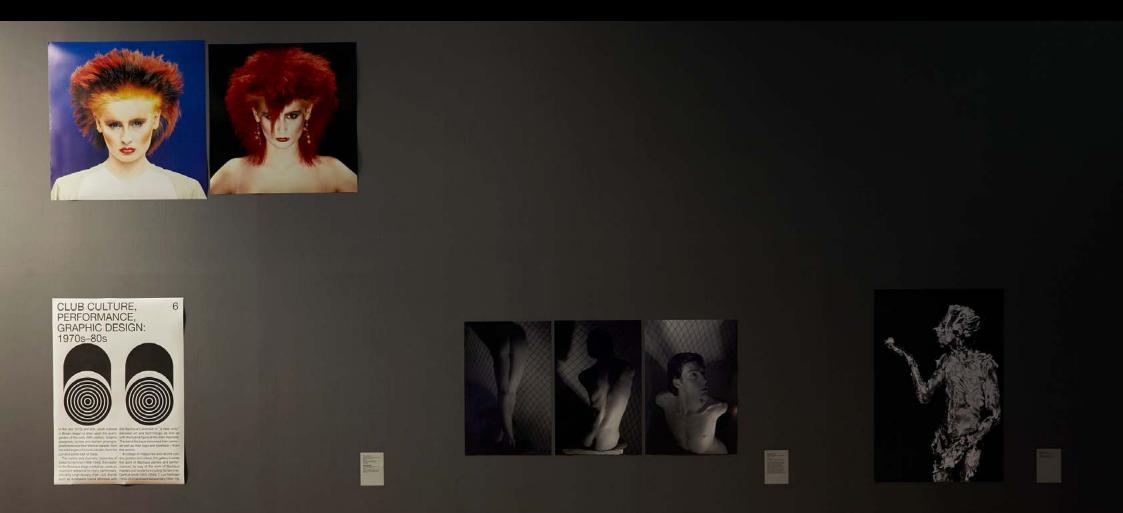


BAUHAUS IMAGINISTA + STILL UNDEAD





Type of output: Exhibitions

by Gavin Butt

Bauhaus Imaginista, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 2019.

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SUMMARY

Butt was Research Curator on the international Bauhaus Imaginista project devising material on Leeds art education for two exhibitions: *Bauhaus Imaginista* (Haus der Kulturen der Welt, March 15 – June 10 2019) and *Still Undead: Popular Culture in Britain Beyond the Bauhaus* (Nottingham Contemporary, September 21 2019 – January 12 2020).

Bauhaus Imaginista marked the centenary of the founding of the Bauhaus by critically reassessing the reach and significance of the institution's ideas and practices across multiple transnational contexts. Different themes were explored across four "chapters." Butt was involved in the "Still Undead" chapter addressing experiments in light design, sound art, expanded cinema, performance and popular culture in Bauhaus-influenced colleges in the US and UK after WWII. The exhibitions restored Leeds as an important regional centre for art school experiment within the globalist purview of Bauhaus internationalism.

Butt's work on this project was informed by his research into regional UK art education and the decisive role played by punk rock in revising the priorities of Fine Art students in the 1970s and 1980s, part of a broader revisionist assessment of the importance of experimental art education within art history and popular music studies (Bracewell 2007; Tickner 2008, Wilkinson 2016).

Butt was research-lead in curating works of art, sound samples and ephemera related to the Leeds Polytechnic sound studio and performance space, and collaborated with project curators in determining the design, narrative trajectory, and intellectual underpinnings of Leeds-based exhibits.

Bauhaus Imaginista and Still Undead were realised in partnership between Goethe Institute, Bauhaus Kooperation, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, and Nottingham Contemporary. Funding was provided by the German Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, the Federal Foreign Office, and Kulturstiftung des Bundes. Butt also contributed essays to the project publication and online journal and participated in its symposium and education programmes.





Left and right: *Still Undead: Popular Culture in Britain Beyond the Bauhaus*, Nottingham Contemporary, 2019.

