

Call for Proposals

Academic Housework: feminist narratives from art academia BOOK CHAPTERS

Proposal Deadline: Tuesday 1st April 2025

Editors: Gillian Dyson and Joanna Leah

Book Title:

Academic Housework: feminist narratives from art academia

How and why women identify as both or either artist and or academic has never been more contested than in this current period of decline in resourcing and political value of the arts and arts education.

This book aims to gather new and original content on the issues, practices, theories and perceptions of what it is to operate as a woman in contemporary UK arts schools, conservatoires and arts universities; and to offer something of a 'how to' survival guide for other women through a demonstration of the *Wise Women Project*.

We are interested to hear from women about their experiences as artist-academics. We want to share knowledge on the history of women in art schools and the practical ways in which women artists operate in the Higher Education context today.

You might want to write about your creativity, pedagogy, management, or research. You might discuss support in pregnancy, motherhood or menopause. You might share collective practices which challenge the normalcy of HE or describe aspects of physical resourcing – studio design for example, which are especially conducive to women's working.

Background and Concept:

The book emerges from the Wise Women Project – a three-year programme of events which sought to give voice to the women working in Leeds School of Arts, Leeds Beckett University (and latterly in other subject areas), and to highlight the inequalities experienced by women artist-academics, in issues of pay, workload, status and seniority, leadership and respect.

Dyson followed this work with a Podcast series of conversations with women in creative industries, commissioned by Leeds 2023 Year of Culture, Available at:

https://open.spotify.com/show/3TNe7z4qvpmeE86tH5D1we?go=1&sp_cid=372eb9cd3037006dfc12a6b9df23d8e&utm_source=embed_player_p&utm_medium=desktop&nd=1&dlsi=bb3a934a8ac9470b

The concept of Academic Housework:

Women have fought for representation and recognition in the 'art academy' Reckitt (2020) however many of these narratives focus on women entering the gallery realm, or their access to education. Once through the doors what are the narratives facing women in art academia?

Despite progression in feminist approaches to the arts academy women remain underrepresented in the management of arts education (Fitzgerald 2016). Aisling Mythen points out that since the lack of evolution in organizational systems and practices, the image of artistic leadership is 'resolutely masculine' (Fitzgerald, 2016 in Mythen, 2022) and the sub-work beneath these layers is administered and fortified by women at the helm of academic housework. Statistically, it is reported as being easier in the West (Aiston and Zi Yang, 2017). Tanya Fitzgerald (2020) refers to how women inevitably generate their own spaces and practices in which they collaborate to make 'cohesive networks' (Fitzgerald, 2020: 221) but it does raise questions of visibility and policy, inclusive practices and systems and how, if and where do these spaces activate change.

We believe, the opportunities and tensions for women, between academic industry and creative opportunity, are being exasperated by the monitorisation of Higher Education in general, and the pressures on arts subjects to conform to module structures, outputs over process, and to offer 'answers' rather than to raise and explore questions. Katharine Jenkins (2014) offers us Gregory Bateson's double bind to think about the competing demands for women in arts academia while being asked to effortlessly produce education and practice outcomes.

Anastasia Kamonos (2020) seeks to "bear witness" to the voids where women's creative voices are silenced due to class, race, or gender. We invite proposals that similarly "bear witness" to projects you've initiated or witnessed in response to these issues. For example, Corbett Shwanda addressed the dominance of visiting male artists at Ruskin College, Oxford, by creating "Women in Craft," which offered more culturally diverse perspectives. As Sarah Ahmed asks, how can we challenge institutional hypocrisy with "new plumbing" (Ahmed, 2021)? Your narratives may help us shape a new landscape.

We pose the following themes that have emerged out of our Wise Women Project research:

Possible Chapter Themes and suggested responses (but not limited to):

- *Visibility*

Experiential and or empirically based research and reflection on historic and contemporary experiences of working in the arts in HE.

E.g. Work roles & job descriptions; celebrating success; doctoral study; perceptions of the aging artist academic; feminist pedagogies; scheduling creative research – the academic and home day or year; career progression – Readers, Professors, Course Directors and Deans; histories of women in art school; the archive; the support staff – technicians, administrators, cleaner, et al. Experiences of (in)equality – race, gender, and other diversities in the art school.

- *Obstacles*

Critical discussion around the particular challenges of working in *arts* academia (as opposed to other academic disciplines).

E.g. Gender pay-gap; Is your work 'academic enough'; disability, health & wellbeing – especially relating to gynaecology, pregnancy and or aging and menopause; 'academic housework'; PhDs; a lifetime's work – is it a 'career' or a 'vocation'? Finding and resourcing - as academic and arts research and practice. HE governance, government policy and the (under)valuing of the arts; student attitudes and approaches to the arts, women academics and artists.

