

**ELENI PAPAZOGLOU**

**Blog Link: <https://elenipapazoglou.myblog.arts.ac.uk/>**

## **INCLUSIVE PRACTICES UNIT REFLECTIVE REPORT**

### Context of Artefact

BA Illustration and Visual Media (LCC) is a course with a diverse cohort of students. Visual references are often shared alongside each project briefing or workshop / studio lab, through the curated lecture programme that supports each year group as well as a co-created digital Database of Practitioners that is featured on the course Moodle page.

As a white non British person that undertook their graduate and postgraduate education in the UK, manifold of the references that I share are primarily Western. The IVM teaching team is rapidly growing and diversifying. There have been some thoughtful changes in the way we share references, yet this has not been addressed officially. I myself actively look to share, promote and celebrate a wide range of practices and positionalities, yet I am becoming increasingly aware that “the irreducible price of learning is realising that you do not know” (Baldwin, 1980).

The significant impact made by presenting diverse artistic practices to students became apparent to me this year, when a student with disability reflected on how seeing an artist with disability deliver a lecture was the most empowering talk they have ever attended. In addition, I started taking note of the primary and secondary research students were drawing from in their submissions. Those often reflected students own experiences with regards to culture, race, class and gender. It was apparent to me that there is a sense of belonging created when engaging practices that relate not just to ones process but one’s positionality.

To understand the course make up, I turned to articles from Shades of Noir. International students make up 37% of UAL’s overall student body, out of which 87% are BAME (UAL, 2018). This large group arrives to university with a range of knowledges. By a referring primarily to Western references, certain students are denied historical, cultural and social affirmation, minimising the contributions of many and inhibiting the education of all (Howe, 1977). To oppose practices of inequity and in line with the Equality Act (2010) it is seminal that all students see the value in their own knowledges and that of their peers (Lelkes, 2019), and understand their role in creating change.

With this in mind, I decided to focus on the structures that already promote co-creation on the course. The ‘Database of Practitioners’ is a co-produced, polyphonic resource in the form of a padlet page made by staff and students. It was instigated by a fellow lecturer Rachel Davey. I admire this intervention because it is subtle, open ended, inclusive and

non-didactic. I also appreciate that holds knowledge from students that have now graduated from the course and it can be a source of knowledge for both students and staff. Yet, a lot of students are not aware of the database (or other archives available to them within the university).

Traditionally in archival studies, the focus has been on collection and preservation, rather than accessibility and communication. Reading upon participatory archiving, decentralised curation and radical user orientation helped me consider how else could generous database of practitioners be shared with students. (Huvila, 2008)

### Design of Artefact

With the above in mind, I wanted to devise an artefact that:

1. Critically engages students in examining the power of cultural presence and memory keeping
2. Promote the importance, accessibility and visibility of the Database of Practitioners to further co-production, diversity and inclusivity

I created an intervention in the form of a studio lab/workshop for Year 3 students (Appendix, Artefact Version 1). The session introduces students to evaluate critically practices of archiving and referencing and building the students' awareness of alternative sources of diverse practitioners. The session is planned to open with two lectures by practitioners that engage with memory keeping: Rhoda Adum Boateng, poet and archivist of the Black Cultural Archives and EJ Scott, Founder of the Museum of Transology, discussing the political nature of databases and the importance of co-creation in such. The session would then continue to introduce the Database of Practitioners to the cohort. Within the session students would be asked to find 5 references from the database that are relevant to their project, and add to the database 5 references that are relevant to them, or where they come from. As a follow up task, students would be asked to visit or access a database outside the walls of the university to extend where they draw knowledge from. Students would also be provided with a glossary of terms, and a list of London based and online archives that they can access in their self initiated study time.

This intervention would be more useful to be implemented at the beginning of the academic year so students are aware they can go back to the Database of Practitioners whenever they need. Due to the level of criticality it requires from students, this could be a relevant session for year 3 students, when they are developing their Self Initiated Project and writing their dissertation, making clear connections between theory and practice. In addition, if this was ran every year, it would create a self sustained updating system for the database itself.

This intervention promotes intersectional justice through instigating the co-creation of curricula, creating a sense of belonging and shared responsibility as well as diversifying

course material. By making this process part of the curriculum, it celebrates peer to peer knowledge and exchange and de-stabilises the tutor-student hierarchy.

