



Art : Design : Media  
Subject Centre

**Annual Forum 2010**  
Friday, 14 May 2009

**Create**  
**Sustain**  
Ability



The Royal Institute of British Architects - RIBA  
66 Portland Place  
London  
WC1B 1AD



## **Create Sustain Ability**

ADM-HEA 2010 Annual Forum

**Friday 14 May 2010**

### **Programme**

<b>09.45-10.00</b>	<b>Registration</b> Tea and coffee	6 <sup>th</sup> Floor landing/ Wren Room
<b>10.00-10.15</b>	<b>Introduction and welcome</b> Stuart Laing, ADM-HEA Director	Wren Room
<b>10.15-10.45</b>	<b>Keynote: Arran Stibbe</b> University of Gloucestershire	Wren Room
<b>10.45-12.15</b>	<b>Morning discussion groups:</b> Group 1 (red) Group 2 (blue) Group 3 (yellow) Group 4 (green)	Hawksmoor Room (6 <sup>th</sup> Floor) Martin Room (5 <sup>th</sup> Floor) Vosey Room (4 <sup>th</sup> Floor) Unwin Room (5 <sup>th</sup> Floor)
<b>12.15-13.15</b>	<b>Lunch</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> Floor landing/ Wren Room
<b>13.15-14.45</b>	<b>Afternoon discussion groups:</b> Group 5 (red) Group 6 (blue) Group 7 (yellow)	Hawksmoor Room (6 <sup>th</sup> Floor) Martin Room (5 <sup>th</sup> Floor) Wren Room (6 <sup>th</sup> Floor)
<b>14.45-15.00</b>	<b>Afternoon tea and coffee</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> Floor landing/ Wren Room
<b>15.00-15.30</b>	<b>Panel discussion</b> Chaired by Stuart Laing	The Wren Room
<b>15.30</b>	<b>Close</b>	

## **Group 1**

Presentation & Discussion

Hawksmoor Room  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor



### **Session One**

10.45-  
11.30

Developing sustainability themes  
within the curriculum of Fashion and  
Textiles students

Cassandra  
O'Connor

### **Session Two**

11.30-  
12.15

The Sustainability Audit as Cross  
Disciplinary Assessment Tool

Paul Denison

Chair:

TBC

## **Group 2**

Presentations & Discussions

Martin Room  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor



### **Session One**

10.45-  
11.15

Sustainability as an enhancement  
theme for the 21<sup>st</sup> century design  
graduate: Should it become  
invisible?

Jackie Malcolm

### **Session Two**

11.15  
-11.45

Heroic Habitus vs. Sustainable  
Cyborg: A critical analysis of the  
role-model provided by the  
technologically determined specular  
Hero in James Cameron's 'epic  
ecofiction' Avatar (20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox,  
2009)

Govinda Dickman

### **Session Three**

11.45-  
12.15

EFS at Plymouth College of Art

Mary Loveday-  
Edwards &  
Teresa Gray

Chair:

TBC

### **Group 3**

#### **Presentations & Discussions**

Vosey Room  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor



#### **Session One**

10.45-  
11.30

Do we impose on Nature or  
reconcile with Nature?

Tanya de Paor

#### **Session Two**

11.30-  
12.15

Referencing the question 'How is, or  
how might ESD be incorporated into  
art and design curricula?

Phillip Hawkins

Chair:

TBC

### **Group 4**

#### **Presentations & Discussions**

Unwin Room  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor



#### **Session One**

11.30-  
12.15

The Nature of Stuff

Justin Carter

11.30-  
12.45

Visions in Light

Sue Fahy

Chair:

## Afternoon Sessions

### Group 5

#### Presentations & Discussions

Hawksmoor Room  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor



#### Session One

13.15-  
14.00

The Sustainability Information  
Teaching Exchange

Chris Smith

#### Session Two

14.00-  
14.45

Socially in Fashion Education

Liz Parker & Hannah Higginson

Chair:

TBC

### Group 6

Martin Room  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor



#### Session One

13.15-  
14.00

About the Centre for Contemporary  
Art and Natural World (CCANW)

Johanna Korndorfer

#### Session Two

14.00-  
14.45

Navigating the complexity of  
sustainability

Rupert Bassett & Lynne Elvins

Chair:

TBC

### Group 7

Wren Room  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor



#### Session One

13.15-  
14.00

Learning in Place

Barbara Dass

#### Session Two

14.00-  
14.45

Making Futures: sustainability and  
curriculum change

Malcolm Ferris

Chair:

TBC

**Create Sustain Ability**  
**Session Abstracts**

# Developing sustainability themes within the curriculum of Fashion and Textiles students

Group 1  
Session 1  
10.45-11.30

Cassandra O'Connor

PG Art and Design Scheme Leader  
University of Bolton

## Abstract

“Industrialisation brought consumerism with it as an integral part of the economy. Economic growth came to depend on continued marketing of new products and disposal of old ones that are thrown away simply because stylistic norms promote their obsolescence. When it comes to clothing, the rate of purchase and disposal has dramatically increased, so that the path a t-shirt travels from the sales floor to the landfill has become shorter.” (ephonline.org: 2007)