TIMELINE

| 2018 - | 2019 MAR-JUN | 2019 JUN-SEP | 2019 oct | 2019 DEC |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| Butt invited to participate by Haus Der Kulturen der Welt. Research begins and Leeds exhibits identified and sourced. | Chapter in book. "Polytechnics and Punks" by Butt in Von Osten and Watson (eds.), (Thames & Hudson). Exhibition. Bauhaus Imaginista, Haus Der Kulturen Der Welt, Berlin. 15th March-10th June 2019. | Butt employed by HKW, Berlin and Nottingham Contemporary as Research Curator. Further development of Leeds exhibits for Nottingham Contemporary. Journal article. Online publication of "Bedsit Art in the Leeds Experiment." | Public workshop. "Being in a Band: When the Leeds Art Experiment Went Pop" study session, Nottingham Contemporary. | Article. "Polytechnika und Punks. Das Fortleben des Bauhauses im UK der Seventies," Stadt Bauwelt, No. 224. |
| | Conference paper/ presentation. "Bedsit Art in the Leeds Experiment" at "A New School" conference, Haus Der Kulturen Der Welt, Berlin. 11th May 2019. | Exhibition. Still Undead: Popular Culture in Britain Beyond the Bauhaus, Nottingham Contemporary. 21st September- 12th January 2020. | | |

The exhibitions showed how art students turned to music-making to break out of the elite art world and create new sounds and styles of selfhood for record-buying publics and within nightclubs.



Above: Fad Gadget, *Back to Nature*, Mute Records, 1979.

RESEARCH CHALLENGE

Butt was invited by *Bauhaus Imaginista* chief curators Marion Von Osten and Grant Watson to help assess the legacy of the Bauhaus in post-war UK art education and to chart the impact of modernist experimentalism in visual arts and design more broadly within British popular culture. Leeds was chosen as a key location because the city's College of Art was a UK pioneer of the Bauhaus-inspired pedagogy of Basic Design in the post-war decades, and Leeds Polytechnic was renowned for student work in performance art and post-punk music in the 1970s and 1980s. The aim of Butt's contributions was to show how performance and sound recording facilities at Leeds Polytechnic, alongside avant-gardist studio discourses, facilitated the creation of 1980s pop and electro-pop music and their associated theatrical and subcultural street-styles.



Right: Installation shot of Soft Cell exhibit, *Bauhaus Imaginista*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin.

Left: Marc Almond, *Zazou*, 1978 Right: Installation shot of Soft Cell exhibit, *Bauhaus Imaginista*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin.





CONTEXT

Butt's curatorial work on *Bauhaus Imaginista* forms part of his broader research into the histories of popular music, performance and art education, including co-edited volume *Post-Punk Then and Now* (Butt, Eshun and Fisher 2016).

This work is part of a recent field of scholarship addressing the role played by post-war UK art education in effecting cultural change (Beck and Cornford 2012; Llewellyn and Williamson 2015) and renewed understandings of the relations between fine art and pop music (Frith and Horne, 1987; Roberts, 2018).

The specific local focus on Leeds, celebrated in 1971 by Patrick Heron as possessing the "most influential art school in Europe since the Bauhaus," is designed to restore regional histories of British experimental pedagogy to the globalist purviews of art history and contemporary museology. Butt's curatorial input to both exhibitions presents electro-pop and experimental music created by Leeds art students, as well as their associated sub- and club cultural styles, as significantly marked by the libertarian experiment of British art pedagogy after Basic Design and the Bauhaus.

Butt's curatorial contributions challenge the limited knowledges of art education circulating within popular music scholarship and journalism and their customary focus on the "art pop" of heterosexual male bands (e.g. Reynolds 2006). *Bauhaus Imaginista* and *Still Undead* focus instead on the creation of dissident queer and female identities enabled by visual arts experiment in club culture, drawing on the insights of feminist and queer scholarship (Buckland 2002, Goldman 2019). The exhibitions show how art students turned to music-making to break out of the elite art world and create new sounds and styles of selfhood for the record-buying publics and within nightclubs.



Right: George Hinchcliffe and Ian Wood installation, Haus Der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin.

METHODS AND PROCESSES

Butt worked with a research assistant (Mariana Meneses) who undertook contextual research on Basic Design whilst he confirmed with Watson and Von Osten the artists and exhibits as follows:

Frank Tovey (a.k.a. electro-pop act Fad Gadget): photography, prints, sketchbooks and audio materials pertaining to *The Loopy and Berg*; vinyl record covers, and photography by Barbara Frost and Anton Corbin

Marc Almond and **Dave Ball** (Soft Cell): press clippings, photographs and Warehouse nightclub ephemera; audio (The Bedsit Tapes); film Sally Bairstow *Glamerama*.

