Williams, 1998), intended to move students on from the constrained nature of school examination art, closely resembles this state of unknowing through challenging students’ views and encouraging independent thinking. Although this is a challenging process it is carried out in a safe environment of structured freedom where students have licence to fail. The open ended, project-based nature of the programme allows them to think out of the box, to break the rules. Beyond this, it is also

clearly an intense, positive and enjoyable experience.

7.3.2 Identity

This theme addresses the second two research questions; have their foundation courses had any lasting effect or influence on the participants, their professional lives, practices and identities. How does the course achieve this?

Their journeys of becoming are driven by their illusio which interacts with and develops their habitus, acquiring a secondary habitus through pedagogic action, through their developing capital, and through their agency and practice interacting with the field. Furthermore, this normalisation of their identities within the field encourages further elaboration of their potential professional identities.

The diagnostic phase encourages students to develop vivid concepts of their identities as art students. For some their images of their future practitioner selves were already well elaborated as they started the course, like Barbara, Mervyn and Narbi, for others, such as Barry, Cath and Tess, this developed during the course as they began to identify with their potential sequel specialisms. This, combined with their socialisation both as art students and as aspiring practitioners, prepared them to set out on their own individual creative journeys, following their illusio and finding their own routes through the preparatory and specialist phases, and beginning to envisage themselves as potential practicing professionals in the specialist phase.

Although the foundation course shares much of its teaching and learning with all tertiary art courses, including the open studio environment, the collaborative, productive competitiveness (Barry, Egon) and learning from each other (Cath) as well as from staff (Mervyn), it is unique in that it has no boundaries of specialisation, and is entirely exploratory, ranging across the whole field of art and design. It is of short duration, time limited, and so more intensive (as noted by Mervyn), and is primarily concerned with the construction and validation of students' creative identities. Students are immersed in experiential learning, learning from practice, what Sprio calls the 'unpredictable and irregular state of coming into knowledge through practice' (2013, p.347). They are learning to be something, not learning about something. Indeed, Westerley (2015) describes foundation courses as teaching skills only in the service of realising ideas, matching Barry's comment about his course where there was 'Interest in your ideas more than your skills'.

The incremental development of their abilities to work in an increasingly open ended, self-directed and independent way which began on foundation carries on through their sequel courses (the Pye Tait report (2007) found that retention rates on degree courses for students

who had taken a foundation course were far higher than for direct entrants) and then into their professional practices. This applies not only to those who followed a direct degree to career route, but also to Barbara who dropped out of her sequel course, Mervyn who took time out between HE and his graphics career, and Journey who changed direction all together.

7.4 The course in the current policy climate

This section critically reflects on the last two research questions, where and how does the art foundation course fit into the current educational landscape? How does it differ from the vocationalist, neo-liberal discourse in tertiary education, and what lessons can be learned from this difference?

> ‘A sea change in educational conditions has left modern art education’s values washed up on a postmodern, neoliberal, shoreline’ (Robins, 2018, p.432).

In the light of that quotation and concern about ‘universities’ reluctance to come to terms with … artistry’ (Booth, 2017, p.251), this section examines the relationship between the foundation course and the neo-liberal discourse dominating current education and considers the broader implications in the light of the policy climate in which this study has been conducted, a climate which Eisner (1985) condemned as focused on performative market logics, narrowness and prescription and which has lost sight of personal experience through an:

> Infatuation with performance objectives, criterion referenced testing, competency based education, and the so-called basics lends itself to standardization, operationalism, and behaviourism, [a focus which is] far too narrow and not in the best interests of students, teachers, or the society within which students live. (p.367)

Art foundation embodies an alternative idea to, and challenges the orthodoxies enshrined in, the rationalities of the dominant educational discourse and the experimental nature of the foundation is a stark contrast to the instrumental nature of much education in the neoliberal era. The course is non-instrumental but set within the context of utilitarian, instrumental, vocationalist education. There are distinct and fundamental differences between a non-vocational art and design programme based on creative and critical exploration, ‘pursued along sometimes wildly disparate lines of enquiry’ (Cross, 2007), and other programmes which are increasingly concerned with vocational, entrepreneurial and business skills, leading to what Parker and Jarry (1995) have called the McUniversity.

Liberal education is very different to vocational training, which Micklethwaite describes as ‘a Gradgrindian professional reproduction model’ (2005, p.88). Rather than encouraging students to become independent and self actualising, commoditised higher education expects students to change to meet pre-determined goals (Kontowski, 2020) involving competencies which can be summatively assessed in what Biesta (2009) refers to as education in an age of

measurement, which reduces the curriculum to comply with ‘a bureaucratic process of measuring what is most easily measurable’ (Robins, 2016, p.348). This commodification of learning is described by Lave and Wenger as the focus on increasing the economic exchange value of acquired knowledge and skills rather than their ‘use value’ (1991 p.112). Liberal education, in contrast, is seen as transformative and should assist students to discover their individual ‘place in the world’ (Kontowski, 2020, p.211). The foundation course’s open ended, exploratory rather than instrumental nature, creates students who are active agents in their own learning rather than just passive consumers, and is far removed from what Friere calls the banking view of education, in which expert tutors deposit knowledge in students’ brains, rather than knowledge which ‘emerges only through invention and re-invention, through restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry’ (2000, p.76).

The logics of tertiary education in a regime of neo-liberalism (Glynos & Howarth, 2007) provide a strong contrast with the foundation course’s ethos and approach of creative, playful, experimental, even joyful risk taking, and, as Biesta suggests, 'if we take the risk out of education, there is a real chance that we take out education altogether' (2013, p.1). Giving students freedom and independence to experiment and to take risks stands in contrast to the dominant mode of education in which outcomes are predetermined and risk averse. Furthermore, this risk taking takes place within a structured freedom and a community built on the environment of an open, shared studio setting. Indeed, several participants describe this community as continuing throughout their lives, with contact maintained with fellow students and sometimes staff from their courses. The collaborative, communal learning that takes place within the foundation course, learning from other students, interactions with and between staff and peers, and learning from staff who also have professional practices, is at odds with the logic of atomization described by Glynos and Howarth, which serves to:

> downplay the social or structural aspect of success and failure in the self-understanding of persons and institutions, leaving them to view themselves as individually responsible for their successes and failures. (2007, p.172)

These collaborative relationships are vital as they support each other through progression into the new programme’s expectations and practices, socialising them into a sense of shared identity and belonging to their new community of practice. Although the emphasis of the course is on the individual students and their development as potential artists or designers, this development is also cooperative through the course’s social and collaborative pedagogies, which is very different to the concept of individuality operative within neo-liberal educational discourse.