The paper considers what will constitute a more sophisticated approach to the total range of skills, knowledge, attributes and socially responsible cultural trends, that fashion and textiles graduates will need to engage with in the near future; and interrogates the questions of how Higher Education will foster them, and an increasingly demanding and complex, global labour market, will utilise them. As ‘Ethical and Responsible Design’ comes relentlessly to the forefront of consumers and retailers’ awareness, it is obvious that fashion graduates need to be professionally equipped and knowledgeable with regard to these issues of globalisation, particularly, the cultural and environmental matters within the manufacturing processes. Fashion courses need to embed ethical trading and sustainable production themes within their programmes of study, in order to produce graduates, prepared to function in an arena where companies have developed ‘Corporate Social Responsibility Strategies’, and expect that these are fully implemented throughout their global supply chains. Issues of ‘Sustainability’ are now developing into the essential vocabulary of contemporary curriculum design and content, and it may be an uneasy relationship between the traditional core drivers of the Fashion discipline, which as a subject is based to a greater extent upon constant seasonal change, desirability, disposability and built-in-obsolescence. Much work has been undertaken in the UK Higher Education sector over the last decade to identify, categorise and embed standard core skills within the curriculum across the breadth of the creative, academic portfolio. These generic abilities such as numeracy, literacy, team working, communication and problem solving are essential generic qualities that educators would naturally strive to foster within graduates. Externally, the commercial fashion employment market led by major transnational brands, has rapidly and irrevocably globalised, and has advanced at a rate that is frequently alien to the operational priorities, inherent structure and academic pace of a traditional UK HE design curriculum. A contemporary portfolio of employability skills is now emerging, which may be at odds with established fashion course content and existing academic practice, and include such topics as corporate social responsibility, globalised production, post-retail product lifecycle, entrepreneurship and transdisciplinary, curricular approaches. With ethical business practice growing in importance, it is essential that students are professionally informed with regard to the prevailing issues and themes relating to globalisation, particularly, practical design decisions, economic imperatives, social discourses and environmental realities. All of this debate is set against the backdrop of an unparalleled, worldwide economic downturn that is affecting most sectors of the Fashion and Textiles Industry and its extended manufacturing bases.

As Ramsden states, we need, “graduates who are educated to the standard which the future economy and well being of our nation demands. That standard must enable them to embrace complexity, climate change, different forms of citizenship, and different ways of understanding individuality and cooperation. A student experience that is fit for the future will develop their qualities of flexibility and their sense of obligation to the wider community” (Ramsden: 2009)

# The Sustainability Audit as Cross Disciplinary Assessment Tool

Group 1  
Session 2  
11.30-12.15

Paul Denison  
Principal Lecturer in Product Design  
Teesside University

## Abstract

In June 2009 Teesside University launched a new MSc Design course in response to an initiative by the regional development body, One North East. The new MSc would be one of 5 new Masters courses developed across schools in the University to provide educational opportunities which would help to up-skill traditional industries and inform the knowledge bases of growth sectors.

This paper describes the issues arising from the first outing of a module in Sustainable Design which was part of the above development. The module had originally been devised for MSc design students, but was delivered here to a mixed cohort of students from Computer Aided Engineering, Environmental Technology, Electronics and Control, Advanced Manufacturing Systems and Process Manufacturing Management as well as Design. Reflections on this development offer insights in five key areas: the value of 'design thinking' to other disciplines; the issues arising out of cross-disciplinary working (such as content and assessment); teaching strategies; workforce development and meeting expectations.

A primary focus of the paper is on the development of appropriate assessment tools within the context of M level art, design and technology education. The two assessment vehicles used were a *mixed group research* exercise focussed around 'best practice' and a *sustainability audit* of a product, service or system (or all three combined). The logic for the inclusion of such methods was based on certain assumptions. The first was that all students needed to be able to access current information and to be able to work across traditional disciplinary boundaries as a replication of real life scenarios. For the audit, the assumption was that many professional contexts require a report-style evaluation of sustainability proposals and counter-proposals. The audit would require the acquisition of focussed tools and methods appropriate to a range of sustainability contexts and, subsequently, an evaluation of the findings and a proposal.

Data for this paper was gathered from samples from the assessments themselves, from qualitative student feedback, and the observations of the programme tutor and colleagues. Conclusions reveal the merits of dynamic and flexible content specifically in relation to sustainability research and case-studies, and emphasises the benefits and occasional pitfalls of working across disciplines.

# Sustainability as an enhancement theme for the 21st Century design graduate: Should it become invisible?

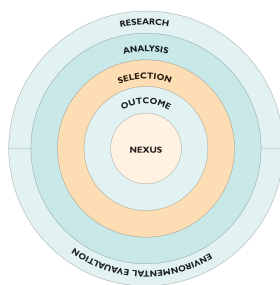
Group 2  
Session 1  
10.45-11.15

Jackie Malcolm

Lecturer

Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, University of Dundee

## Abstract



REASON  
Research : Environmental Evaluation : Analysis : Selection : Outcome : Nexus

Our pedagogic approach to the development of Sustainability has brought environmental issues to the fore, and through the evolution of the curriculum we have seen students engage in a variety of projects that enhance their learning experience, empowering them with knowledge and the ability to make real change, as 21st century design graduates, within the creative industries.