George Hinchcliffe and **Ian Wood** (Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain): *Dehbye*, pictorial and musical notations, and supporting documentation

Ros Allen and **Marian Lux** (of bands Delta 5 and Really): photo documentation

Photographs and documentation of Leeds Poly sound studio and performance space.

The Estate of Frank Tovey, the Soft Cell archivist, Hinchcliffe and Wood, Allen and multiple lenders of documentary materials were contacted to supply original materials.





Above top: Barbara Frost, photographs of Frank Tovey, 1978. Above: Photograph of Ros Allen, Delta 5, c. 1979. It was decided to focus on work made in the purpose-built performance space and sound studio at Leeds Polytechnic.

The aim was to make vivid for the exhibition visitor connections between these facilities and the invention of futuristic electro-music and new street styles and forms of club culture. This was achieved by presenting audio recordings in the gallery alongside film and video works, performance documentation, club ephemera, musical notation and sketchbook material. Some channels were on headphones, others ambient in the space, and vinyl records by Fad Gadget were available for visitors to play on turntables in the final room of the exhibition at Nottingham Contemporary.

This was the first time this material was exhibited in public.





Above: Frank Tovey, *Berg*, 1978. Publicity stills and poster, sketchbook pages, audio soundscape.

Left: Frank Tovey, Berg, 1978.

For the Nottingham Contemporary show Butt worked with exhibiting artists Hinchcliffe and Wood to reconstruct their 1978 experimental sound work *DEHBYE*. Adopting an approach of curatorial reanimation, a novel installation of the work was arrived at. Made from an unconventionally long, spliced tape loop, *DEHBYE* moved across spools on the gallery wall through a reel-to-reel tape recorder to produce ambient sound through a loudspeaker, accompanied by documentary materials also displayed on the surrounding wall space.

This was the first time the work had been presented for gallery exhibition since its creation.





Left: George Hinchcliffe and Ian Wood, *DEHBYE*, reconstruction, Nottingham Contemporary, 2019.

Above: George Hinchcliffe and Ian Wood, *DEHBYE*, musical transcription, 2019.

In the Berlin exhibit the Leeds materials were included in a diffuse and open presentation alongside other elements. This was to encourage historical comparisons between Leeds forms of self-fashioning, Bauhaus parties and London club culture.

In the Nottingham exhibit a dedicated gallery space was assigned to Leeds Polytechnic. Tovey exhibits were included both here and in the final gallery space 'Club Culture, Performance and Graphic Design' to help make connections between the focused Leeds presentation and the broader cultural field with which *Still Undead* concluded its curatorial narrative.

Below: Installation, Haus Der Kulturen Der Welt.





Below: 'Club Culture, Performance and Graphic Design,' Nottingham Contemporary



DISSEMINATION

The exhibits in both shows were accompanied by reference material about Leeds authored by Butt on wall texts and labels and in printed gallery guides, and he participated in guided gallery tours of the Berlin exhibit. Both shows had extended periods of exhibition and brought Butt's academic research to a gallery-going public.

Attendance figures were as follows:

Berlin – 32,000 **Nottingham** – 60,976

Butt was also contributor to the international conference 'A New School' at Haus der Kulturen der Welt in May 2019. His paper 'Bedsit Art in the Leeds Experiment' was revised and extended and accepted for publication in the *Bauhaus Imaginista* online journal.

At Nottingham Contemporary Butt delivered a study session as part of the Sonic Bauhaus season: 'Being in a Band: When the Leeds Art Experiment Went Pop' on October 1 2019.

Butt also contributed an essay to the summary publication of the Bauhaus Imaginsta project: 'Polytechnics and Punks: The 1970s After-life of the Bauhaus', Marion von Osten and Grant Watson (eds), , London: Thames & Hudson, 2019, pp. 278-282 (also in German). This was additionally republished in *Stadt Bauwelt*, No. 224, 2019, pp. 40-41.