There are three elements involved in the students’ induction into the field of art and design

and its community of practice during the foundation course, institutional, personal and community. The institutional element involves the setting for the course, the studio spaces and equipment, the course management and organisation, the staff, the ethos and the provision of a safe space for playful experimentation. The personal element includes the individual student's attitude and approach to the course, their illusio, the habitus and the cultural capital they bring to it, the cultural capital they add during the programme and the modification of their habitus. The community element is a combination of the first two elements and the community of learning that evolves amongst the students on the course, a generous learning community as students learn from and support each other; a learning community which is characterised by energy, vitality and playful discovery within a safe shared space.

This sense of community is at odds with the atomised, competitive nature of instrumentalist vocational education, and also very different to the relatively isolated professional environment of those participants who have gone on to work as freelancers. Additionally, while foundation courses create an environment which is nurturing of the students and their development, this is also very different to their later development as professionals, and the reality of needing to equate economic value to their work and practices. Dealing with the challenges of building creative careers in a neo-liberal regime and reconciling the tensions between their habitus and their practices as creative individuals with the demands of the market and of their clients requires considerable resilience as they try to reconcile their individual creativity and authenticity with economic requirements and uncertainties. Nevertheless, as these participants demonstrate through their entrepreneurial activities and successes, the course seems to set them up well to cope with this in spite of it being neither instrumental nor vocational. This may, at least in part, be due to the intensity of the time limited course; as Mervyn says 'We had much sharper deadlines and much more focus on the foundation course' than on his degree course. This community of learning is also far removed from Glynos and Howarth's logic of competition, which sees individuals interacting as rivals rather than as collaborators, and from their logic of instrumentalization, which sees the 'potentially intrinsic and processual qualities' (2007, p.172) of learning as less important than its exchange value.

7.4.1 Growing threats to art foundation courses

At interview for the PhD I was asked how I was going to avoid the thesis turning into a polemic about the course; it has come to feel as if I have been writing its eulogy. As commented on earlier, the Education Secretary and the Office for Students have cut funding for courses in 'performing and creative arts, media studies and archaeology' (OfS, 2021, p.6). In 2017 Policy Connect noted that delivering HE in FE colleges was far more cost-effective than in HEIs, and as

a result, when policy is dominated by reducing public costs and by individual returns on investment, HE in FE is seen by government as an attractive alternative. For students, however, given the hierarchical HE sector (Scott, 1995), when they attempt to enter an increasingly competitive employment market from HE in FE their qualifications are likely to be seen as less prestigious and of lower worth (Bathmaker 2016). Furthermore, there is real concern that HE students in the smaller institutions and in the mixed economy of HE in FE rather than the larger, more concentrated, HE sector institutions will 'miss out on the personal development and social capital building as a result' (Policy Connect, 2017 p. 58). Recent developments have signalled a continuing instrumental and punitive market-led approach to higher education provision; for example, when UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak was a contender for the Conservative Party leadership in 2022, he 'vowed to phase out university degrees that do not improve students' earning potential' (The Guardian, 2022). The Office for Students has also recently announced that it will impose sanctions on universities and colleges whose courses do not meet the threshold of 60 per cent of their students going on to 'further study, professional work, or other positive outcomes, within 15 months of graduating' (Office for Students, 2022), which, as discussed above, clearly has implications for art and design courses, especially with the slow start and the precarity of many creative careers.

As neo-liberal policies drive increased marketisation of higher education and greater competition between institutions, between courses and between students, there is an issue about higher education's contribution to the public good. Indeed, Rammel is concerned that what he sees as the function of universities, to act in the public interest and to contribute to 'the flourishing of civil society' may be lost (2016, p.6). He goes on to point out that this flourishing of civil society cannot be achieved through the individual's acquisition 'of decontextualized knowledge' (p.33) and that the risk that with the quality of education being judged on its economic returns, students are being offered a less rich educational experience and so risk graduating with a diminished level of social capital than they would otherwise have attained.

At the extreme, in a fully marketised higher education system, as Rammel points out, the total loss of subject areas which have low economic returns, or which are expensive for institutions to run would be completely acceptable (Falmouth University closed its foundation course in 2017 (Dawood, 2017) as it was too expensive to run; in 2022 the University of Wolverhampton announced it was closing its glass making degree course (Thomas, 2022) due to rising costs). These actual and further potential closures take no account of any public benefit arising from those courses, or the reduced opportunities for aspiring students. This possible loss of arts courses and indeed art departments, is nothing new for art and design, being reminiscent of

the closure of specialist art colleges in the 1960s onwards when they did not get validation for the Summerson Committee DipAD courses, and later as others closed as they were merged into larger polytechnics. Art course have also been under similar economic threats previously; as long ago as 1973, as art schools were being absorbed into polytechnics, Piper wrote that art students and their teachers were being 'judged by the crude standards of a cost-benefit analysis of art education' (Piper, 1973, p.1078).

A further cause for concern is that in place of a stand-alone foundation course, a number of HEIs offer degree courses with an integral foundation year. There are a number of issues with this and two specific issues with significant implications concerning progression route choice and affordability. Regarding the first, as discussed previously, this limits any sequel choice to the courses on offer in that institution, if, indeed, there is any choice, as some offer (for example) BA fine art with a foundation year or BA graphic design with a foundation year. Regarding the second, the stand-alone foundation course has no fees for students under age 19 so does not require a student loan, whereas the integral year requires four rather than three years of fees and loans.

7.5 Contribution to knowledge

Taken together, the participants' narratives add to the available understandings of the experience of being an art student and of becoming a practicing artist or designer. While there is considerable published literature about art education and creative careers, less of this is in the form of first person accounts. This research adds a set of processed first hand accounts to our collective knowledge, accounts which add new knowledge about the impact of this preliminary stage of tertiary art education and its lasting benefits to the participants as they develop their professional practices. These are but one set of creatives, and although these participants were not intended to be representative, the resounding similarity of themes suggest that the findings would resonate across the wider population. The study has produced a number of aspects which are original and significant:

The study has provided a new long view, with a retrospective reflection on the art foundation course from the viewpoint of established creative careers to add to the literature.

The study has produced evidence of the positive effects of the art foundation course and its enduring benefits to the participants, at a time when the course is under threat from multiple political and economic directions.

The study has also produced evidence for the benefits of a liberal, collaborative, social form of education, a process of transformation and becoming through experiential learning, a

process based on vocation rather than vocationalism (in contrast to the instrumentalist, prescriptive preparation for employment enshrined in neo-liberal education).

Although intended to lay the foundations for further study in art and design, this study provides evidence that the course also lays the foundations for creative careers, and for the survival of those careers in a neo-liberal economic regime.

As discussed in the literature review, there are a number of texts which consider the pre-diploma course and the foundation course historically, and others which consider issues of teaching and learning on foundation courses. There are also many publications which examine teaching and learning in degree stage art education. Studies which look at graduates' progression into creative careers have concentrated on the degree stage of education rather than the foundation course, whilst others concentrate on early-stage careers, without necessarily linking these to prior education. Although there are a few research outputs that explore students' understandings of their experiences on their foundation courses there is no published research that takes them from their school experiences, through their foundation courses, onto their degrees and through into their professional careers and practices. This study, based on the realties and contexts of practitioners in the creative industries, adds to the literature by demonstrating the lasting benefits to their careers and practices and to themselves as creative individuals which the participants ascribe to taking a foundation course.