This journey has been outlined in a case study published by the Higher Academy for Education : Art Design Media Subject Centre in which the pedagogic approach to projects based on Sustainability and Design from 2007 to 2010 were promoted as an example of good practice.

This study concluded by asking educators not to become complacent, but instead to work together to offer the design graduate the critical skills with which they can promote 'a new design philosophy that embraces a new society, in which we are all good citizens, who believe we are socially responsible for the future of our planet through new design thinking and practice'.<sup>1</sup>

I would now like to argue, however, that Sustainability within the curricula, needs to become invisible. Creating awareness has been the focus of our teaching, developing an understanding of the issues for the design graduate, and promoting sustainability as an inclusive part of the design curricula. To be thoroughly embedded means that we have redrawn the design process to include issues of sustainability as a natural objective of design practice.

It can be argued that by making it a visible part of the design process, it will not become invisible. I believe, however, that by achieving a holistic design process, fully inclusive of environmental design issues, we will achieve an environment in which the transition of new design thinking can be nurtured. This will allow the visibility of environmental issues to become an inclusive consideration for designers. The stimuli should be the project, the aims and objectives. Improvement for nature, the environment and human life should be the motivation for change through design.

We need to understand the REASON for change and the benefits to our planet through the empowerment of knowledge and design skills.

The following formula attempts to create a new, holistic design process which sets out the key requirements for any design response:

REASON // Research: Environmental Evaluation : Analysis : Selection : Outcome : Nexus<sup>2</sup>

As a tool REASON sets out issues of sustainability as an inclusive element of the design process. It is an intergrated consideration of the research which informs the design response of the 21st century design graduate. Invisibility will be achieved as one project informs the next, becoming the link (Nexus) to the future design response.

1. Malcolm J, Sustainability as an enhancement theme for the 21st century design graduate.  
2009 Higher Academy for Education : Art, Design Media Subject Centre.

<http://www.adm.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/case-studies/sustainability-as-an-enhancement-theme-for-the-21st-century-design-graduate/>

2. Nexus is used to describe the link from one design project to another. It is the invisible core which informs the future design response.

# Heroic Habitus vs. Sustainable Cyborg: A critical analysis of the role-model provided by the technologically determined specular Hero in James Cameron's 'epic ecofiction' Avatar (20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, 2009)

Group 2  
Session 2  
11.15-11.45

Govinda Dickman

Lecturer – Digital Media and Video: Culture and Production  
University of West of England

## Abstract

"The simulacrum is never what hides the truth - it is truth that hides the fact that there is none. The simulacrum is true."  
(Ecclesiastes, in Baudrillard, 1981, p.1)

Are cinematic heroes potential role-models for sustainability, in the contemporary ecological sense of this word? Certainly, the heroic stereotypes in Avatar are narratologically constructed as exemplars of an "ideal" *ecological habitus*: the "durable, transposable dispositions," (Bourdieu, 1977, p.72) and the "structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" (ibid.) of the Pandorans seem the very essence of environmentally friendly. In truth, however, if Pandorans are role-models, then they diagram an impossible dichotomy: Regarded as icons or symbols, they exemplify an anti-technological habitus *that may or may not be genuinely sustainable*; regarded indexically, they are technology incarnate – both pure digital wizardry, and pure technocentrism.

So, these digital eco-warriors are both more and less diagrammatic than simple role models. However, the rhetorical effect of *megarealism* (Bacon & Dickman, 2010) is to repress this dichotomy: The technological literalisation of a phantasmatic Other elides the true nature and substance of both the speculum and the spectre that appears in it. In Avatar, it creates a hyper-reality where ecological icons and environmental symbols systematically veil their decidedly non-ecofriendly material and historical indexicality: *The insubstantial is made substantial, and the material is rendered immaterial.*

This repression of material reality is almost the precise antithesis of sustainable behaviour, but this should not come as a surprise: Historically, the environmental impact of both heroes and the technocentric culture of which cinema is an index has not been notably sustainable, in either the current environmental or the strict semantic senses of the word! Considering the agonistic nature of the conventional heroic paradigm that defines most contemporary cinema, it is debatable whether heroes or cinema can be considered sustainable in any regard: How can a role-model that is *fundamentally* alienated (i.e. competitive and manipulative) and a system of representation that is *ontologically* simulacric (i.e. specular and phantasmatic) be deployed in communicating the notion of *interconnectedness*, which many now recognise as an essential characteristic of any truly sustainable human ethos?

Reimagining the cyborg's "mystic union" as a marriage between subjectivity and alterity (rather than ego and technology), may help to create a more sustainable heroic paradigm. *That, however, is not what Avatar sets out to achieve...*

## **Bibliography**

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# EFS at Plymouth College of Art

**Group 2**  
Session 3  
11.45-12.15

Mary Loveday-Edwards &

Lecturer in Contextual Studies

&

Teresa Gray

Academic Leader for Critical, Contextual and Historical Studies

Plymouth College of Art

## Abstract

EFS can inhabit a spectrum which moves from (and should progressively move from) education *about* sustainability, in which students are informed about and engaged in learning the structures underpinning sustainability (social and ecological), towards education *for* sustainability, in which students are prepared holistically for a sustainable future. EFS in many educational institutions (including our own) is primarily engaged at the former end of the spectrum. There are many reasons for this, not least the structures to which institutions must conform (a very obvious example is that the current system of grading students presupposes and extends competition rather than cooperation and sharing) but there are many more impediments to a more holistic approach.