Butt also delivered talks related to this project at West Dean College of Arts and Conservation <u>'Bauhaus Art and Education in Practice'</u> conference (October 2019); and the Młode Wilki in Szczecin, Poland <u>'Life After Academy?'</u> event (November 2019).

Butt's scholarship was singled out for extended approving critical engagement in Peter Suchin's 'An Experimental Education' review article in Art Monthly, March 2020. Will Gompertz (BBC) wrote of the Nottingham show: "The results of Basic Design course are presented in the final room of the exhibition, which is dedicated to work connected to Leeds Polytechnic in the 1970s and 80s [...] a rousing finale."

Bauhaus Imaginista project site: http://www.bauhaus-imaginista.org/events/683/bauhaus-imaginista-berlin

https://www.nottinghamcontemporary.org/whats-on/undead-pop-culture-in-britain-beyond-the-bauhaus/



Left: Bedsit Art in the Leeds Experiment, *Bauhaus Imaginista* online journal article







Above and Farthest Left: Leeds Polytechnic 1970s-1980s, Nottingham Contemporary. Left: Bauhaus Imaginista, Thames & Hudson.

Below: Article in Bauwelt journal

Polytechnika und Punks Das Nachleben des Bauhaus im Vereinigten Königreich der 70er Jahr

Text Gavin Butt



Gang of Four vor dem brutalistischen Roger Ste vens Building der Leeds University, 1979

40 THEMA



Left: Sonic Bauhaus study session, Nottingham Contemporary



Left: Will Gompertz review, BBC News

Below: Peter Suchin article, Art Monthly, March 2020

An Experimental Education

Peter Suchin argues that, for all the faults of art schools in the past, from Leeds to London, compar with today," high-pressure university environmen they offered unprecedented freedom and opportun ties to experiment, collaborate, agitato and, of course, to start a band.

Among the considerable amount of literature about art schools to have hit the presses in recent years, a substantial proportion of these texts focus on art education in Britain in the 1900s, 1970s and 1980s. education in Britain in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. To some degree this came about through individuals looking back at their own personal experiences, an approach taken, for example, by Yaughan Gryls in his I bought this in Class: The 1960s, Four Art Schools and Me. Possin and in Case: The 1990s, Pour Art Schools and Me, 2014, in which Grylla saxembled 'tota of joitings I made at the time' so as to produce a memoir of the period he spent as a student at Wolverhampton, 'an extraordinary 1960s art school'. The volume, amusing though it may be, is more personal than analytical, whereas James Charnley, in his Creative License: From Leeds College of Art to Leeds Polytechnic 1963-1973, 2015, provides not only an account of his time as a student at Leeds Poly from 1970 to 1973, but also a wide-rangsion of the first ten years of the art school's incorporation within one of the then new polyte Lisa Tickner's Hornsey 1968: The Art School Revo ion within one of the then new polytechni 2008 (Reviews ANSI6), is also written by a former student with direct experience of the circumstances under review, though she was only marginally involved in the notorious Horness within that are the focal point of her book. Hornesy 1968 is, however, a scholarly study in which what became known as 'the Hornsey affair' is used as a means by which to consider the function of art education within an increasingly commercialised culture. "What art is and can be for," Tickner concludes somewhat confusingly, "the role of design, in the interests of commodity turnover or a better life, the best means of educating students in either or both;

best means of educating students in either or both these are still questions for us now.

The cultural significance of British art educatio was also recently addressed in Nottingham Contemporry's "Still Undead: Popular Culture in Britain Beyond the Bauhaus' last year (Reviews (M431) A small section of the show looked at what its hibition leaflet called, paraphrasing Patrick Heron, ne of the most influential art schools in Europe, seds Polytechnic Pine Art (hereafter LPFA). Given that a large proportion of the Leeds material centred of the early development of the much-feted band Soft Cell, an uninformed visitor to "Still Undead" could have been forgiven for coming away from the show completely unaware of just how very unusual, open, informativ playful and productive an education LPFA students ceived during the period leading up to, during and for me time beyond the few years Soft Cell were students ere at the end of the 1970s. The band are still probaand Life, his claim that he had 'always fou

ontract were made in the Fine Art course's tiny sour studio and, with a post-Duchampian 'anything goes ethos in operation at LPFA, any students who, like studio and, with a post-Dechampian 'anything goe ethos in operation at LPFA, any students who, like Almond, wanted to give the bulk of their time to making music were entirely free to do exactly that. Although a student on the course several years