In addition to presenting further research into what foundation courses actually do, away from their course outlines and the rhetoric of their promotional information (see Annex 4 for a selection of extracts from course descriptors from validating agencies and from course providers), this thesis takes a distinctive approach by examining issues which have not been examined holistically in the existing research literature on artists and designers and their relationships with their art and design foundation courses. The research produced an examination of the development of creative professionals through narrating life histories linking their school experiences, their experiences in tertiary education and their progression through their careers. The study focused on participants who had been in practice for some twenty years, making the majority of them around forty years old and so had had time to establish themselves in their careers (the time from school to their current practice for the participants covers at least 30 years), allowing them to take a retrospective long view, and to reflect on their journeys of learning and becoming, and so the research presented in this thesis begins to address this omission. One implication from this research is that hopefully, as well as providing a resource that art educators can use to inform their own critical reflections and practices, it might also serve to support their arguments for maintaining their courses in the face of potential closures.

The thesis also adds to the body of research on tertiary art education (and tertiary education more generally) by highlighting the benefits which can come from a liberal, non-vocational programme, and contrasting this with the dominant discourse of neo-liberal, vocationalist education. There is evidence in this study that the experiences these participants had on their foundation courses have had a positive impact of their perceptions of themselves as creative individuals, and which suggest that the personal transformations experienced by them can be attributed directly and specifically to their foundation experiences. Rather than the competitive, individualistic approach to learning fostered by neo-liberal policies, the participants clearly benefitted from mutual support and shared identity with their peers, creating a sense of belonging to and participating in a community of practice, enhancing their images of their potential professional selves. In spite of being non-vocational, the course does appear to produce strongly entrepreneurial creatives. As such their illusio makes them able to exploit their cultural capital to pursue contacts and commissions which further enhance their profiles and cultural capital, as well as bringing financial rewards.

This is not an attempt to make a case for an American Liberal Arts College style of liberal education, with its 'interdisciplinary curriculum spanning social science, natural science, arts, and humanities' (Godwin, 2015, p.236) but for an education which allows students to develop 'their own ways of thinking, doing and being' (Biesta, 2009, p.36) whatever their subject area, as the art foundation course has clearly done for these participants. The implication of this is, as Mervyn and Barbara point out, that the benefits of this style of foundation year could profitably be expanded to many other subject areas.

Another implication arising from this research is the possibility of further studies. As Luke points out, at the time these participants began their professional practices work was relatively easy to come by, even for a freelancer, so a study which followed participants just starting their foundation courses on into their careers would be able to consider the issues of precarity raised in the literature review but would require at least a decade. It would also be interesting to examine the issue of socio-economic and occupational class and how that impacts on the participants' initial cultural capital (their experience, or lack of experience, of art, design and other forms of culture) and the development of that capital over time. As this project looked at students who did complete and progress from their foundation courses, another potential topic of further study would be students who did not progress, and the reasons for this. A study comparing students on degree courses who had done foundation courses with direct entry students could also be illuminating.

7.6 Personal reflections on the study

Having examined the participants' journeys of becoming, this section reflects on my research

journey from its starting point with the research questions, through learning the importance of a robust research design (discussed and evidenced in the methodology chapter), to finding reasonable answers (Freebody, 2003) on the basis of findings that are trustworthy and credible.

After having previously discussed the parallels between art and qualitative research described by McCutcheon (1999) and Eisner (2001), I would add one from my own experience; in both art and research, it is less a matter of knowing a piece of work is finished but of knowing when to stop.

The results of the research did surprise me. From previous conversations with artists and designers I had expected comments like Cath's 'foundation had all been fun'. The intensity of the participants' experiences, the depth of the transitions they underwent, and the lasting impact of their courses came as a surprise and challenged some of my previous beliefs. As Freebody (2003) points out, and as I discovered, research has the potential to 'put the sort of activities that you know so well, and in which you have so long participated, under a new microscope' (p. 128). Finally, in view of the threats to the course's future discussed above, recording and celebrating what the course does, what it achieves for its students, has come to feel an increasingly worthwhile and timely endeavour.

7.7 Conclusion

The University of the Art London, the main validating agency for art and design foundation courses, has a full page in its Foundation Diploma Statement of Purpose (UAL, 2022) detailing what sort of specialist higher education courses foundation students could progress to; at the end of the page there is one line saying 'Students completing this qualification may progress to roles in the creative industries'. In spite of this lip service to employment possibilities the foundation course is clearly not a vocationalist programme, and yet, even in a neo-liberal economic and political climate, it does establish firm foundations for building creative careers and all the participants recognise the contribution their courses have made to their success. In spite of their degrees 'not being commercially focussed enough' (Mervyn), both Barbara and Mervyn rose through their sectors and eventually set up their own design agencies. Luke decided to study advertising for his degree with a view to being able to make a living and started to 'hustle work as a student'. In spite of their degrees offering 'little in the way of preparation for life beyond college' (Barry) both Barry and Narbi have successful fine art practices. After working for major architecture partnerships Egon set up his own practice during the pandemic, with completed projects and others in build. Unwilling to pay high rates of commission Cath opened her own gallery. On her foundation course Tess says she developed 'skills that I continue to utilise in my current working life', just as Mervyn and

Journey have also been able to apply the skills and attitudes developed on their foundation courses into other areas of work.

The study points to an alternative model of preparing people for professional creative careers, a model which is concerned with vocation rather than vocationalism. It is about becoming something rather than learning about something, what Ball (2019) calls ‘a process of creative self-fashioning’ (p.141). As Grayson Perry puts it, art is not something that you did, but ‘something that you *were*’ (Perry & Jones, 2007, p.145, emphasis in original). The gap between this model and the neo-liberal instrumentalist preparation for employment is clear in the contrast between skills as employment ready capabilities, and the foundation course’s emphasis on skills in the service of ideas, in which skills function to facilitate the realisation of ideas. Even Mervyn’s view of typography as a “trade” was applied to enable him to enhance the appearance and legibility of his designs. This process of learning to be something and the associated acquisition of appropriate skills is through experiential learning, an open-ended exploratory process of learning from practice linked to critical reflection on both the processes and the resulting artefacts. This linkage of practice and critical reflection prepares them well for careers in the creative industries (and indeed for other careers, including a career in nursing as Journey attests).