Having said this, education about sustainability is better than nothing, and a positive first step towards EFS. At Plymouth College of Art, a NALN-funded research initiative based within the Applied Arts discipline has resulted in a cross-(and multi-)disciplinary curricular approach towards EFS based within the Critical, Contextual and Historical Studies department. All students are presented with some sustainability lectures; and Fd2 students take a module in which sustainability is one of the areas they may choose to study in more depth. Students come from a broad range of disciplines and throughout the module relate sustainability to their discipline and their wider life. Uptake has doubled from the first to the second year of offering the option. We are convinced that a cross-curricular and culturally-aware approach is an important element in EFS – students are encouraged to explore deeply the issues leading to unsustainable practice in order to better understand and create effective alternatives.

It is important, too, to understand that we are well-placed to explore sustainability: we are working with developing artists. Acts of creation are, perhaps surprisingly, very much about practical problem-solving. In the future we will need many different creative approaches to solving sustainability problems; artists are no less needed than scientists (and that binary is one which needs exploring as well...).

With proposed carbon budgets for educational institutions making areas like the Applied Arts feel defensive about their energy intensive practices, it may also be important to recognise that these are the kind of skills-based subjects that may well become more important in a post-peak oil future. EFS should continue to be a culturally-aware, cross-disciplinary concern; but some art subjects have immediate potential for widening participation in less academic forms. Eventually EFS in academic institutions would ideally cover a range from vocational training to higher degrees. Also ideally, institutions themselves would change their structures and methods to more holistic approaches. Whilst this is difficult within present conditions, part of the pedagogical implications of EFS is to anticipate and facilitate these changes.

# Do we impose on Nature or reconcile with Nature? How to structure a postgraduate Art Education course with the Principles of Education for Sustainable Development as a core principle?

**Group 3**  
Session 1  
10.45-11.30

**Tanya de Paor**

Lecturer – Digital Media and Video: Culture and Production  
University of West of England

## **Abstract**

This paper explores the issues of how Education for Sustainable Development can be embedded into the Visual Arts curriculum course for the Graduate programme for students undertaking a postgraduate qualification to become a primary school teacher. This is an eighteen month postgraduate programme. The course attracts people from all professions and at various stages of their careers.

Architects, engineers, solicitors, and second level teacher are some of the diverse professional and academic professions that enter the course. Almost none of the entrants have a background in visual art /design.

Due to the current economic climate there are several students this semester who have entered the course who hold or have recently completed PHD's in a range of diverse disciplines such as history and Irish. These highly skilled, academic and high achieving professionals are key strategic stakeholders for future educational contexts.

So how do you structure a programme for art and design with such a wide cohort of students while maintaining sensitivity to their lack of subject knowledge and non expertise in media, processes and skills?

Recent semesters based the course content on a thematic framework. The theme for the current semester is based on looking at using visual art to explore the environment. The question – “Do we impose on nature or reconcile with nature?” In introducing the project we used fundamental principles of Participatory methodology as well as scenario building exercises. The work was centred on photography, drawing and colour work and on wide ecological, pedagogic, aesthetic and environmental contexts. This paper focuses on how to ignite an interest and confidence in the area of art/design and media while simultaneously anchoring the subject area into sociological/environmental and ecological. What are the pedagogical implications and how are these addressed are central issues explored in this paper.

# Referencing the question: 'How is, or how might ESD be incorporated into art and design curricula?'

**Group 3**  
Session 2  
11.30-12.15

Phillip Hawkins  
Visual Culture Coordinator  
&  
Eileen Rosamond  
Fine Art Lecturer

Somerset College of Arts & Technology

## **Abstract**

Our presentation and discussion will explore two facets of our work in sustainability.

First of all we would like to introduce and review briefly some specific assignments or projects with illustrations from recent practice in sustainability from BA Fine Art and Design courses, that reference both studio and research projects. Examples will include a studio-based project in Fine Art, the development of thesis subjects around Fine Art and ESD, and the development of a short student-led project in ESD within a lecture series in a 2<sup>nd</sup> year Fashion and Textiles module. Essentially then this is an opportunity to share examples of practice in ESD but also to begin to highlight in real terms some of the specific implications, opportunities and problems that are afforded to tutors who attempt to integrate aspects of ESD into the curriculum. These include for example an evolving and expanding clarity about the implications of ESD on modes of assessment, learning outcomes, and a diversity of forms or contexts for project design

Secondly however we would like to move on to discuss some of the fundamental limitations of integrating ESD in this step-by-step and somewhat disjointed way and how these limitations might begin to be resolved. Essentially, and in terms of our research looking ahead, we are asking how ESD might be incorporated into art and design courses in a more holistic, comprehensive, or measurable way within the curriculum and what that might be. We would like to discuss the potential value of this rationale for tutors which would in theory provide a map, or a specific set of criteria, as a useful tool, for developing, and integrating ESD in art and design in a more coherent and measurable way.

