

KNOWLEDGE SHOULD BE PRICELESS

INTERVIEW WITH
PAUL STEWART

知識本無價 專訪保羅·斯圖爾特

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Paul Stewart is an artist and researcher focusing on themes of alternative learning and critical pedagogy. He has a BA (Hons) Fine Art from the University of Lincoln (2011) and also completed an MA in Art and Politics at Goldsmiths (2012). He is the Learning Research Assistant at Tate and the creator and Co-producer of The Alternative Art College.

保羅·斯圖爾特是一位藝術家同時也是一位研究員，他的工作重心是研究可替代性的學習方法和批判性教育學。他于2011年獲得英國林肯大學榮譽學士學位，並在2012年獲得了倫敦金史密斯學院藝術政治專業的碩士學位。他是另類藝術學院的創始人和聯合出品人，現在他供職于泰特美術館從事助理教育研究工作。

ART.ZIP: Would you please give us an introduction of your project, the Alternative Art College (AAC)? How did it start and what triggers the establishment of AAC?

PS: The Alternative Art College is a non-profit education facility, an online creative platform to critique higher education which I developed whilst studying for my Undergraduate (BA Fine Art). In 2010 the government began to dismantle the higher education system, home students' tuition fee increased to £9000 per year. The response to this was in the form of mass demonstration; this often was unsatisfactory because of the reaction of the authorities. In response to these events I set up the Alternative Art College in the tradition of protest art, as a proactive form of protest that was an alternative both to the prospect of an increasingly expensive education system and also to the existing forms of protest that were being used in 2010.

In short, the reason for the start up of the AAC is as a response to the current educational system, to question aspects of learning aimed to produce consumers of knowledge rather than participants in a grander scheme. The aim is to get students to question how they learn as well as what they learn and allow them to become active agents in a participatory learning experience.

The initial rationale behind the idea of the Alternative Art College in 2010 was to show that you could gain the same, if not a better understanding of a topic, than you could if you were to pay £9,000 to study at an education institution. Why is higher education something that is only financially accessible? Knowledge should be priceless.

ART.ZIP: How would you describe this project, political activity or art practice?

PS: It's really a good question. I would say that it is both and both elements are intrinsic in to how the Alternative Art College functions. The AAC attempts to question the dominant power, and then producing a space with a selection of shared experiences that can develop learning practices in a more open and discursive form. At the same time the Alternative Art College is my art practice, so I am constantly combining that relationship you have between making work and producing an open space. My commitment to the concept may not always be represented by the work as commitment is not a category of art. I do feel very protective of the AAC as it is my 'making process but this alongside the values of the AAC to be collective and open produce to opposing positions. To combat this, I have found ways of dealing with that by the making process focus on the production of posters, and publications, and I was able to release



ART.ZIP: 可不可以給我們介紹一下你的「另類藝術學院 (Alternative Art College, 以下簡稱AAC)」項目？AAC是怎麼開始的，為什麼要建立一個這樣的學院呢？

PS: 「另類藝術學院 (AAC)」是一個非盈利的教育項目，通過網絡平臺來搭建一個質疑英國高等教育體制和平權，建立它的時候我正在林肯大學讀我的純藝術專業本科，在2010年的時候，英國政府開始大刀闊斧地改革和改變高等教育系統，本地學生的每學年學費漲到9000英鎊（約9萬人民幣），加之當時對民意的爭議沒有做出滿意回應，由此引發了大規模的遊行抗議活動，對於這個事件，我成立了AAC來表達我的態度，這也是一種傳統上的通過藝術行為來進行抗議，這是一種主動的抗議形式，同時對上漲的藝術學費和增高的高等教育體制提出抗議。

簡而言之，建立AAC是為了對現在的教育體系做出質疑，現在的體系是為了培養「知識」的消費群體，而不只是在宏觀上促進教育和技術對教育的參與，我們的目的就是讓學生們思考他們如何學習，學習什麼，從而使他們更好地，更積極地參與到學習的體驗中來。

that relationship through those, and then keeping the context and ideas open.

I would say the AAC is a politically active art practice, maybe.