Without the constraints of a curriculum of prescribed units of knowledge, the course offers an ethos of playful, experimental freedom; freedom to take risks, freedom to fail and to learn from failure, within a cooperative social environment. Participants speak of an ‘atmosphere of friendly collaboration’ (Egon) coupled with a ‘productive form of competitiveness’ (Barry) occasioned by the open studio environment. This social aspect, of learning from each other as much as from lecturers, of seeing what everyone else is making, supporting and encouraging each other and discussing and critiquing each other’s work, is far removed from the competitive, individualistic approach to learning fostered by neo-liberal policies.

Finally, to return to the question at the start of this chapter, “The Foundation Diploma in Art and Design, is it worth the paper it is written on?”; for the reasons set out in this study the answer is that it is worth considerably more than that.

References

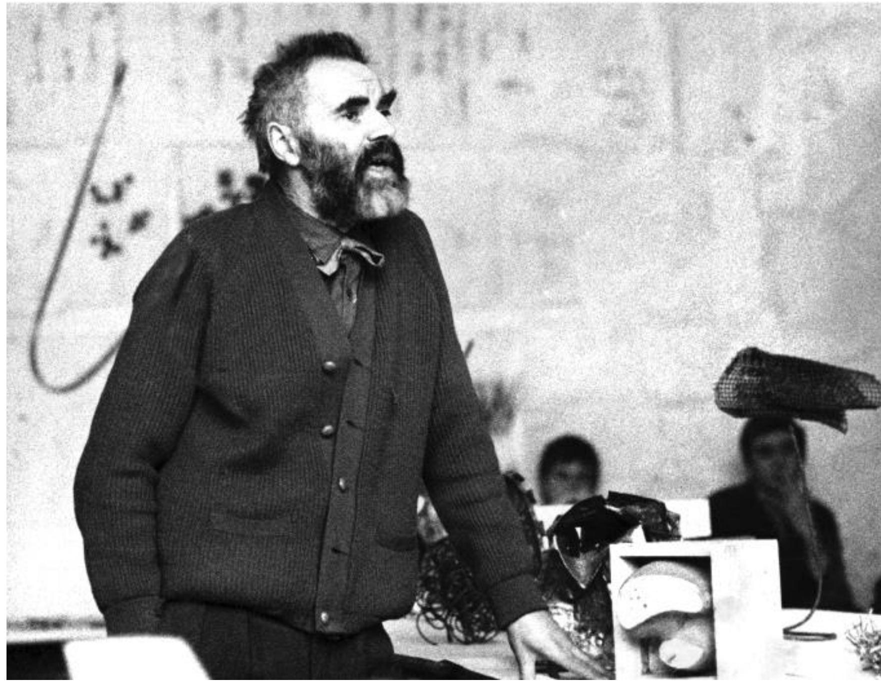

Figure 38. Victor Pasmore teaching at Newcastle in 1960.

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Image references

Figure 39. One of Harry Thubron’s students at Leeds College of Art

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6 *Point drawing: basic design work by a student of Richard Hamilton at Newcastle in 1965* [Internet]. Available from https://vads.ac.uk/digital/collection/BDC/id/364/rec/349 [Accessed 26 August 2020].

7 Hudson, T. (c.1956) *Session of group criticism, Scarborough Summer School, Yorkshire, c.1956* [Internet]. Available from http://images.tate.org.uk/sites/default/files/styles/grid-normal-12-cols/public/images/basic_design_display_tb1.jpg?itok=1WJHNlHl [Accessed 23 February 2016].

8 Richards, S. (1964) *Cardiff Foundation work sheet. Colour exercise: complementary variations-warm-cool-light-dark* [Internet]. Available from https://vads.ac.uk/digital/collection/BDC/id/21/rec/1 [Accessed 21 February 2022].

9 *Harry Thubron and Tom Hudson at the Scarborough Summer School, c.1965* [Internet]. Available from https://i0.wp.com/bobrichmond.co.uk/wp-content/uploads//2020/06/011B.jpg?resize=1000%2C717&ssl=1 [Accessed 23 February 2016].

10 Webb, B. (2012) *What do you need to be a professional artist?* [Internet] Available from https://artcareerbuilding.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/what-do-you-need-to-be-a-professional-artist-lo.jpg [Accessed 22 March 2016].

11 British Film Institute (n.d.) *Tony Hancock sculpting. (Image from the Rebel, 1961)* [Internet]. Available from http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/styles/full/public/image/rebel-the-1961-001-tony-hancock-sculpting-00m-oy5.jpg?itok=ey-z147Z [Accessed 24 July 2017].

12 *Richard Hamilton at King's College, Newcastle University, 1963* [Internet]. Available from https://narcmagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Richard-Hamilton-in-Kings-College-Newcastle-1963-c-National-Art-Education-Association__1506599899_128.65.101.130.jpg [Accessed 1 July 2018].

13 *In-vivo codes on sticky notes.* Personal photo.

14 *Codes sorted into groups*. Personal photo.

15 *Victor Pasmore at the Scarborough Summer School, c.1965.* [Internet]. Available from https://apollo.imgix.net/content/uploads/2014/11/Pasmore-teaching-Basic-Design.jpg [Accessed 25 May 2018].

16 *Barbara's foundation image*. Image supplied by participant.

17 *Barbara's now image*. Image supplied by participant.

18 *Barry's foundation image*. Image supplied by participant.

19 *Barry's first now image*. Image supplied by participant.

20 *Barry's second now image*. Image supplied by participant.

21 *Cath's foundation image*. Image supplied by participant.

22 *Cath's now image*. Image supplied by participant.

23 *Egon's foundation image*. Image supplied by participant.

24 *Egon's now image*. Image supplied by participant.

25 *Journey's foundation image*. Image supplied by participant.

26 *Journey's now image*. Image supplied by participant.

27 *Luke's foundation image*. Image supplied by participant.

28 *Luke's now image*. Image supplied by participant.

29 *Mervyn's foundation image.* Image supplied by participant.

30 *Mervyn's now image. Image* supplied by participant.

31 *Narbi's foundation image.* Close, C. (1967-8) *Big self-portrait, 1967-8.* Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis. [Internet] Available from https://walkerart.org/collections/artworks/big-self-portrait [Accessed 27 August 2020].

32 *Narbi's now image.* Price, N. (2000) *Studio 2020 (empty).* Image supplied by participant.

33 *Tess's foundation image.* Image supplied by participant.

34 *Tess's now image*. Image supplied by participant.

35 *Students on the basic design course, Newcastle University, 1964*. [Internet]. Available from www.hattonhistory.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/NAEA-1_0002-800x600.jpg [Accessed 1 July 2018].

36 *Tom Hudson teaching at Lowestoft School of Art* [Internet]. Available from https://d3i71xaburhd42.cloudfront.net/3cc8549610a860e5df3bdb2e11d9b5d7e9456516/143-Figure4.3-1.png [Accessed 16 May 2020].

37 *Students on the Pre-Diploma course, Leeds College of Art, c.1958* [Internet]. Available from https://d3i71xaburhd42.cloudfront.net/3cc8549610a860e5df3bdb2e11d9b5d7e9456516/71-Figure2.2-1.png [Accessed 16 May 2020].