Therefore we would like to put forward the relevance of guidelines being developed about ESD by the Centre for Sustainable Futures (CSF) at the University of Plymouth (UoP), but to consider how to flesh those out into a more detailed map specifically for art and design courses. Those UoP guidelines conceptualise ESD in terms of a 4 c's approach that references Curriculum, Campus, Community and Culture. We would like to evaluate the relevance of breaking those criteria down into a working document for art and design tutors to develop and map their courses integration with the full implications of ESD content. While we are aware of HEFCE's 'Sustainable Development in Higher Education' report from 2008 that highlights the necessity for voluntary codes of practice in ESD, it nonetheless seems useful and important to consider the value of formative criteria, that can be shared institutionally or nationally, for deepening or focussing specific forms of engagement by those that choose to develop ESD in Art and Design as a voluntary code. We would like to know in strategic terms for example how individual tutors are currently developing or measuring ESD. We would like to ask the forum to discuss whether a formative map could offer tutors a useful, albeit non-prescriptive, set of reference points in the first place, what it should include, and what its strengths and pitfalls might be as a research endeavour.

# The Nature of Stuff

**Group 4**  
Session 1  
11.30 -12.15

**Justin Carter**

Lecturer - Sculpture and Environmental Art  
School of Fine Art.

&

**Robert Mantho**

Lecturer & Stage 2 Leader, Mackintosh School of Architecture.  
Glasgow School of Art

## Abstract

*“The social spaces through which we live do not only consist of physical things: of bricks and mortar, streets and bridges, mountains and sea-shore, and of what we make of these things. They consist also of those less tangible spaces we construct out of social interaction”. (Doreen Massey, Space-time and the politics of location)*

## Introduction

This collaborative project was undertaken by undergraduate students and staff from Architecture, Design and Fine Art at Glasgow School of Art. Founded on a shared appreciation of ‘Problem Based Learning’ (Biggs) the brief aimed to create an opportunity for staff and students to share, develop and explore a range of creative methodologies that would allow a more dynamic and complex understanding of sustainability in relation to place.

## Method:

Sustainability is by definition a wide-ranging framework of ideas that extends beyond disciplinary boundaries. For this reason sustainability formed an ideal and dynamic focus within the project brief. The ethos reflected Sterlings insistence that learning be ‘reflexive, experiential, inquiring, experimental, participative, iterative, real-world and action oriented’ (Sterling, Stephen. *Ecological Intelligence*)

Responses to the brief were explored through a range of specific sites within Greater Glasgow. Field trips encouraging speculative, experimental and qualitative research methods formed a central part of the process. In experiencing place, students perceived a complex range of phenomena, from natural and built forms to diverse historical, social and cultural readings.

‘Place’ manifested itself in different contexts not as a fixed or concrete thing, but as an ever changing, relational entity defined through social interaction. Likewise, ‘sustainability’ took on different meanings in different places, creating new problems to solve. The whole process set out to test the feasibility of ‘Breathing Earth’ - an eco-settlement proposed by Internationally acclaimed sculptor Susumu Shingu. From actively exploring potential sites for his work, the project turned back on itself by asking questions of his design concept.

## Outcome:

Creating sustainable futures requires creative cross-disciplinary, systemic approaches that go beyond the instrumental and mechanistic. The outcome of this project is a diverse body of knowledge built on imaginative responses to different sites. These oblique visions demonstrate deep, philosophical insights into sustainability as an exchange between people and place.

*This is a paper to be spoken with visual accompaniment. (ppt)*

# Visions in Light

Su Fahy

Divisional Leader Fine Art & Photography  
University of Wolverhampton

**Group 4**  
Session 2  
11.30-12.15

## Abstract

Using drawing the artist and designer visually interrogates structures using hand and eye. Extending this practice to look at specific buildings addressing sustainability, allows both visual documentation and engaged research to work together<sup>1</sup>. Visions in Light offered this opportunity to bring together drawing, perspectives, photography and research to visually and contextually interpret the British Embassy in Rome. This building designed by the architect Basil Spence is for the photographer an essay in working with light, shadows and reflections. It is also in its time a building referencing ideas of sustainable architecture. Spence was an architect trained in an art school using drawing in his perspectives to analyze form and a sense of place to structure his buildings accordingly. Spence also believed in collaborating with engineers and others who engaged with creativity and new ideas<sup>2</sup>. Within the scope of this investigation the interplay of form, shading and the model of courtyard dwelling exemplify the skill of this architect. This offers us the chance to reflect on our own ideas and perceptions in relation to the environment thus enabling research into past projects that have engaged with these ideas ahead of their time. To build a sustainable future we need to build on successful interventions that have demonstrated sustainable solutions<sup>3</sup> rather than work without actual recognition of past success. Sustainability is not new but our raised consciousness may now be more susceptible to past experience. It is therefore my premise that this is an opportunity for deeper and broader learning in this area through drawing together visual documentation of sustainable ideas and solutions. In past practices<sup>4</sup> shelter and all its associations with solar gain and environmental comfort for its inhabitants has been documented by artists, photographers, designers, architects, filmmakers and planners. Mapping ideas and connectivity through drawing, photography and case studies<sup>5</sup> offers us rich material to embed in our curricula in Art, Design and Media. It is my view that collaborative research enriches the student experience in higher education bringing together different disciplines to engage in sustainable solutions. To explore the question 'How is, and how might ESD be incorporated into art, design and media curricula?', I propose this notion of working with a synergy of ideas around drawing, photography and lens based media to engage with different disciplines and their role in sustainability. This will offer students the chance to engage in problem solving through understanding and relating ideas from past practices into future projects.