### Feedback & Re-design

To evaluate the success of the designed intervention, I chose to present my thoughts to the instigator of the IVM Artist Database and Year 3 leader, Rachel Davey. I received meaningful feedback that helped me develop my artefact further. After making the adaptations, I had the opportunity to present my second draft to my peer group and receive further insight. Rachel and my peer group agreed that the incentive of the artefact, its timing at the beginning of the year and its importance for a year 3 cohort were well chosen. We also agreed that extending to sources outside of the university, and inviting practitioners that engage with archival processes to share their praxis was significant and brought a critical lens to the conversation while also diversifying the positionalities of guest lecturers. Rachel agreed that the support of the glossary and list of recommended archives (including resources both within UAL and beyond) would be helpful for a students who speak English as their second language or students that find it easier to be given a starting point when dealing with a new subject area. Furthermore, it was mentioned that there could be further development in the focus of the session with regards to its accessibility and visibility. Some of the most generative feedback reflected on the relationship of database as opposed to archives, but also the physicality of the archive: Where does it exist? What does it look like? What form does it take? How does it become one's own? How does it translate between physical and digital spaces?

Reflecting upon some of the received feedback, I have made alterations to my artefact (Appendix, Artefact Version 2). Firstly, in order to both cover and distinguish between databases and archives, I have chosen to work with and around the term *memory-keeping*. I believe this term allows diverse ideas what an archive could look. Due to its openness and personal tone, it might also feel more tactile and easier to engage with.

In addition, I have re-designed the session to focus on peer to peer exchange of artists references. To promote the accessibility of the database, I have included QR codes around the room that link directly to the database. In addition, to make the database visible, I have included physical elements such as students printing out their references and making connections with string. I have also extended the peer to peer support by inviting students to physically exchange references much like trump cards, and eventually uploading them to the database to link the physical with the digital element. By including elements of play, this session opens the possibilities of how to use / navigate a resource, drawing from radical user orientation studies in participatory archiving processes (Hill 2004; Sexton et al. 2004 in Huliva 2008).

There is still further nuance to be found on how to transfer data collected in the studio to an online format, as well as how to physicalise the database in a rather permanent way so that students return to work with it. In addition, further incorporation of student positionality could be incorporated in the session.

## Conclusion

Through this artefact, I aim to 1) examine how contextual references are shared in my teaching context, 2) critically engage students in examining the power of cultural presence and memory keeping 3) consider how to invite students to co-create the reference list to promote empowerment, diversity and inclusion 4) make pre-existing structures that promote co-creation more visible and accessible to students.

In the process of the Inclusive Practices Unit and the development of this intervention, I have become aware of my positionality within learning environments and ways to challenge my biases. By approaching this task, I was hoping to preserve the work of fellow tutors and invite students to be co-producers, diffusing the student-teacher hierarchy and give students agency within their learning environment and content.

Yet this process has also taught me to understand not having the answers as an exciting starting point to new ways of doing which involves taking count of the structures are there already, evaluating them and re-activating them anew alongside others. Apart from pluralising the devising of learning content, this has also had a positive impact on my own wellbeing, by removing the anxiety that I experience when perceiving the position of the tutor as an all knowing figure.

Moving forward, I am interested in co-creation of curricula and knowledge exchange. Equally I feel strongly about making students aware of resources that are available to them and exploring new methods of accessing and navigating, orienteering and putting such to use.

I would like to say thank you to the tutors of the Inclusive Practices Unit for all their support, insight and knowledge as well as my peers Rachel Davey, Francesco, Ekaterina and Fiona for helping me develop and reflect on this intervention.

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## APPENDIX

(A) Artefact version 1

BA ILLUSTRATION AND VISUAL MEDIA  
SELF INITIATED PROJECT  
YEAR 3 ::: STUDIO LAB

### Summary of session:

Often at the beginning of a project we look for inspiration: on location, in libraries and archives, from other practitioners and artists. Yet who decides what is relevant, worth documenting, preserving, recording and holding on to? Who decides what is important and according to what criteria.

This session will explore notions of the archive, introduce you to a range of sources and ask you to expand our collective archive.