38 *Victor Pasmore teaching at Newcastle in 1960* [Internet]. Available from https://www.hattonhistory.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/1960-c.-NAEA-1_0031.png [Accessed 1 July 2018].

39 *One of Harry Thubron's students at Leeds College of Art* [Internet]. Available from https://vads.ac.uk/digital/collection/BDC/id/389/rec/658 [Accessed 26 August 2020].

40 *Staff of the Bauhaus in 1926.* [Internet]. Available from https://cjbuildsllc.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/04-bauhaus-staff-1926.jpg [Accessed 16 May 2020].

41 Knowles, J. (1972) *Plant* [Wood and fibreglass]. Private collection, New Zealand. Personal photo.

42 Knowles, J. (1974) *Terraplane* [Wood and fibreglass]. Private collection, UK. Personal photo.

43 *The programme for the 1956 Scarborough Summer* School [Internet]. Available from www.hattonhistory.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/1956-summer-school-naea-Documents-1.jpg [Accessed 1 July 2018].

Annexes

Figure 40. Staff of the Bauhaus in 1926.

Left to right, Josef Albers, Hinnerk Scheper, Georg Muche, Laszlo Maholy-Nagy, Herbert Bayer, Joost Schmidt, Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Lyonel Feininger, Gunta Stolzl, Oskar Schlemmer.

Annex 1 Self within the research – an autobiography

A1.1 School, and a thwarted ambition

From age 11 I wanted to be an architect, an ambition which was encouraged by my art teacher. After my O level results I asked Hull School of Architecture what A levels I would need; they said maths, physics and art because you need to be able to draw and be able to make the buildings work as structures. In September I returned to school to enrol for those A levels (I had good O level passes in all three), but I was told that as there was a science stream and an arts stream in the sixth form I could not mix their courses, and the head said I should do art, music and literature in order to be an architect. I was in Newcastle in December and asked the University's school of architecture about my A levels, and their reply was the same as Hull's. When I returned to school after Christmas I told the head he was totally wrong and was immediately expelled.

A1.2 Art college entry and a 3D epiphany

I went to work in France for a few months while I decided what to do next.

> 'Recommendations in the first Coldstream Report stated that entry to the new Dip AD [Diploma in Art & Design] would depend on a satisfactory completion of a pre-diploma course, five O levels and a minimum age of 18. Of the five O levels, three subjects should be recognised as being 'academic' and one of them should be in a subject considered to provide evidence of English language ability.' (Lord, n.d.)

This meant that my O levels and my portfolio of work allowed me to apply to my local college, Hull Regional College of Art, for their pre-diploma course and I was offered a place. The first few weeks of my course were typical of this Bauhaus/Hudson/Thubron basic design programme. We had small sheets of paper and charcoal and were asked variously to make one mark that suggested balance, or imbalance, or stillness, or movement, and so on. Next we moved on to colour, much on the Albers line of comparing one colour with another, then constructions using balsa stick and card. At the time I was not (and in retrospect still am not) convinced that I learnt very much from this. But then we moved on to more project and material based work; figure drawing, printmaking, ceramics and sculpture.

Since all my school artwork had been painting and drawing, three dimensional work using a variety of materials including clay, plastics, welded steel and cast aluminium was a revelation. At that time students could apply for three sequel courses and all my applications were for courses involving sculpture, and I got a place at Stourbridge College of Art.

The college had two sculpture tutors, one who made large sculptures in glass and steel, and I often worked as his assistant at weekends and in the holidays, and occasionally for the other one, who worked in welded steel. This gave me an awareness of what it was like to be a professional artist, including the economics of producing work and exhibiting it. One gave me

some great advice, paraphrased as ‘You may not like the projects I set you, at least they’re there to do. The hardest piece of work you ever do will be the first thing you make after college, when there’s no-one there to tell you what to do!’. The day after I graduated I left I bought a big sheet of ply and started making a relief. As far as I know, I was one of only two in my year who carried on working.

A1.3 Early teaching career, exhibiting, and a question of professional identity.

I spent a year as an occupational therapist working with adults with severe learning difficulties, but then took a post-graduate Certificate in Education combined with a specialist Art Teaching Diploma. I had realised during my DipAD course that very, very few people make a living as sculptors, and many of the ones that do compromise what they do to get any kind of commercial success, so you needed something else to pay the bills. That was the motivation for getting into teaching, to finance being a sculptor.

From 1971 to 1986 I taught at a 13-18 senior high school in Hull, but was also a practising sculptor working in my studio at weekends making stuff, getting the odd commission, exhibiting (Solo Show, St Edmund Hall, Oxford University, 1973; Knowles & Tonks, The Gallery, Market Weighton, 1975; Solo Show, Lincolnshire & Humberside Arts Association, 1976; Hull Ferens Art Gallery Winter Show, various dates; Six Art Teachers, Hull Central Library, 1978; Humberside Art Teachers, Beverley Art Gallery, 1978 and Site Specific Sculptures, Bishop Burton College, 1985) and selling work. I also occasionally worked as an assistant to two professional sculptors working on large scale commissions Two examples of my work are below.

Figure 41. Plant, a two metre high sculpture (Knowles, 1972)

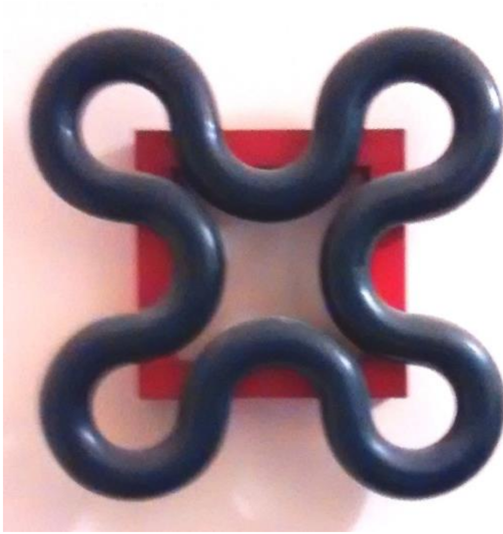

Figure 42. Terraplane, a one metre high relief (Knowles, 1974)

In 1982 the local authority sent out a document about gender equality; as I was teaching in a recently built girls' school which had no craft, design technology (CDT) facilities I sent in a request for funding to set up CDT resources. This was successful and enabled me to re-establish my interest in architecture, including getting a GCSE endorsed examination in architecture validated. I also secured a secondment to the Royal Institute of British Architects to work on their Architects in Schools programme.

A1.4 Teaching takes over

In 1986 I moved to the East Riding to become head of department in an 11-18 school and I switched from being a would-be sculptor who taught, to an art teacher who aspired to be a good head of department, and my own work declined. I was also teaching life drawing evening classes for the local FE college, largely so that my A level students could do some life work. I only stayed at the school for two years, and in the second year I was also acting head of sixth form. In 1988 a post as head of arts faculty in a new sixth form college was advertised nationally, and I was appointed.

