

'R London Conference in Critical Thought

myself and James Ellison will be speaking at the London Conference in Critical Thought on the 6th and 7th of June at the Royal Holloway

Learning to resist: on the universities ruins.

James Ellison & Paul Stewart

This paper aims to critique current trends in the neo-liberalisation of education, as well as explore our experiences with the creation of critical alternatives. Together we began our participation at university, as art students, in the wake of the global economic and social 'crisis' of 2008, albeit at separate institutions. Two of the main theoretical benchmarks we encountered while becoming art students were Jacques Ranciere and Pierre Bourdieu respectively. We have allowed these thinkers to permeate our education, they have aided us in the exploration of notions such as institutional critique and radical aesthetico-political dissent.

As the battle to stop the rise in fees exploded into the political imaginary of the student body, so did an extended period of experimentation with autonomous pedagogies. This shift in consciousness prompted Paul to begin his project The Alternative Art College in 2011, which created an experimental platform to question pedagogical processes, albeit temporarily. As both of us began the next stage of HE, as postgraduate students, we encountered further outlets for critical engagement. James became involved with the latter stages of the University for Strategic Optimism, a radical pedagogical and aesthetic anti-institution. While situated within a university we initiated projects together, such as Education as Experiment, May, 2012 and Holding Knowledge Hostage, February, 2012. Theoretically the work of Boris Groys, who's transdisciplinarity and contextual critique, influenced our critical approach to autonomous art praxis.

Since graduating from Goldsmiths James has been involved in several occupied social centers including, Palestine Place and Cuts Cafe both ephemeral and unsustainable manifestations, while Paul has moved into a practical role in a private London business school, the forefront of the market based approach to higher education. To paraphrase Noam Chomsky, 'debt neutralises critical thinking, disciplining students into efficient components of the consumer economy'. As the university lies in ruins how will the next generation learn to resist?

**London Conference
in Critical Thought**
6th - 7th June 2013
Royal Holloway, University of London

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Attendance is free.
For information and registration visit
www.londonconferenceincriticalthought.wordpress.com

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(http://alternativeartcollege.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/lcct2013_lowres.jpg)

you can download the full provisional programme
here <http://londonconferenceincriticalthought.wordpress.com/2013/04/29/programme-and-registration/> (<http://londonconferenceincriticalthought.wordpress.com/2013/04/29/programme-and-registration/>)

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