### Aims and objectives:

To expand the range of sources from where to draw reference material (Enquiry)  
To critically engage with the notion of the archive (Knowledge)  
To contribute to the course's collective archive / database (Communication)  
To exchange socio-culturally diverse references with peers (Communication, Enquiry)

### Scheme of Work:

#### 10:00 – 11:30

Introduction and hellos

Introduction to archives: What is an archive?

Who makes it? Who decides what goes in it? What does it do? Who uses it / has access to it?

Potential Guest Practitioners: (invite 2 // )

– Rhoda Adum Boateng, poet and archivist of the Black Cultural Archives

– EJ Scott, Founder of the Museum of Transology

– Erin Liu LCC Archives

– Blanca Garcia Paja, BA IVM Illustration Librarian at LCC Library

Introducing alternative libraries

#### 11:30 – 12:45:

BREAK (15 mins)

#### 11:45 – 12:30: BA IVM Artist Reference Archive

Introduce students to the archive.

Everyone in the room / student / guest practitioner needs to add a minimum of 5 links to artists they love on the archive.

Everyone in the room student / tutor / guest speaker need to find 5 artists that are relevant to their practice from the archive.

## Appendix B Artefact Version 2

BA ILLUSTRATION AND VISUAL MEDIA  
SELF INITIATED PROJECT  
YEAR 3 ::: STUDIO LAB

### **Summary of session:**

Often at the beginning of a project we look for inspiration: on location, in libraries and archives, from other practitioners and artists. Yet who decides what is relevant, worth documenting, preserving, recording and holding on to? Who decides what is important and according to what criteria.

This session will explore notions of the archive, introduce you to a range of sources and ask you to expand our collective archive.

### **Aims and objectives:**

To expand the range of sources from where to draw reference material (Enquiry)  
To critically engage with the notion of memory making (Knowledge)  
To co-create to the course's collective database (Communication)  
To exchange socio-culturally diverse references with peers (Communication, Enquiry)

### **Scheme of Work:**

To prepare for session:

- Put QR codes to Database of Practitioners around the room.
- where else could the qr code exist? Something that they take with them? badge? sticker?
- Keyring?
- Giveaway??
- Bring a laptop
- Make sure students the settings are set out so students can add to the padlet board.

### **10:00— 11:30**

Introduction, hellos, outline structure of session

Open question: what is memory making? Who makes it? What does it do? Who uses it / has access to it?

Potential Guest Practitioners: (invite 2)

- Rhoda Adum Boateng, poet and archivist of the Black Cultural Archives
- EJ Scott, Founder of the Museum of Transology
- Erin Liu LCC Archives
- Blanca Garcia Paja, BA IVM Illustration Librarian at LCC Library

Introducing alternative libraries

**11:30 – 12:45:**  
BREAK (15 mins)

**11:45 – 12:30: BA IVM Artist Reference Archive**

—Come with 5 of your favourite references printed alongside the name of artwork and artist name, date and media specifications. They should be important to you, whatever that means to you. That might include, they are where you are from, they might link to your project, they might be memorable to you from previous projects.

Exchange your references with that of other people's. Every time you take one you should get a new one. You should do this until you have 5 completely different references in your hands. You can exchange more than once. Keep a trace of who you got this from or where it went after.

**12:30 – 13:30**

Look at what you have gathered from this exchange.

Take some time to research your new findings.  
Create categories / subject areas that are relevant to your references with regards to your project.  
Take a picture.

Exchange with someone. Find out different links between the five images.

Take a piece of string. Go around the room and link you material with other student material that is relevant to you.

**13.30 – 14:00**

Look at the database of practitioners. See if there are any relevant categories to your project. Add your new set of references to the database. If there is no relevant category, make a new category.

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**Work for the next session:**

**You must choose and complete one of the following tasks:**

—Categorisation and organisation: Organise your material in minimum 3 different ways. Reflect on the categories you are choosing to work with—what observations are they helping you to make? How can these observations fuel your project?

—Visit minimum two of the following archives. Find minimum 4 items that can be added to your archive.