Working in a sixth form college was wonderful. The whole atmosphere of the place and the attitude of the staff and (most) of the students made it fun as well as hard work. Because I was responsible for a broad range of subjects (art, design technology, home economics, music, PE, drama, and English) I got interested in their different curriculum offerings and why they went for those particular programmes and what else we could do. I persuaded some of the English department and others to develop media studies and taught the production element of the media course myself. I also encouraged PE, drama and music to get involved in dance.

I also became interested in why the college were getting very few students from certain schools in the city. When they had their own sixth forms they did send a few students off to

HE, but we were getting even fewer of their pupils into the sixth form college. After attending a conference about Coventry Polytechnic's Compact Scheme, I became convinced that this was because the schools had lost sight of HE and I started working with the local polytechnic and the local university to set up Compact style progression links with the 11-16 schools. This also led to developing an access course at the college for mature students and negotiating Year 0 courses franchised from the local university in maths and physics and electronics.

In 1990 I was promoted to an assistant principal post with responsibility for curriculum development, including an entitlement curriculum, records of achievement, links with higher education, the introduction of vocational courses and the Technical and Vocational Educational Initiative.

A1.5 The foundation course

During the Easter break in 1992, one of my A level art students rang me to say his interview for the local foundation course had been cancelled as the course had been closed. The Dean of the polytechnic's art school lived near me, so I went to see what was going on. He confirmed the course had been closed but offered support to develop one at the college. My principal agreed that we could proceed, and the LEA also offered financial support. I worked with the art school's staff on a course outline and burned a lot of midnight oil producing a full course document. We commissioned a large modular building for a studio, bought and acquired furniture and equipment, appointed a new member of staff, advertised the course, interviewed prospective students, and opened in September! During the following year we also got full BTEC accreditation for the course, becoming the only sixth form college with a formally recognised programme.

The three years I spent as course leader were probably the most exciting, most rewarding of my teaching career. My philosophy was that you didn't have one tutor and 20 students in the studio, you had 21 people working towards a common goal, because as a teacher of art, you learn from the students as much as they learn from you. Because I had aspired to be an artist and had had the experience of being an apprentice artist working with professional artists in their studios, I treated students as apprentice artists or designers. (My new colleague had also been a professional designer before coming into teaching.)

The other great joy was seeing the students mature. Those that came from the sixth form colleges had already crossed several of the thresholds, but for those who came from school sixth forms, watching them make the change to calling staff by their first names, becoming aware that they were being treated as equals by their tutors, starting to realise that they could debate and defend their work, and realising that their opinions were valued, listened to and discussed seriously made teaching on the course a delight.

A1.6 Widening participation takes over

I carried on working on HE links during that time, and in 1995 I was seconded to the University of Lincolnshire & Humberside to run a widening participation scheme linking the University to three 11-16 secondary schools serving disadvantaged communities, later expanded to six schools. Working with one of the pro-vice chancellors, we got academic board approval for a scheme which would see pupils (nominated by their schools as having potential) visiting the university and being treated as undergraduates, given work to do and feedback on their work, and then given a conditional offer of a place, based on a form of record of achievement, as they started their GCSE courses. Staff and students from the university volunteered to help with this. Feedback from the schools showed that this did make a difference to the pupils' performance and motivation, and a number did eventually enter the university or got places elsewhere. I also started working with primary schools through the Hull Children's University (this was so novel at the time that the THES sent a reporter to cover a day with a primary school group).

I was appointed as Widening Participation Coordinator at the University of Lincoln in 2001. I was able to employ recent graduates to work on the project on temporary contracts, depending on external funding, and we eventually worked with forty secondary and primary schools.

A1.7 Redundancy, retirement and research

In 2006, as I approached my 58th birthday, the university offered me voluntary redundancy. The university didn't pick up either of the two large external contracts I had negotiated, so I ran them as a self-employed freelancer. These entailed developing an information website for groups with very low participation in HE and delivering masterclasses to key stage 4 pupils on behalf of Aimhigher. I also got funding for two regional research projects , one looking at progression rates for four local authorities and another on issues around progression for students with specific learning support needs, and the two years of funding took me to 60 when I could pull down my teachers' pension.

Retirement didn't suit me. After a few months I took up a post as a part time research officer with the children's rights service in a local authority's children's social services. My real bosses were the young people on the children in care council, who commissioned most of the research. Examples include access to computers for homework, the effectiveness of designated teachers, how well the council dealt with requests for overseas school trips, and young people's satisfaction with fostering agencies.

At 65 I retired again and decided to start a PhD. My rebellious 1968 art college past came back to haunt me, however. Because I had not paid to "upgrade" my DipAD to a degree I had to

start with a Masters. I was accepted for a part-time masters by research at Huddersfield, looking at art teachers' professional identities and attitudes to promotion (Knowles, 2015). Although I had worked in HE and as a researcher, this was almost as transformative as my pre-diploma course had been. I was fortunate to have a supervisor who challenged and transformed my thinking, my approach to research and my writing, and made significant inroads into turning me into a proper academic researcher, rather than just someone who researched stuff. Having attained the Masters, I started on this PhD.

Annex 2 Art and design degree courses

A considerable range of degree courses are available in the UK (UCAS, 2017). These include:

Art

Fine art, Fine art contemporary practice, Fine art critical practice, Fine art drawing, Fine art installation, Fine art painting, Fine art printmaking, Fine art sculpture, Environmental art

Graphics

Graphic design, Advertising design, Animation, Comic & graphic novel design, Digital media design, Game design, Graphic communication, Illustration, Web design

Fashion

Fashion & textiles, Contour fashion design, Cordwainers [shoes & bags, etc.], Fashion design, Printed surface design, Sportswear design, Surface pattern design, Textile design

Design

3D design, Applied arts, Ceramics, Decorative arts, Design for theatre, film & performance, Exhibition & museum design, Furniture design, Glass, Industrial design, Interior design, Jewellery & silversmithing, Modelmaking design, Multimedia design, Product design, Scenic arts, Special effects design, Theatre design, Transport design

Art history

Art history, Curating & art history, History of art & museum studies, Visual culture

The Guardian Good University Guide (2023) lists the number of art and design courses and the number of institutions offering them:

Animation and game design, 615 courses in 93 institutions

Fashion and textiles, 593 courses in 77 institutions

Film production and photography, 520 courses in 91 institutions

Fine art, 241 courses in 72 institutions

Graphic design, 640 courses in 85 institutions

History of art, 251 courses in 37 institutions

Interior design, 522 courses in 78 institutions

Product design, 709 courses in 99 institutions

Annex 3 Scarborough Summer School, 1956

The programme for the 1956 Summer School.