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<sup>1</sup> Visions in Light ,catalogue (Edinburgh College of Art 2002) Sir Basil Spence Exhibition at the RIAS Edinburgh 2002

<sup>2</sup> The British Embassy in Rome ; Collaboration between Spence, Nervi and Arup. Professor Brian Edwards, Arup Journal 3/2009 (Images –Su Fahy) [www.arupjournal.com](http://www.arupjournal.com)

<sup>3</sup> Brian Edwards, *Rough Guide to Sustainability* (Third Edition 2009 )

<sup>4</sup> R. Buckminster Fuller, *Utopia or Oblivion* (Buckminster Fuller Institute )

<sup>5</sup> Neaseden Control Centre, *Neaseden Control Centre* (Gestalten 2003)

# The Sustainability Teaching Exchange

Chris Smith

**Group 5**  
Session 1  
13.15-14.00

Lecturer in Photography

Plymouth College of Art

## **Abstract**

For many of us wishing to introduce sustainability into our curricula, the first question is; where do we begin? For those of us who have not received any specific training in ESD, who are working on curricula with no existing ESD specifications, finding the right way to introduce sustainability into our curricula can seem a bewildering subject.

'Sustainable Design' principles and practices are increasingly becoming a feature of much product manufacturing and built environment projects. Yet there is arguably still much scope for further implementation of ESD into existing arts education. In Photography, for instance, much of the production process of our materials is 'hidden from view' from both the artist and art viewer. The sustainability issues of our subject areas are not always immediately apparent. What many of us need is to firstly understand and question what the sustainability issues our subject areas are. Having identified the issues we may then need to find further information, sources of assistance and solutions to enable greater sustainability practice.

A natural progression to this questioning is also to look for information on how others have been able to introduce ESD into their curricula, from within the same subject area as our own. There are many initiatives and examples of good practice of ESD in existing curricula 'out there'; but when the teachers of existing curricula have themselves not been trained or informed of such practice, finding space to insert or implement ESD can be a real challenge.

Perhaps what is needed then are forums for the sharing of information. This year's ADM HEA 'Create, Sustain, Ability' conference is one such forum. At the Plymouth College of Art, we have been developing our own responses to this need; in one such response we have created an online educational resource called the **Sustainability Information Teaching Exchange**.

The SITE, as it is known will soon be available online. It provides both workshop materials to assist those wishing to begin the process of introducing more sustainability into their curricula and a forum for information exchange. There are sections on sustainability information grouped into their relevant academic subject areas. It is by design a simple and easily accessible resource. By encouraging and enabling users to contribute information back into its resource bank, it has the capacity and potential to constantly grow and evolve in terms of its usefulness to academic study in the UK.

The SITE is initially being developed around the needs of the Art and Design sector, both FE and HE; a logical step for PCA as a specialist art college. The SITE, however, has a huge potential to be developed for use across the educational sector and subsequently within industry. The SITE is due to be launched officially in June 2010.

At the ADM HEA 'Create, Sustain, Ability' conference I would like to introduce and share this resource with the other delegates; as well as seek discussions and debate that might enable me to further enrich this resource for all its potential users.

Project Coordinators  
Fashioning an Ethical Industry

## Abstract

Fashioning an Ethical Industry faced a number of challenges five years ago when embarking on a project to raise awareness of social responsibility issues in fashion colleges. One of these was how to focus on social responsibility when the fashion industry, from education to advertising and everything in between, places such great importance on final product – and when sustainability is so often used interchangeably with environment(al)(ly). This paper outlines why we think a more holistic notion of sustainability that incorporates social justice and economic viability are important for fashion design students and some of the pedagogic approaches we have taken to engage these students.

The social aspects of sustainability relating to fashion include poor working conditions, preservation of culture and skills, size zero and over consumption. Economic aspects relate to poverty wages and the unequal distribution of profit, but also to the economic viability of fashion. The market currently fails to take into account externalities, those social and environmental costs that do not feature in prices paid even though existing and future generations are bearing these costs in a multitude of ways from low wages to the cost of cleaning up pollution. Social, environmental and economic issues also overlap and cannot be dealt with in isolation: the run-off from dyeing, causes health and safety issues for workers, causes devastation to eco-systems in polluted rivers, contaminates drinking water meaning communities then have to pay for potable water, and so on...