ART ZIP: How does AAC run? What kind of practice is it like?

PS: At present the Alternative Art College does not have a constant physicality and our events and projects happen sporadically. When I started the AAC I wasn't really aware what was happening. It started as a protest as an undergraduate university project in itself where we turned five students' accommodation houses into our 'university' campuses. We lifted our practice out of our art college and moved them into students' houses, and used that as a navigation to relocate a space where we could remove the power relation of higher education. So its the home that creates a different atmosphere, a more personal context, more informal space for learning. At the start, there were talks, common assemblies, art exhibitions in these spaces and all bits of pieces for a period of three months, basically. And then I think there's a dramatic shift where the AAC went from rather than trying to offer learning classes or

whatever they were as the practice in a move onto questioning what is education, treating learning as an experiment. This form is looking into pedagogical approaches, and moving back into questioning those processes and creating work from that. I guess that's what a lot of our work has been for the last couple of years and now it's kind of move on to not so much of a physical happening but a series of conversations using the blogs and tweeter feeds as dissemination points.

I think in this way, the AAC bridges digital media with grass root activities and creative platforms, focusing specifically on the development of alternative education discourses.

ART ZIP: What kind of feedback did you get till now?

PS: When we started, we had a lot of interest from local and national press, such as news articles we have with the BBC and the local TV news in response from that way. And then as we developed a more mature approach within our art practice, we moved on to collectively communicating experience of the events and how we can develop them collectively. This allowed us to have a core openness, and we are able to have

conversations that people could both take from and give to. So that's nice and what we received back.

I get some interesting emails from individuals. It depends on the content of the event. And I think we keep everything as open as possible. I set a reading group recently that was open to all, and it brings in different ages, different backgrounds and different context. I think what the key thing could be taken from it is that process of doing, so not taking a piece of knowledge and disseminating it from a point of authority but bringing different perspectives to the table to learn collectively. This allows space to have an open discussion about how to engage socially, how to create critical events, and how to develop those that kind of situations. When people emailed me asking to be students of the AAC, I find it really flattering. A lovely lovely question. Then I quickly say to them, I don't have an accommodation, and it is a house. It's normal spaces where we accommodate, it's a process of happening and then I would tell them a list of how to start their own AAC. Most recent case is a Lithuanian student, who has decided to go to Holland for studying an art degree, and then she gave up because of the financial situation, and then she turned to our AAC. I thought it was lovely. I hope what I have given her, a series of things that could help her start her own form of practice there. And I think that is a real creative sharing.

ART ZIP: Many of your co-workers are working for the universities, what do they think about this different way of doing education?

PS: What you find is that, if I was to generalise, many academics have critiqued their institution they've worked in for years. Normally they dislike the structure, which is controlled by the QAA, Quality Assurance Agency, dictates how learning outcome should be formed, which is one of the bodies to find and decide how learning is justified. And those kinds of situation question are to find out how you teach. For instance, a lecturer might want to teach how socratically as an approach through learning, and you can't justify because you can't quantify an outcome through that for the Quality Assurance Agency, where are your learning outcomes? There are no learning outcomes. You know that kind of process. And a lot of them have already started up their own projects, such as Mike Neary at the university of Lincoln. There are a lot of shifts and also you have to be aware that with high education in general, to generalise it as well, it is part of a commodity, it's a value system of Capitalism.

To paraphrase Walter Benjamin, a man makes shoes for another's needs rather than needs of his own, it's about finding a point where we can be part of a system but get equal participation in response.

在2010年, AAC想要表達的訊息是, 從教育的本質上來說, 花費9000英鎊才能得到的教育資源也許在不花錢的情況下依舊可以實現, 為什麼還需要教育? 是教育“金錢准入”原則的嗎? 知識本該是無價的。

ART ZIP: 你怎麼定義AAC這個項目呢? 是一個政治行為還是一次藝術實踐呢?