NORTH RIDING SUMMER SCHOOL

SCARBOROUGH 1956

11 day COURSE in DRAWING, PAINTING, SCULPTURE and CONSTRUCTION

The nature of this course has differed from that of previous years in so far as it has not concentrated on providing opportunities for the student to produce complete works. Instead, the purpose has been to investigate the possibility of providing a course of basic training in keeping with the demand of modern visual art.

As modern art is "conceptional" rather than "perceptual", a form of laxity is necessary, whereby the student is given the means of formulating his own objective basis. Knowledge of how to reproduce nature's effects and appearances (as in naturalistic painting) gives way to knowledge of the causes by which these effects are produced. This course, therefore, provides opportunities for the study of form and colour at all levels by analysing their fundamental structure and aesthetic functions.

The course has been divided into a series of exercises beginning in two dimensions and finishing with three.

1. A series of exercises in area division and relationships (pencil)
2. Free spatial relationships of given rectilinear areas (paper collage)
3. Colour analysis and association (oil paint)
4. Development of primary forms (other than rectilinear) and their complimentaries (charcoal)
5. Analytical drawing from natural forms (pencil)
6. Development of cubic relationships in mass (carving)
7. Building in mass and development of free forms (clay modelling)
8. Spatial division and light relationships with rectilinear planes (construction)
9. Spatial division and relationships with straight lines (dowl rods)
10. Spatial relationships in curvelinear form (wire)

R^{H}§/PL/8

Figure 43. The programme for the 1956 Scarborough Summer School

Annex 4 Art Foundation Course statements.

This section gives a selection of extracts from course descriptors from validating agencies and from course providers.

Validating agencies

Offered at Levels 3 and 4, the UAL Foundation Diploma in Art and Design is a pivotal qualification, which provides a transition from general education to specialist art and design education. (University of the Arts London, 2022)

Our BTEC Foundation Diploma in Art and Design is a project-based course that lets you develop your portfolio so you have the best possible chance of getting a place at art college or on a BA or foundation degree. (EDEXEL/Pearson, 2022)

Course providers

You will be taught by experienced staff, including practising artists and designers, who have extensive experience across a wide breadth of art and design disciplines. They will support you through the UCAS application process and help you find the most appropriate degree course. Admissions tutors at highly selective universities look favourably on applicants with a Foundation Diploma in Art & Design. (Leeds Arts University, n.d.)

The Diploma in Art & Design - Foundation Studies is the perfect course to take after your A-Levels if you're looking to progress onto a degree in any creative subject. This year-long course will help you improve your skills and knowledge across a wide range of art and design subjects, preparing you for your chosen degree or helping you decide which course to study. (University for the Creative Arts, 2022)

This accredited course prepares you for the study of art and design at degree level. You'll gain an understanding of visual communication, three dimensional design, fashion and fine art. You'll explore a range of art forms and techniques, and begin to develop your own creative style. (Kingston University, n.d.)

The Foundation course is designed for post A-Level (or equivalent) 18-year-old students, to provide a unique transitionary year between 6th form/college and creative degrees at university. It's an intensive experience which enables you to develop your own individual creative identity, discover which art and design discipline best suits you and equips you with the skills and confidence to apply and thrive at university on any of the many creative degrees available nationally and internationally.
Foundation, which is free to those aged under 19 years old, helps you avoid costly mistakes by enabling you to be sure of your subject choice at degree level. (Northern School of Art, 2021)

[T]his 1 year course is fundamental if you want to progress to university to study Art & Design at degree level. It will give you the opportunity to study a wide range of art and design disciplines before you decide on the area you wish to specialise. (Cambridge School of Visual and Performing Arts, 2021)

Foundation Diploma in Art and Design is a year-long course providing the vital stepping stone from A-Level / Extended Diploma to Higher Education. (Lincoln College, 2020)

The Art & Design Foundation course provides the transition from general education to specialist art and design education. Specialist areas include Fine Art, Fashion and Textiles, Graphic Design and Illustration, and Three Dimensional Design. The course enables students to make an informed decision regarding what area they want to apply to within Art and Design at undergraduate level. (York College, 2022)

The Foundation Diploma in Art and Design at Central Saint Martins is an intensive one year pre-degree course designed to prepare students for specialist undergraduate degrees in art and design. For many students it offers the ideal bridge from a school education to the demands of specialist undergraduate study in the creative arts. (Central St Martins College, University of the Arts London, 2022)

Annex 5 Consent form and information sheet

Research Consent Form

Name of Researcher John Knowles

Title of study: The impact of the Art and Design Foundation Course on the subsequent choices and careers of art and design students.

The aim of this research is to obtain rich narrative accounts of how graduates from art and design foundation courses perceive, establish and develop their identities as artists or designers into their subsequent degree programmes and on into their careers.

Please read and complete this form carefully. If you are willing to participate in this study, ring the appropriate responses and sign and date the declaration at the end. If you do not understand anything and would like more information, please ask.

I have had the research satisfactorily explained to me in written form by the researcher. YES / NO

I understand that the research will involve an audio recorded interview, lasting around one hour, and the production of two images in advance of the interview. YES / NO

I understand that these images may be reproduced in reports on the research (including any conference papers or journal articles) and in the final thesis. YES / NO

I understand that my involvement in this research is entirely voluntary. Should I choose to take part I am free to decline to answer any questions and I am free to withdraw my participation and my data at any time during the project without having to give an explanation. YES / NO

I understand that care will be taken to preserve my anonymity so that my real name is not disclosed at any point. Any identifiable information (such as the university where I studied or organisations I have worked for) will be changed or removed during transcription. However, if I wish to be identifiable (e.g. by speaking as a representative of an organisation, or by association with my artistic output) I can choose to be so identified. YES / NO

I understand that any audio recording of my interview will be used solely for research purposes and will be destroyed on completion of your research or if I choose to withdraw from the research. YES / NO

I understand that you will be discussing the progress of your research with staff and other research students at York St John University. YES / NO

I freely give my consent to participate in this research study and have been given a copy of this form for my own information.

Signature:

Date:

Interview notes

Thank you for agreeing to be a participant in my PhD research.

The impact of the Art and Design Foundation Course on the subsequent choices and careers of art and design students

My aim is to obtain rich narrative accounts of the way graduates from art and design foundation courses perceive, establish and develop their identities as artists or designers into their subsequent degree programmes and on into their careers.

In advance of your interview, can I ask you firstly to choose a pseudonym which I can use when writing up the report, and also to produce two images or artefacts to use in your interview; one based on your identity on your ADF course and another based on your identity now? My intention in using this approach is informed in part by Jones' maxim that 'If your research question is about people, find a way to really involve them in the process, not just answer some stupid questions' (Jones, 2014), and that art/design creative people are as, or more, happy to communicate through images than through words, and may express different things in the other medium. (Images can be 2D or 3D, any media/mixed media, as long as they will reproduce at A4 or will photograph to go in the thesis.)