earlier, Charnley found himself in an open situation that closely echoed Almond's: 'the emphasis', Charnley remembers, 'was on unrestrained creativity: almost remembers, was on unrestrained creativity; almost asything could be art. There was little time spent theorising. The concept was that knowledge and theorising. The concept was that knowledge and expertise cause through the process of making. The artwork was the research? In Charnley's day LPPA. had 'an atmosphere that combined a sense of brilliant-creativity and imminent crisis,' and students were expected to decide for themselves how to best use their expected to decide for themselves how to be at use their anything could be art. There was little time time and the generous resources available. Studying time and the generous recourses available. Studying at Leeds was 'quite demanding, even though there we apparently no demands - apart from two, be original and be creative. Such stress on self-determination ... could be daunting. Charmley wryly comments that "There seemed to be no course to take in both senses of the word, having such an open framework meant 'attempts were often made [by students] to find out where the boundaries lay, generating both 'some very fine work', but 'anti-social behaviour' too. Despite the lack of rules, 'creativity was rigidly enforced ...

Among the staff at LPFA, both in Charnley's day and also Almond's, was Jeff Nuttall, whose larger-than-life persons and romantic liberalism carried considerable



PUNCTUALITY IS ESSENTIAL

'Punctuality is Essential' one of the several 'Locked Room' dictums to students

force, as did that of the various Fluxus-related artists sorce, as did that of the various status reasons as we who taught there. Charnley describes the latter as "anti-commercial and pro-anything alternative," and although by the time Almond was a student there the 'Flux-tutors' had long gone, much of what they stood for had become intrinsic features of the course. for had become intrinsic features of the course.

Charmley regrets that many worthwhile aspects of
Leeds were subsequently lost, even the 'quite exceptional' work this 'bold experiment in art and education'
produced. He suggests that much of what was later historicised as 'cutting-edge work by the Young British Artists' resembled what LPFA students, engaged in 'the most radical experiment in the pedagogy and praxis of art ever attempted within an academic praxis of art ever attempted within an accommo-institution, had already achieved. Harry Thubron, an important Leeds tutor whose influence pervaded every educational institution he worked in, taught at Goldsmiths, the 'official' isaunch pad for the yBs, for

er a decade from the early 1970s. One astute commentator on the unusua struction at Leeds is Gavin Butt, whose essay 'Being in a Band Art School Experiment and the Post-Punk Commons is included in the 2016 volume he co-edited with Kod Eshun and Mark Fisher, Post-Punk Then and Now. By 2016, Butt had interviewed over 50 people who had seen closely involved with LPFA or its near neighbour been closely involved with LFFA or its near neignour. the Fine Art department at Leeds University, and was 'intrigued... by the readiness of many people to speak about this formative time in their lives with much enthusiasm and excitement, something also apparent with the writers mentioned above. It's imp grasp that in using the term 'Being in a Band', Butt is as opposed to privately owned - resources, a far cry rom what Terry Atkinson has called the 'monad-like from what Terry atkinson has caused the monad-in-self-determined avant-garde artist. The art world interest in band-like structures had, as with many aspects of what transpired in late-1970s Leeds, its cedent in the 1960s. Referring to the Art & anguage group, Lynda Morris recalls in her 2014 bool Jenuine Conceptualism that well before the time of Art key concept in contemporary pop music. She also tes that Atkinson, while still a student at the Slade notes that Attension, while still a student at the Slade in the early 1800s, organised a collective practice under the rubric 'Fine Arta'. 'The motivation of the group', Morris tells us, 'was against the type of education they were receiving' at the Slade.