The focus of fashion has been the aesthetic rather than the process of manufacture or use. As environmental issues are often embodied in the final product it is therefore easier to engage students on these topics. Is the fibre made from petro-chemicals? What will happen to the garment once it has been worn? In contrast, a garment produced under decent working conditions could look the same as one produced in dire conditions. So, to introduce the makers, the millions of women who are garment workers, is not straightforward.

Fashion design students need to understand the provenance of our clothes and who has made them for a number of reasons:

- ✂ Market relevance: There is a growing market for products that address social justice.
- ✂ Employability: Some employers actively seek sustainable literacy skills and knowledge, and social responsibility is a key issue facing the fashion industry.
- ✂ Student demand: There is a demand from students to learn more about these issues.
- ✂ Design opportunities: All aspects of sustainability offer opportunities to push fashion boundaries.
- ✂ Potential for change: Fashion can contribute directly to a sustainable world.
- ✂ Negative impacts can be mitigated: Designers directly affect the workers making our clothes, whether that's because of poor critical path management, last minute changes or the choices of where to make the product.

The design studio is a prime space for engaging with education for sustainable development, including social justice, and some of the strategies we have attempted to incorporate to engage

students and tutors with social responsibility will resonate with the design tutor:

- ✂ We have worked at developing empathy for workers amongst students.
- ✂ We have tried to inspire students to see sustainability as a creative opportunity, rather than limiting their creativity.
- ✂ Our workshops are interactive and build on student's experience. To do this we use role-plays, simple activities such as looking at labels in students' own clothes and discussion questions. These can all be adapted to different design disciplines.
- ✂ We encourage students to see that the fashion industry is full of contradictions and dilemmas relating to sustainability, supporting them to see that there are two sides to the story and that there is not one simple answer; They need to navigate their way through this journey.
- ✂ We engage with questions around fashion and identity and see the value in this when it comes to sustainability.
- ✂ There is not a right or wrong way to do engage with sustainability; we need to be inspired, practice, reflect, learn and inspire others – and share that learning and not get bogged down in being right first time.

# About the Centre for Contemporary Art and Natural World (CCANW)

**Group 6**  
Session 1  
13.15-14.00

Johanna Korndorfer  
Learning Programmes Manager  
CCANW

## Abstract

The Centre for Contemporary Art and the Natural World (CCANW) is an educational charity and a forward-thinking leader in the growing arts and ecology movement. Launched in 2006, it has established itself as the UK's first organization of its kind focused on using the Arts to explore how we can live more sustainably within Nature. From its base in Haldon Forest Park, a Forestry Commission site in the South West, CCANW functions as a hub linking regional, international and UK arts, ecology and education networks, universities and professional bodies.

CCANW delivers a year-round programme of exhibitions, forums and seminars, live events, workshops and artists' residencies from its Project Space. It also reaches audiences nationally and internationally through its website and publications and as part of an international network of arts and ecology organisations and practitioners.

During 2007-9, CCANW's *Wood Culture* programme celebrated the beauty, usefulness and sustainability of timber in architecture and design. One of the projects included an exhibition of student work from the University of Helsinki's innovative 'Wood Studio' – a year-long immersive course on wood in architecture for engineering and architecture graduates. CCANW brought the course leader, Pekka Heikkinen, to the UK and organized a lecture tour to university architecture courses in the South West. Inspired by the Wood Studio ethos, CCANW also created an artist residency whereby University of Plymouth architecture students worked with an architect and received first-hand experience of the selection, felling and processing of a tree for construction grade timber.

Currently, CCANW has involved first-year architecture students from University of Plymouth in its proposal for an 'eco-shelter' for covered educational activities at Haldon Forest Park. Based on a brief set by CCANW and the Forestry Commission, 140 models were produced by the first year architecture students. An exhibition of the 22 best proposals will be shown at CCANW from late April – middle of May. Many of the students also attended CCANW's 'Wood Culture' forum in early 2010. They found this event – with presentations ranging from an architect's use of timber to the ongoing debate on the quality and use of softwoods versus hardwoods – of real value to their education and practices.

From June 2010 – March 2011, CCANW will be focused on a programme exploring Fashion, Textiles and the Environment. The programme includes three exhibitions – two of them touring to South West colleges and universities and potentially to further UK and international venues. There are other events including an eco-fashion show in the forest, workshops, live events and a seminar geared towards local producers and makers/designers of natural fibres and students of fashion and textiles. South West college and university courses in fashion and textiles will have the opportunity to get involved in the programme, promoting their own work in sustainability through documentation which will form part of CCANW's reference materials and library on the topic.

The centerpiece exhibition, from which the programming of events and workshops has been developed, is called *Fashion Footprints: Sustainable Approaches*. The exhibition and programme is a collaboration between CCANW and recent MA graduates of the London College

of Fashion's Centre for Sustainability and is based on the seminal book *Sustainable Fashion and Textiles* (2008) by LCF Reader, Dr. Kate Fletcher. The exhibition intends to highlight the key problems and major environmental and social impacts that result from the fashion and textile industries. It will be drawing on work of recent MA graduates and their research, which will be seen by current students and lecturers of higher education courses of fashion design. Importantly, it will also be available to be seen by the wider public, who play a role in influencing the sustainability agenda.