PS: 這是一個很好的問題。我聽說這兩方面都有, 而且這兩方面是相植于AAC的複雜性。AAC是對主流的教育提出質疑, 並且開發出一個共享體驗的區間, 來開發更開放更具交流性的學習和教育實踐。同時, AAC是我個人的藝術實踐, 因此我必須依賴我自己的藝術創作和AAC這個開放空間之間的關係。我對觀念的保守往往不能讓作品來呈現, 因為這種對觀念的保守“並不是藝術的衝動, 作為我生產的一部分, AAC是具有保護性的, 同時它的意義在於, 在聲音和空間的開放性之下對對立的系統產生影響。為了保護這些問題, 我不得不找出方法來解決, 通過製作海報和出版我可以同時保持AAC的觀念和開放性, 同時完成我的個人創作。

或許我可以說AAC是一種政治行為的藝術實踐項目吧。

ART ZIP: AAC是如何運作的呢, 它到底是怎樣的一種實踐?

PS: 現在AAC還沒有一個實體或者物理空間, 我們組織的活動和項目都是比較鬆散的, 我創立AAC的時候還並沒有意識到底發生了什麼。開始的時候就是一個大學本科期間的抗議活動, 我們將五個學生宿舍改造為我們大學的校園, 我們把自己的實踐從藝術學院轉移到學生宿舍, 通過這種形式, 我們解除了高等教育和學校空間之間的關係。在那裡, 我們創造了不一樣的氛圍, 更個人化的上下文關係和更強烈的學習空間, 在開始的時候, 我們在這種學習環境、討論、集會以及藝術展覽, 基本上在前三個月時間裏就是這樣, 各種各樣的事情。後來, AAC的目的發展發生了戲劇性的變化, 它從單純提供學習空間和環境轉變為探討和質疑什麼是教育的本質。將學習作為一種實驗來對待。這種形式開始進入到教育學研究的範疇, 而且被回到對這種反思並且開始試圖創造進行藝術創作。我清楚這也是近幾年來我們很多工作的重心, 而且這也是為什麼我們並沒有舉辦太多賣打賞的活動而是舉辦了一系列的討論, 并很多運用博客和推特等事變的原因。

通過這種方式, 我覺得AAC逐漸了一個飛植于基礎的創造學堂, 我當處於對可替代性教育問題的討論和發展。

ART ZIP: 目前為止, AAC項目獲得了哪些反饋?

PS: 在開始的時候, 有很多地方和國家級媒體對我們的項目非常感興趣, BBC和TV的新聞報導了這個項目。隨後, 我們的想法是成為成熟, 逐漸將實踐重點轉移到將整個事件過程中的溝通和交流的經驗進行整合, 并探討如何更深入的發展和挖掘這些材料。這種我們能夠保持一個開放的核心態度, 我們可以提供一個有意義的討論, 讓人們可以各自貢獻, 同時也可以各取所需, 我覺得這就是我們收到的回報, 我覺得這是不錯的。





ART ZIP: What is your attitude towards the current education system?

PS: I think rather than waiting for something to happen, do it yourself! Having interesting chats at a coffee or shop, or creating, starting political approaches, taking actions, this does not have to be direct action, they can be an art practice, it can be in any form, I have met a lot of people that have different ways of doing it.

ART ZIP: Do you think AAC has changed something?

PS: I would say so, it was definitely a moment when I think about it. We realized that a collective could do something, there's shift and change of when it happened, I remember when the AAC did its first TV interview, and they are asking me how I was going to fund the AAC, I was thinking in my head, it's an art practice, I don't know how I'm going to fund the AAC, I have to think of something, so I said if you could tax football transfers by 2.5%, you could pay for everyone in the UK to go to higher education. And at that point, I

thought they are going to catch me out, but they accepted it and they put it on the news. No way of backing this fact! And in some way you deal with humour to combat the current context. You play with the current context. To avoid positioning yourself as a victim of the commodity system humour allows a space to use capitalists tools against itself. And I think digital media and digital platforms are the space to reunite this common ground. I think that's something which might reach the search for something else, it's moving and hopefully collectively we can produce a learning space that is open in both its practice and separate from a commodity system quantified by values and outcomes.