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**Resources:**

Biblioteka  
<https://www.biblioteka.website/>



## An alternative artist references library

### Black Cultural Archives

<https://blackculturalarchives.org/collections>

The Black Cultural Archives collect, preserve and celebrate the histories of people of African and Caribbean descent in the UK and to inspire and give strength to individuals, communities, and society.

### The Feminist Library

<https://feministlibrary.co.uk/>

The Feminist Library is a large archive collection of feminist literature, which is based in Peckham, London. We support research, activist and community projects in this field. The Library is trans-inclusive, welcomes visitors of any gender, does not require registration or membership, and provides an intersectional space for the exploration of feminism.

### Materials Library, Institute of Making

<https://www.instituteofmaking.org.uk/materials-library>

The Materials Library is a collection of some of the most wondrous materials on earth, gathered from sheds, labs, grottoes and repositories around the world. It is a resource, laboratory, studio, and playground for the curious and material-minded to conduct hands-on research through truly interdisciplinary inquiry and innovation.

Museum of Transology: <https://www.museumoftransology.com/>

The UK's most significant collection of objects representing trans, non-binary and intersex people's lives.

### National Poetry Library

<https://www.nationalpoetrylibrary.org.uk/>

The National Poetry Library is the largest public collection of modern poetry in the world and is free to visit.

### May Day Rooms Archives

<https://maydayrooms.org/archives/collections/>

MayDay Rooms is an archive, resource space and safe haven for social movements, experimental and marginal cultures and their histories. Our building in the centre of London contains an archive of historical material linked to social struggles, resistance campaigns, experimental culture, and the expression of marginalised and oppressed groups.

### The Women's Library, London School of Economics

<https://www.lse.ac.uk/library/collection-highlights/the-womens-library>

The Women's Library is the oldest and largest library in Britain devoted to the history of women's campaigning and activism. It was officially inaugurated as the Library of the London Society for Women's Service in 1926 and it had two aims: to preserve the history of the women's suffrage movement and to provide a resource for newly-enfranchised women to take their part in public life.

### Wellcome Collection Archives

<https://wellcomecollection.org/pages/YL9OAxIAAB8AHsyv>

At Wellcome we look after hundreds of archives from many different sources, including: health and medical workers and organisations, charities committed to improving health outcomes and care, artists and other individuals, often sharing their lived experiences of health and well-being.

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## **Glossary:**

*Archive:* a collection of historical documents or records providing information about a place, institution, or group of people.

*Archivist:* Archivists are responsible for assembling, cataloguing, preserving and managing valuable collections of historical information. Archivists work with a wide variety of public and private sector organisations, and, once qualified, may move between a variety of organisations, roles and specialisations.

*Belonging:* an affinity for a place or situation, ex. Feeling a sense of belonging

*Cabinet of curiosities:* Cabinets of curiosities, also known as 'wonder rooms', were small collections of extraordinary objects which, like today's museums, attempted to categorise and tell stories about the wonders and oddities of the natural world.

*Catalogue:* (*noun*) a systematic list, (*verb*) to make a systematic list of (items of the same type), to categorise; to systematise

*Collection:* the action or process of collecting someone or something.

*Collector:* a person who collects things of a specified type, professionally or as a hobby.

*Co-creation:* refers to a framework or design process in which users / participants play a central role and engage in informing the creation of an object / service / product etc. This also happens with databases and archives.

*Critical Race Theory:*

*Database:* an organized collection of structured information, or data, typically stored electronically in a computer system. A database is usually controlled by a database management system (DBMS).

*Memory-making:*

*Institution:* an organisation, establishment, foundation, society, or the like, devoted to the promotion of a particular cause or program

*Library:* a building or room containing collections of books, periodicals, and sometimes films and recorded music for use or borrowing by the public or the members of an institution.

*Museum:* a building in which objects of historical, scientific, artistic, or cultural interest are stored and exhibited. "the Museum of Modern Art"

*Original Order:* This refers specifically to the order of an archive collection. The aim is to preserve the order that the creator maintained. For example, an individual might have organised their correspondence alphabetically by person, or by date, or by topic.

Radical user orientation:

Participatory archiving

Stuart Hall:

*(Un)conscious bias:* Unconscious bias is when we make judgments or decisions on the basis of our prior experience, our own personal deep-seated thought patterns, assumptions or interpretations, and we are not aware that we are doing it.

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