at precisely the period Butt researched - roughly the at precisely the period Buts researched - roughly the five years following Margaret Thatcher's rise to power in 1970 - it is apparent that his characterisation of the Teeds socre's is a perceptive cost, of the 7 line Are tours at that time the properties can of the 7 line Are to the period of the 10 line and 10 line and 10 line and 10 line at the 10 line and 10 line at 10 authorship was decided as a second of the control o 80 or more students and staff from both the polytace and the university art departments, in which may art related issues were threshed out at length. These weekly stafferings began in a seminar room in the early evening and progressed to the pub when the early evening and progressed to the pub when the college security staff instated that they had to lock up the building or risk being sacked. Sometimes the were lively exchanges continued even later into. up the building or risk being sacked. Sometimes the very lively exchanges continued even later into the night at a 24-hour cafe or student flat. So although Butt does directly consider actual art school 'pop' bands, he is specifically interested

art school 'pop' banna, he is speciment, more execu-in collaboration per se, partly as a contrast with present-day art educational mores which emphasise individual success, employability, quantification to the paranoise abolition of risk. From the 1960s to th once all HK students had their BA fees paid by the te, and with grants for living expenses also avails state, and with grants for living expenses also avails ble, the temporary 'opting out' from paid employmes was a real possibility for many working-class studen But emphasises that in former times you could 'hav three years to do whatever you wanted', while presen sity as training for a ... job'. Today's would-be graduates are expected to insist upon obtain ing 'a personal financial return for the investment in their studies'. Yet another difference Butt draws atten tion to is that attending a UK art school in the wak to live and work, one based around sharing, as opp as a naturally monetised career, such a view would constraining thought and action in all quarters of the culture' (Reviews AM333). A more productive wa at LPFA is as a time during which students were uraged to develop a state of critical resi encouraged to develop a state of critical resulting time would enable them to continue working as artists lor after they had completed the course. A former LPFA student quoted in Charnley's book, Gavin Lockhart, describes the course as simply a collection of people describes the course as 'simply a collection of peop without a collective ideology but with some kind o

commitment to spending three years there.

Butt's contention that in the 1970s in Leeds some thing remarkable happened' is to the point. He obset that being in a band of some kind became a 'crucial thing to do at the city's art schools [and] transcended



of living, a mode of existing even t alternative future could be glimpsed, and a path was created out of the cultural and political impasses of t tive activity 'allowed for ways of working of producing new forms, of being-with-others, and of having fun, that didn't seem possible as individuals apart; Collaborating, sharing ideas and other resource was, then, 'some kind of answer ... to a perceived problem in the culture: namely, that it appeared to have stalled ... late 70s culture in the UK ... was doing the

In Butt's view, the critical energy generated by punk not only reinforced British youth's alreadyforms but also encouraged a DIY ethos among those most everything available at the time seemed stai exhausted and irrelevant to the experience of living in a Northern English industrial city in a p the emergence of new cultural possibilities, unhin dered by economic constraint or a forced adherto ideologically rigid patterns of action or display.

In Leeds, the art schools - LPFA, at least - supporter tudents in remaking what Butt calls 'the values and forms of expression typical of British culture in the pproach was already in evidence prior to punk, not east in Conceptual Art. In his 2012 article on 'The Un-artist' (Feature 4M357), Michael Corrie that, alongside many other artists active in the 1980s and 1970s, Ian Burn, together with his close collabor: whose aim was in part to collect the intellectual resources required for a thoroughgoing critique of late-modernist art. But, Corris adds, 'what the

artist ought to know in order to deal with the

artist cought to know in order to deal with the shifting consistation of culture and commerce —— remains a sits of contention? But makes controversial claims for the post-punk Leeds scene, viewing it as something akin to a 1970-UN version of Weitmar or Yitleba, to a 1970-city version of Weitmar or Yitleba, to ver York's Soil-celly less glamorous equivalent to remarkathy small and that time. Both played sendorseless servine of insports and the time. Both played host to a remarkatory assume assu-dedicated community producing scores of innovative work across the divides of art, music and performance, in Leeds the students took their inspiration 'from art, from film, from critical theory', allowing 'alternative

The long-term defining component of LPFA was its open course structure (its critics would protest that there was no structure at all). Embedded in this 'philos-ophy' was Herbert Read's idea of an education through rather than in art, as detailed in his 1943 book of that title, and this approach was even inscribed within a document issued by the course's Board of Studies in 1965, quoted in Charnley's book: 'although we cannot teach art,' the document's authors declare, 'we can educate through art ... we believe that a meaningful course can only be developed by staff as well as stu-dents participating in genuine research into the unknown. If we bring about a situation where both staff and students are faced with problems for which no known solution exists, we teach thought and experi ences, which must lead to self-knowledge! This idea that an art school might provide a liberal education for its own sake, as well as help students develop a viable art practice, still had its strong supporter among LPFA staff in the 1970s and early 1980s, notably Geoff Teasdale, who organised the aforementioned evening seminars, brought in more rigorous teaching methods and forcefully defended a wide range of student art practices which other, less openstaff regarded as irrelevant deviations from the 'dr and skills' to which they believed all art students should willingly submit.

