**Interview – Respondent 3**

**Held on 5 December 2024 at 3.30pm via MS Teams**

**Graduate from BA Design for Art Direction course (2023/2024 AY) currently undertaking an MA at Sotheby’s Institute**

 **RR:** Thank you so much again for agreeing to meet with me. That's really kind of you. I really appreciate your time. I'm gonna try to keep this to like 30 minutes so that you can kind of get on with your day.
The reason why I'm doing this interview is because I'm currently doing a kind of a research project as part of a postgraduate course in design education, which is what all lecturers need to take. And it is about thinking, how do students perceive the role of contextual and theoretical studies in their design education. So I'm interviewing a few students for who have graduated over the last few years and asking them to just tell me a little bit more about their experience.
So, with that in mind I'll just jump straight into the questions if that's OK with you. So you're currently studying, right?

 **R3:**  Well, I'm doing MA in fine and decorative art and design at Sotheby’s Institute of Art. This course is basically about provenance research. Connoisseurship and examination evaluation and authentication. Which is a very specialised course.
It's I think the longest course in the Institute because sort of itself needs an evaluation of the artwork and that transformed into a class when they made an institute. That's what I've heard. And you know, London is the oldest one. So that's how my course is and the heritage of it. And that's what we do basically. So we kind of skim over the art history and then kind of goes into how to see the objects.
So it's very object focused studies.

 **RR:** That's really interesting. OK, which is why you're doing these visits, I suppose, right. Kind of actually looking at the work inside different collections… how long is the course for, is it one year, 12 months or is it?

 **R3:** Yeah. It's one year, but I think extra for dissertation and if you want you can have like optional semester in New York.

**RR:** And can you remind me did you do a DPS year when you were at LCC? No, you just went straight for the three-year degree, yeah.

 **R3:** yeah.

 **RR:** Right, right. So looking back now, you've obviously graduated like less than a year ago, six months ago, so looking back at your three years at LCC, what would you say was the purpose and value of CTS within your degree?

 **R3:** I guess it was the most, how do I say connecting threads in the three-year curriculum? Because every time I felt like all of my practises were wrapped by CTS, that's kind of impression that I got. CTS1, CTS2 and CTS3 all in general.
Obviously it kind of went over through the summer break of transition of year two to year three as well.
What was really nice about CTS was that you can actually pull in all the theoretical stuffs into the design, within the design education. So what was the question again?

 **RR:**It was that looking back, what was the purpose, what do you see as being the purpose of CTS within your degree?

 **R3:** Purpose I think it was a nice... Well, I think it works really different from all the like by other people. Individuals have different experiences, but for me, even when I was coming in I was super interested in art history.
So all of my artistic practises were developed alongside CTS, so I guess the purpose itself is writing a dissertation, right? Because, at the all university, well, the trend is now different, but the academic, basically the university education is about wrapping it over with the dissertation. So you have a certain expertise on it, so CTS is like by yeah, that's the purpose to have the expertise or specific focus on one whatever niche area that is kind of narrow.

 **RR:** How do you see this relationship between CTS and practise? How would you define or how did you perceive that relationship between CTS and studio? Did you see them as very separate? Did you see them feeding off each other? What was your experience of this kind of relationship?

 **R3:** Well for me, because I don't even, as you can see from my degree right now, I think at the end I realised I didn't like the creative process that much. It's just like a personal problem that I got really stressed when I'm looking at the blank screen like and like I look at the outcome and I'm never happy with it.
It's just too much stress for me. So for the creative process itself was really, really too stressful for me. So for me, I guess like I did my final project inspired by dissertation, or generally, I just wanted to do a publication design of my dissertation enormously.
I really wanted to do that, but because I'm in design course not a publication course.
Especially Art Direction they wanted to make it more, I guess, artistic. So the publication was not enough. I disagreed with it. I still disagree with it because I ended up not enjoying my final major project, but they wanted me to make a curatorial project, applying the thoughts that I put in the dissertation. So it's like, I guess, branded contents, right?
So in CTS3, there was a little bit section that you kind of comes out with. But what kind of designed object you want to put through with one from there, I guess. So I really didn't enjoy it. I think like the fact that that my creative project was so much pushed on the commercial side was really stressful for me. I don't think it was very organic. But I mean it did went well but still I personally don't think it's my baby. It went too much commercial whereas my dissertation was more about the colonial thinking and kind of a noble type of insight whereas this being very much commercial and branded it really didn't work that well for me.
 **RR:** So it seems like especially from what you're doing now that you're theory driven or history driven. Would you say that there were any particular skills or knowledge that you gained through CTS that are relevant to what you're doing now? Do you see the relevance in relation to your course that you're doing here and what?