'Wood Culture' and the current project on fashion and sustainability illustrate the potential for dynamic partnerships between cultural organisations and higher education. The benefits are mutual; working together, the partnership can encourage dissemination of ideas supporting the ethos of Education for Sustainable Development. CCANW's work often takes the best of academic scholarship on sustainability in the fields of art and design to curate visually interesting exhibitions and programmes of activity that do what education through the arts does best – touch people creatively and emotionally – in ways that conventional methods of advocacy rarely do. In turn, this work encourages further responses from the world of higher education and influences their teaching practices.

# Navigating the complexity of sustainability: Sustainability Issue Mapping for Design Students

**Group 6**  
Session 2  
14.00-14.45

Rupert Bassett  
&  
Lynne Elvins

Lecturers in Graphic Communication and Design

Bath Spa University

## **Abstract**

Whatever your view on the subject of sustainability, tackling it is now an established expectation in business practice, a government imperative and a day-to-day topic for consumers. But how do designers find a role for themselves in the field of 'sustainable design' and how do they navigate the complexity of the issues involved?

Too often in design education the subject of sustainability is reduced to a small set of stereotypical eco-issues — recycling, materials or longevity. The result is that students come away with an oversimplified view that denies the complexity of the topic. Other approaches overwhelm design students with negative and guilt-inducing facts and figures about the state of the world — climate change, pollution, poverty or inequality. While it is important to acknowledge these global issues in order to understand the need for change, this does not help designers see what they can do as skilled individuals. The result is that students come away feeling that sustainability is a depressing subject that only relates to global businesses and politicians.

Sustainability Issue Mapping has been developed by Rupert Bassett and Lynne Elvins to specifically introduce design students to the subject of sustainability. It has been implemented at Bath Spa University with first year BA Graphic Communication programme and with MA students to help them understand the complexity of the subject, and give them the ability to embed sustainability into any design project they might tackle as they continue their education and their careers. Positive feedback about the improved ability to think more widely and understand the issues involved includes:

“It made me more aware of what sustainability was. It made me question my own values and how I would want to work as a designer.”

“I've learnt stuff that I never normally think about. I now realise it is important to talk about sustainability.”

“I haven't thought much about the responsibility of designers before – I find this very interesting.”

“The visual learning experience makes it much more interesting.”

Sustainability Issue Mapping works by providing a hands-on visual form for sustainability: students discuss issues, agree the positioning and build a visual map (see images). It employs a simple informational mapping structure that makes sense of the way that important issues from very different agendas — environmental, social, financial and personal — are combined in every design project. It shows how designers need to balance the issues from these four agendas in

order to produce more sustainable design. This methodology can be applied to answer any design brief from any design discipline.

As well as providing a clear overall picture, Sustainability Issue Mapping breaks the subject of sustainability down into manageable elements that can be integrated into design courses in practical ways. Students gain the ability to assess the sustainability of their own design projects and as a result be able to make positive changes to the way they work. Ultimately our approach empowers the student to handle the complexity of the sustainability so they can properly engage with the subject as something that is challenging, exploratory and exciting.

# Learning in Place

**Group 7**  
Session 1  
13.15-14.00

**Barbara Dass**

Head of School of Art & Design

University of Ulster

## Abstract



Students on Oxford & Rathlin Islands

Collaborative, cross-curricula and multidisciplinary approaches are consistently endorsed as the most appropriate pedagogies for advancing the sustainability, creativity and innovation agendas. Learning the 'language' of another discipline is possible, but this is not synonymous with being able to traverse discipline boundaries, navigate knowledge cultures and transfer competencies appropriate to creativity and sustainable development into educational pedagogies.

This paper intends to examine a number of sustainable art and design pedagogical case studies involving approx 30 students from Art, Design and Architecture from University of Ulster, Belfast. In particular, three interdisciplinary programmes of participatory visual practice conducted in fairly remote rural areas of Northern Ireland.

The activity and participatory-based learning research occurred during 2007 to 2009. The locations of Oxford Island located on the shores of Lough Neagh and Rathlin Island situated in the North Channel between the Mull of Kintyre, Scotland and Malin Head, Ireland, proved most pertinent and challenging sites for the educational studies to be sustained, explored and documented.

An important educational focus was to promote a number of multi-layered experiences not least that of students' inter-year, multi course and cross disciplines sharing, living and enquiring into visual activity together.

A central adjunct to these programmes of study was underpinned, not only by the challenge of diverse studentship creating art, design and architecture solutions collectively, but the quality of visual problem solving intentionally set in local natural environments. Direct engagement with nature was seen as a central core of the events. Different tasks were discussed, agreed and approached with a diverse range of resultant learning outcomes. The focus on understanding one's relationship to nature as a source of sustaining and developing visual creativity produced an interesting array of unusual artefacts and constructions.

The study will show the details of how a wide range of students brought to fairly remote rural settings (many for the first time) originated, developed and finished sustainable art practice as valid, appropriate and relevant forms of their own environmental enquiry.

# Making Futures: sustainability and curriculum change

**Group 7**  
Session 2  
14.00-14.45

**Malcolm Ferris**

Research and HE Development Director  
Plymouth College of Art (PCA)

## **Abstract**

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