LPFA was not the only fine art department to maintain, during the 1980s through to the 1980s, a radical approach to teaching. Morris describes how, within the short-lived Art Theory Course at Coventry Polytechnic around 1970, the Art & Language group 'plunged their students into the middle of the controversy that has produced the most important contempo-rary art', and at London's St Martin's from 1969 to 1973 the so-called 'Locked Room' project subjected a dozen new soulpture students to an intriguing investigation into student independence and wild-card creativity, though whether its instigators - Garoth Evans, Peter Harvey, Peter Kardia and Frank Martin - would have deployed the word 'experimental' when discussing the course is unlikely. The students had to remain in a designated studio for eight hours a day, were not allowed to talk, and were provided only with restricted

given a single polystyrene cube with which to engage, whatever they made from this being later removed without explanation. Orthodox teaching was not provided, the studente eventually devising their own method of wordless communication, and in time producing a range of 'non-art' objects and actions including a notiorizen boxing match, and interactive pieces such as a card game void of rules, at one point all ward contact with students was restricted to letters sent via the postal system. From curator Rozemin Keshvani's "The Locked Room: Four Years that Shook Art Education, 1969-73' exhibition at London's Laure Genillard gallery (which closed last month), and her Geniliard gallery (which diosed last month), and her forthcoming book of the same title, one gets a powerfuseness of just how bizarre this set-up must have seemed to the young people involved, who had presumably expected to be taught the rudiments of sculpture in a department famous for the welded constructions of Anthony Caro, its artist-lecturer star.

There were many problems with LPFA during the period I have considered, and no doubt with St Martin's and other risk-taking art schools too. These should no be ignored, but the critical and collaborative ambience investigated in 'Being in a Band' and inside the Locke Room was genuinely felt, not foreibly factored in as a quantifiable part of a course module, as in today' as a quantifiable part of a course module, as in today' doctorate-driven universities of art. Students are now almost as neurotically obsessed with assessment as those who teach and manage them, which surely shows the reprehensible failure of the art schools to assert an even nominal independence from the mainstream an even nominal independence from the mainstream paradigm of prioritising business and personal success over all other forms of exchange. Fisher asked whether students are education's consumers or its products, but perhaps they have become both these things at once. In drawing our attention to what he labels precorpora-tion "the pre-empitie" ... shaping of desires, aspirations and hopes by capitalist culture' - Fisher helps us to see how the relatively autonomous spaces of UK art schools have been cynically reconfigured to primarily

schools have been cymically reconsquired to primarily economic ends.

Earlier this year Sunderland University announced it was henceforth to promote only those degree course that talign with particular employment sectors' (quote in the Observer by Kenan Malik on 26 January). No more history teaching, no more politics and, as soon as it can be arranged, no more arts, unless these as it can be arranged, in modified so as to foreground only those attributes employers expect and demand. Is this to be the new 'culture' of post-Brestit Britain: remuner-ative, practical, rabidly commonsensical and very,

As Robert Fripp observed in the notes accompanying As Robert Fripp observed in the notes accompanying the 2000 CD release of his 1972 IF Exposar, the more powerful the creative impulse, the more likely the resistance of controlling business interests. The creative impulse involves hazard: there are no guarantees. Business demands guarantees and reversal coertainties, even though cortainty is often unfailling and unsate fright, Anything which seriously deserved to name. miture' must stoically accept the need for criticism nent and risk.

Peter Suchin is an artist, critic and curator

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self-determined avant-garde artist.

In using the term 'Being in a Band', Gavin Butt is alluding to several

overlapping concerns, especially to the benefits gained through the collaborative

process itself, irrespective of the medium involved. The phrase also connects with

notions of the commons, of shared - as opposed to privately owned - resources,

a far cry from what Terry Atkinson has called the 'monad-like'.

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