I have attached a consent form for your information, which I will ask you to sign and return before we start the interview.

If you have any questions, my email address is john.knowles@yorksj.ac.uk, and my mobile number is 07519 569343.

Many thanks,

John Knowles

Jones, K. (2014, December 30). *Kip Jones' ten 'rules' for being creative in producing research*. [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://kipworldblog.blogspot.co.uk/2014/12/kip-jones-ten-rules-for-being-creative.html [Accessed 19 March 2016]

Annex 6 E-consent form and information sheet

Research Consent Form

Name of Researcher John Knowles

Title of study: The impact of the Art and Design Foundation Course on the subsequent choices and careers of art and design students.

The aim of this research is to obtain rich narrative accounts of how graduates from art and design foundation courses perceive, establish and develop their identities as artists or designers into their subsequent degree programmes and on into their careers.

Please read and complete this form carefully. If you are willing to participate in this study, delete the inappropriate responses and sign and date the declaration at the end. If you do not understand anything or would like more information, please ask.

I have had the research satisfactorily explained to me in written form by the researcher. YES / NO

I understand that the research will involve me participating in an exchange of email questions and answers and producing two images in advance of the interview. YES / NO

I understand that these images may be reproduced in reports on the research (including any conference papers or journal articles) and in the final thesis. YES / NO

I understand that my involvement in this research is entirely voluntary. Should I choose to take part I am free to decline to answer any questions and I am free to withdraw my participation and my data at any time during the project without having to give an explanation. YES / NO

I understand that care will be taken to preserve my anonymity so that my real name is not disclosed at any point. Any identifiable information (such as the university where I studied or organisations I have worked for) will be changed or removed during transcription. However, if I wish to be identifiable (e.g. by speaking as a representative of an organisation, or by association with my artistic output) I can choose to be so identified. YES / NO

I understand that the texts of my interview will be used solely for research purposes, securely stored on encrypted computer drives, and will be destroyed on completion of your research or if I choose to withdraw from the research. I also understand that this signed form will be stored securely and will be destroyed on completion of the research or if I choose to withdraw. YES / NO

I understand that you will be discussing the progress of your research with staff and other research students at York St John University. YES / NO

I freely give my consent to participate in this research study and have retained a copy of this form for my own information.

E-signature:

Date:

Interview notes

Thank you for agreeing to be a participant in my PhD research.

The impact of the Art and Design Foundation Course on the subsequent choices and careers of art and design students

My aim is to obtain rich narrative accounts of the way graduates from art and design foundation courses perceive, establish and develop their identities as artists or designers into their subsequent degree programmes and on into their careers.

In advance of your interview, can I ask you firstly to choose a pseudonym which I can use when writing up the report, and also to produce two images or artefacts to use in your interview; one based on your identity on your ADF course and another based on your identity now? My intention in using this approach is informed in part by Jones' maxim that 'If your research question is about people, find a way to really involve them in the process, not just answer some stupid questions' (Jones, 2014), and that art/design creative people are as, or more, happy to communicate through images than through words, and may express different things in the other medium. (Images can be 2D or 3D, any media/mixed media, as long as they will reproduce at A4 or will photograph to go in the thesis.)

I have attached a consent form for your information, which I will ask you to sign and return before we start the interview.

If you have any questions, my email address is john.knowles@yorksj.ac.uk, and my mobile number is 07519 569343.

Many thanks,

John Knowles

Jones, K. (2014, December 30). *Kip Jones' ten 'rules' for being creative in producing research*. [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://kipworldblog.blogspot.co.uk/2014/12/kip-jones-ten-rules-for-being-creative.html [Accessed 19 March 2016]

Annex 7 Interview schedule

Before Foundation	Tell me about your experience of art/design at school.
	KS4, A level/BTEC …
	When did you decide to study art/design after school?
	Why?
	Did you work or do anything else before ADF?
Foundation	Can you talk a bit about the transition into ADF?
	What were your aims/ambitions when you started ADF?
	Did ADF change or reinforce these? How?
	Did ADF change you? If so, how? Identity [IMAGE]
	Why ADF rather than direct (if applicable)?
	Did you progress to A/D sequel? (If not, why? What instead?)
	Anything else about ADF?
Degree/sequel course	Did you work or do anything else between ADF and sequel course?
	Specialism?
	How well did ADF prepare you?
	What were your aims/ambitions for degree?
	Did these change? (How? Why?)
	How well did it prepare you for work?
	Any placements?
	Did you go on to PG? If so, what? Straight away or later?
Career	Can you talk a bit about the transition from student to work?
	Work straight away? (Interning/volunteering?)
	Employment/self-employed?
	Precarity? Freelancing? Portfolio working?
	Transitions within work?
	Identity [IMAGE]
	Does ADF still influence you in any way?
	Looking ahead?
Closing	Anything else you would like to add?
	Anything to re-visit?
	Thank you

Annex 8 Interview schedule mapped onto research questions

Research Questions	Interview Questions
Preamble	Tell me about your experience of art/design at school; Key stage 4, A level/BTEC… When did you decide to study art/design after school? Why? Did you work or do anything else before ADF?
What are artists' and designers' experiences and views of their art foundation courses?	Can you talk a bit about the transition into ADF? What were your aims/ambitions when you started ADF? Did ADF change or reinforce these? How? Did ADF change you? How? Identity then (using image)? Why ADF rather than direct (if applicable)? Did you progress to A/D sequel? (If not, why? What instead?)
Have their foundation courses had any lasting effect or influence on the participants, their professional lives, practices and identities.	Did you work or do anything else between ADF and sequel course? Specialism? How well did ADF prepare you? What were your aims/ambitions for degree? Did these change? (How? Why?) How well did it prepare you for work? Any placements? Did you go on to PG? If so, what? Straight away or later?
	Can you talk a bit about the transition from student to work? Work straight away? (Interning/volunteering?) Employment/self employed? Precarity? Freelancing? Portfolio working? Transitions within work? Identity now (using image)? Does ADF still influence you in any way? Looking ahead?
How does the course achieve this?	What were your aims/ambitions when you started ADF? Did ADF change or reinforce these? How? Did ADF change you? How? Identity (using image)? How well did ADF prepare you for your sequel course? Does ADF still influence you in any way?
The final questions use a mix of interview questions and literature sources	
Where and how does the art foundation course fit into the current educational landscape?	Literature including policy documents

How does it differ from the vocationalist, neo-liberal discourse in tertiary education, and what lessons can be learned from this difference?	What were your aims/ambitions when you started ADF? Did ADF change or reinforce these? How? Did ADF change you? How? Identity (using image)? How well did ADF prepare you for your sequel course? What were your aims/ambitions for degree? Did these change? (How? Why?) How well did it prepare you for work? Identity now (using image)? Does ADF still influence you in any way?
	Literature including policy documents
Close	Thank you. Anything else? Anything to re-visit?