- *Collaborating*

Considering how and why we make the work we do – the friendships, teams, ensembles, partners and collaborators we develop as a support structure and feminist strategies to sustain these collaborations.

E.g. Practice as research; Relationship dynamics; Facilities and industry/ tech' support; working beyond the studio; inter, cross and transdisciplinary practice and research; what is a feminist approach to communication, pedagogy, sharing artistic practice? Working with external agencies – galleries, theatres, archives, funders etc.

- *Conversations*

Open-ended contributions focusing on aspects of academic and or artistic theory and or practice

E.g. What do you do or make or write about and why – is it 'research' and or is it 'practice'; non-linear practice and research; slow research; practice and pedagogy; what is 'academic housework' – the art school manager; making best use of the art school; getting out of the art school; etc.

Note – we are using the term 'women' to apply to those who identify as 'female' or 'feminine'.

We welcome contributions regarding intersectional issues of race, gender identity, disability.

The Editors are writing from the perspective of cis-straight women; our pronouns are described below.

Publisher:

Intellect publishes and encourages original thinking and seeks to widen critical debate in new and emerging subject areas – in the pursuit of education and learning. We're committed to creativity, innovation and excellence, and to working with our authors and editors to provide an outstanding service that takes their work to a global audience.

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Author Editors:

Dr Gillian Dyson is Senior Lecturer in Performance with Leeds School of Art - Leeds Beckett University. She originally studied Fine Art and has an MA from The Slade. However, her visual performance art practice intersects with theatre and screen and her PhD thesis for Glasgow University was on The 'Feminine Un-canny': A strategy for the deconstruction of the homely in contemporary, solo feminist performance art'.

Recent Performances: 2024 International Forum of Performance. Drama, Greece; the 2024 Back to Athens Festival, Athens, Greece; Future Flares, Manchester. UK 2024 and Emergency/ Word of Warning, at Contact Theatre, Manchester UK 2023.

Recent Publications: Cruz; Dyson, et al. (2023). Everywhere, All the Time, 3:42—Collaborative Encounters with the Mundane. *Performance Research* 28(4), i–xxix, 5–6, 139. 'Why Be Seen': talk - in conversation with Funmi Adewole Elliott and Susan Kempster, for *Ageless Festival 2024*, Yorkshire Dance, UK.

Dr Joanna Leah is an Artist and Academic with a Current position: Senior Lecturer in Contextual Studies and Research Methods Art & Design with Leeds School of Art - Leeds Beckett University. Leah's practice explores choreographic tactics in diagrammatic drawing, writing, installation, and performance. Current areas of Drawing practice are in Drawing ecologies, New Materialism and feminist forces, and Formless Art History explored in situations that engage in interdisciplinary entanglements. Diagrammatic modes of drawing, writing and performing present ways to 'draw out' fresh relationships with place.

Founder of DRA|W Drawing Radical Articulations Work at LARC Leeds Artist Research Centre, LBU. Leah hosted a national and international Drawing symposium in June 2024 contributing to the consolidation of .UK drawing networks by establishing a North of England Drawing Network.

Member: BADA British Art & Design Association, Liverpool and DRN Drawing Research Network, Loughborough University.

Research: Drawing in relation, Drawing ecologies of social, cultural and environmental breadth, Feminist New Materialism and concepts of the matter of difference, Scores and Notation, Diagramming, Choreographic Drawing in Art and Performance.

Exhibitions and Performances: *Shift Sync*, in Orla Bates Drawing Exchanges, Wexford Arts Centre, 2025. Liverpool Independents Biennial 2025, Site notation, La Tourettes de Couvent, Lyon, France, 2024; Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing, UK Tour, 2024. Collaboration, Leuven, Belgium, 2023; Drawing Ecologies, 2023; Drawn to Time, 2022.

Publications:

Upcoming: Joanna Leah Blubild Drawing Methodology, in Tracey Bowen and Tessa Berg Eds. Drawing Methodologies, Intellect.

EDGELANDS TWISTS: PERFORMING LIMINAL FISSURES IN EDGELANDS REPRESENTATIONS, AMPS Proceedings Series 32, *Representing Pasts – Visioning Futures*, <https://philarchive.org/archive/MEHTDA>

Joanna Leah, 'blubilds; drawing diagrammatic stains', *Drawing: Research, Theory, Practice*, Volume 7. Issue 2. Oct 2022, p.267 - 283. https://intellectdiscover.com/content/journals/10.1386/drtp_00095_1.

Joanna Leah Geldard, 'A Processional Blueprint for Our Edgelands: Exploring a Spatial Model between Site and Elsewhere', *The Arts In Society, The International Journal of New Media, Technology and the Arts*, Volume 12. Issue 3. Aug 2017. Common Ground Publishing doi:10.18848/2326-9987/CGP/v12i03/13-26.doi:10.18848/2326-9987/CGP/v12i03/13-26.