Tips 小贴士

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我也收到很多來自四面八方的有意思的郵件，我想我們一直都堅持最開放的態度，最近我成立了一個讀書興趣小組，對所有人開放，從不同年齡、不同背景和不同語境之中的人會匯聚一堂。我覺得這件事最重要的一個收穫就是在“做”的過程中，教育并不是學習一小塊知識或者從當權者的角度去做某種宣傳，它應該是從傾斜地傾斜和以一端而放縱去汲取和吸收養分。這樣，我們可以以一個開放的態度來探討我們如何來和這個社會相整合，如何變得批判性活動，如何將現有的情況進行反思，而人們給我發信，要求變成AAC的學生的時候，我真的覺得受寵若驚，真的是很可愛的來信，後來我會給他們回覆，說我們並沒有真正的往條件，這里只是普通的民主而已。雖然如此，但這是一個開端，我會告訴他們如何開始他們自己的可替代性學習。就在前不久，一位立陶宛的學生打算去荷蘭學習藝術課程，後來因為經濟原因未能實現，她後來聯繫我們的AAC，我覺得這件事很多，我希望我給她的建議可以幫助她開始建立自己的學習實踐，我覺得這樣的互動是非常有創作力的分享體驗。

ART ZIP: AAC的很多同仁都是在大學裡面供職的，他們是如何看待這種不同方式的教育行為的呢？

PS: 總體來說，多年來他們都對自己供職的教育機構有巨大的意見。一般來說，他們不喜歡現有的系統結構，整個教育系統把教育質量評估機構（Quality Assurance Agency）所控制，它規定了教師的成果是應該如何評定的，他們還有評估教育機構成功的權利。這種機構的問題是，他們會影響教育機構的教學實踐，比如，一位老師想教給大家如何通過嚴格底式的思維來學習，但是教育評估機構會覺得他的教學沒有實際的結果，也沒有方法可以評估，所以他的教學是失敗的，我想你就像這樣的過程。很多在學術領域的老師都已經開始建立他們自己的項目，比如林肯大學的邁克內里（Mike Neary）。現在在教育界有很多轉變，而且你要認識到，在資本主義的價值系統之中，教育與商品社會的一個組成部分。

塞爾本諾明（Walter Benjamin）的一句話，藝術的生產是為了顧客量身定做，而不是為了給自己學，我們是處在這個系統中的一員，但我們同樣處在一個可以同時參與其中并給出反饋的位置。

ART ZIP: 對於當下的整個英國教育體系，你是怎麼看的呢？

PS: 我覺得，現具等系統要求發生改變，不如去改變它，通過個人人的行動：在商店裡或咖啡館進行有趣的聊天，或者開始一些政治行動，不一定採取直接的行動，可以是藝術實踐，可以是任何形式，我遇到過很多人，他們對各種方式和途徑來表達和實踐他們的想法。

ART ZIP: 你覺得AAC的出現對現在的系統有所改變呢？

PS: 我覺得可以這麼說，每當我思考這個問題的時候，我覺得AAC出現的那一剎那是有巨大意義的，我們認識到開放和收作可以造成很多事情，從開始到現在，AAC有了很大的轉變，我記得在AAC第一次接受電視採訪的時候，他們問我如何能確保AAC運作的全全來源，當時我腦子想：這是一個藝術項目，我不知道怎麼能成為AAC的資金來源，所以我必須說些什麼，所以我說“如果我們可以吸收英國政府每位轉會轉會費用的2.5%作為稅收，那麼就可以讓英國所有的人都獲得高等教育了。”當時我覺得這是有史以來第一次，我知道後來他們不僅知道切達到了新聞里，很多事情其實就是這個簡單，赤裸裸的直白！也正是因為這樣，你不得不利用國家的手段來平衡當下的經濟，或者說“玩轉規則”，為了不把自己置於一個商品社會中受害者的角色，幽默感是一個用資本主義反對資本主義的偉大武器，我覺得藝術價值和網絡平臺都具有這樣的共同點，我想它們可能會將研究的基礎引以另外的方向，不道不道怎樣，這種變化希望是我們可以開闢出一片開放的、對難以功利為價值取向的商品社會系統的實踐空間。