Important Dates:

Abstract/Chapter Proposal Due: 1st April 2025

Notification of Acceptance: 30th June 2025

Receiving Full Drafts of Chapters: 1st October 2025

Finalized Full Drafts of Chapters: 27th February 2026

Format:

Authors are invited to submit an abstract or proposals of circa 700 words for artist pages, short pieces of 3000- and 6,000-word contributions – Submit to editors by April 1st, 5pm (UK time)

These should clearly describe the author's thesis and provide an overview of the proposed chapter's structure.

We welcome 'non-conventional' essays: that is, you can propose an 'artist's page'; a written style that might play with academic convention; a reflective, experiential or an art-historic perspective. To reduce all our 'academic housework' we accept writing in a range of academic traditions and forms. We will consider prose and poetic texts, biographic reflection as well as theoretical exegesis. We can also consider artist's pages of a more visual nature (to be discussed with the publisher).

The editors are committed to diversity and inclusion and warmly encourage contributions from all sections of the academic and artistic community, including those who might be considered overlooked in academia. We also want the book to reach a wide range of users, including artists, academics, student researchers, those in the cultural industries and arts policy, and general readers.

The Book Structure:

- The publication will be prefaced by an invited artist academic.
- Dyson & Leah will introduce their *Wise Women Project* and contextualise their research into gender and arts academia.
- Your open submission contributions will be organised under chapter headings (see below), with
- Each of the themes will be represented as sections within the book introduced by content from the *Wise Women Project* in the form of workshops, findings and tips on navigating these issues to include a combination of visual/ written content from Dyson and Leah.
- The book will be indexed: each contributor indexing their own content as keywords.

General Submission Guidelines:

- We invite chapter contributions which critically discuss the experience of attending or working in a UK Higher Education arts department, from the perspective of being a woman.
- This context might be a Conservatoire, Art School or University Faculty or School.
- Your subject area might be visual arts, graphics or design, performing arts, dance or music, or digital media, sound and film. Or you might be an art historian or arts theorist. Or indeed, an arts or academic manager.
- Our focus is on UK arts educational contexts, but we welcome contributions from international artist and colleagues – if you have studied at or worked in or partner with a UK, HE context.
- All proposals/chapters will be reviewed by anonymous peer reviewers blind review, removing any reference to the author. Please title document NAME_Title. .
- As a separate document, authors should provide a short CV containing contact information and relevant publications and presentations. Please include your ORCID iD (if you have one).
- Final contributions will be referenced and accompanied by a bibliography. And we will ask you to index your work as key words.
- We have limited capacity for black and white illustrations – so these should be discussed with us, and the necessary permissions sought by the author.
- Please note, submitted proposals/chapters should not have been previously published nor currently be under consideration for publication elsewhere. Proposals/Chapters should follow

Intellect's Harvard, referencing style.

- Submit articles in accordance with *Intellect's* Guidelines. For more information visit: <https://www.intellectbooks.com/asset/2243/house-style-guide-6th-edition.p>
- Authors of accepted proposals will be asked to send their finished articles for consideration.

Please email questions and submissions to the editors:

Dr Gillian Dyson (She/ her) g.dyson@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

Dr Joanna Leah (no pronouns - use my name) j.leah@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

References:

Ahmed, S. Power 100, *Art Review*, <https://artreview.com/artist/sara-ahmed/?year=2021>, date accessed 13.01.25].

Aiston, S. and Yang, Z, "Absent data, absent women": Gender and higher education leadership, *Policy Futures in Education*, 2017, Vol. 15, No.3, 262 – 274. Sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav, DOI: 10.1177/1478210317716298journals.sagepub.com/home/pfe

Cooles, D and Samantha Frost, (2010) *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency and Politics*. USA: Duke University Press

Gosling, L. Hilary Robinson, and Amy Tobin. Helena Reckitt Cons. Ed. *The Art of Feminism: Images that shaped the Fight for Equality, 1857 – 2022*, Revised Edition.

Fitzgerald, T. Mapping the terrain of leadership: Gender and leadership in higher education, *Irish Educational Studies*, 2020, Vol 39, No.2, 221 – 232, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2020.1729222>

Jenkins, K. (2014). 'That's not philosophy': feminism, academia and the double bind. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 23(3), 262–274. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2014.909720>

Kamonos, A. (2020) *The Female Artist in Academia, Home and Away*, Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Imprint Lexington Books, The Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.

Mythen, A. 'Being There – A Qualitative Arts-Based Narrative Inquiry into the lived experiences of women in management and leadership in Higher Education in Ireland.' MIRR – Mary Immaculate Research Repository, [Date accessed 12.01.25].