**R3:** What LCC does well and UAL I guess in general, is the anti-colonial education in terms of structure, even and embracing diversity and feel like it's not something that you should deal with?
Personally, I believe speaking English well, studying at the UK University is crucial, I believe that. But the fact that LCC opens a door for people who are not confident with it, it's quite impressive, especially through language support and that really kind of encouraged me that I can write well in English as well and writing a long dissertation honestly… like me feeling less inferior about my nuances and those kind of stuff. Really made me feel more attached and made me feel confident, OK, I can do long writing because I felt like I was inferior or like less confident. I don't think I would have completed those process, but once I finish it now I'm like, OK, I really kept doing it right. So before I might have a doubt on myself, but now I at least know that I've finished one, That one really put me in, like, encouraged me to do a masters that I can complete a piece long writing.
One of the other thing was that it wasn’t heavy on like bibliography and like how to structure essays. I think personally, if I was if they did it more strictly, then it would have been benefited me in that sort of sense. But I know that because it's a free form type of essay rather than a dissertation that has to follow certain structures so much.
That difference made me to test out the writing on the contemporary art. I think if I did it in the art historical perspective, they would not have encouraged me to go and talk to people and do the ethnographical research in the 1st place or visits and incorporate into my reading because that's not what the art historical dissertation is about.
Traditional form of dissertation is about looking back into the past, not you conducting a research implementing it into your writings. So that has been fun. But because that's what I really wanted to do and wanted to pursue. [unclear]. So yeah, that's very informative and I feel like it's going to be an integral part of my whole like academy life. I feel like I'll be proud of it. And it's kind of everything I wanted to talk about more. So whatever part I pick on and expanded it later, I can do that. I come back to it.

 **RR:** I feel really emotional by what you just said. We work really, really hard to make students from different backgrounds who may feel more or less capable about writing in English. It's not just about writing in your own language. It's about coming into a new country, a new language, a new kind of academic framework. So that's really lovely. I'm very pleased that we were able to do that and that you are taking some of this forward. Thank you for that.

I think you touched a little bit upon this. Are there any other things that you feel could have been better in terms of the way CTS was delivered? What can we improve going forward?

 **R3:** Well, making it better. I don't know how. I don't know how to make it through, but you know the transition between year two and year 3 and that's actually a part of CTS, right, that you're supposed to read, etc. I think there was less emphasis on that, but then at UAL in general they don't force people to do something during the break.
So I don't know how that's gonna work, but using that time really wisely.
Or kind maybe assigning the tutors before that?
Because I try to read it, but then I was like, oh, I have to adjust to the tutor. And then you suddenly have to pitch the outline and you don't have enough time to review the final outcome, if that makes sense. Like, oh, everything is more concentrated on the conception because people meet their tutors after the break or like month after the break, right. So, conception takes so much time, whereas I think the most important part of dissertation it's not about consumption or research, but it's about keep reviewing it and then adding more stuff in and that kind of improves the quality at the end. But then you don't have enough time for that. You don't have enough time for crits within the student group, or crits from other tutors or externals or peers or professionals.
And you feel less obligated during the breaks. But I guess that's make makes sense. Maybe for DPS people I would say, yeah.

 **RR:** Yeah, I totally get what you're saying. And one of the things we're considering is to have sort of tutorials after you submit CTS2. So to have something in place for those who do feel that they would benefit from that. I think that's a really good point.

 **R3:** So because the reading list of the whole dissertation, whatever idea you pick right, it comes from your tutor. So you don't have the time to read that or you don't have the time to examine it because the reading list comes later like one month later after you met the tutor you talk about like what general topics, how to write this blah blah blah. Then you think about individual reading list… that's too late.
And I felt really pressured personally, because honestly, I had extenuating circumstances. So I had a time to review and add more. So I used my extenuating circumstances to proofread. But if it wasn't me recalling back to the time that I like when everybody was submitting, I knew I wasn't ready to proofread it.

 **RR:** Yeah. So to embed time to actually polish the writing rather than feeling that writing is almost like being too rushed or an afterthought. But it's also quite a challenge because some students change their topic over the summer or they, you know, it takes a while for them to really kind of zero in on a topic, but I get your point about some kind of transition between year 1 and year 2 and year 2 and year 3. Are there any other thoughts you had?

 **R3:** I think in general LCC or UAL like they don't feedback. They don't give a good constructive feedback in between. So you can the good constructive feedbacks always comes after the submission.
So that's maybe a point of improvement, especially for writings, because writings can change so much and it's easy to adjust, whereas like artistic projects like sometimes you know you might have to start from even like really from the beginning, the more complex it is. I know major project, I got a lot of feedbacks in between. So that was good. But CTS like you didn't have time to get a good feedback in between.
They ask you to write an outline, bullet points, but that's not going to be the constructive on the whole of it, but that's going to be feedback on the conception that should have been done within the seminars already.
 **RR:** That’s a good point about incorporating feedback. Did you already know when you started this course that you wanted to go into more kind of theoretical or historical direction? Or did you discover that during the course?

 **R3:** No, no, no. I thought I wanted to be a curator. But they do certainly have, how do I say practical sides of it? Like, I feel like they're also kind of a creator, right, like creating a space at the end. Like, I mean, research foundations and everything. But their actual job is to create that within the space. I mean, there's those curators who doesn't do that who just write a little like, well, that's what my definition of a curator was. And I thought I wanted to create like, a spatial thing.
Then what I was writing right like in CTS, especially CTS1 like I'm so proud of my baby in CTS1, CTS2 I didn't have enough time to revise it. I think it overlapped with something else within the course that I really couldn't like straighten myself through, but the first one really did, and that's when I discovered, oh, I really want to write now. But the thing is I had ADHD. Meaning that I have a second submission, right? Like I have a resubmission opportunity so I was able to get a constructive feedback and try that to my final outcome which is resubmission. I loved it, right?
And I also often went to language support. Academic support, not language support Academy support. I knew the system. I'm basically VIP there.
So there is a way for, I guess, academic students to be academic, which is great.
If you want you can be as academic as possible.

**RR:** Now you mentioned a bit around decolonization and all of that, but were there any other themes or any other concepts that you learned as part of those two units that were kind of relevant to what you're doing now? Or were there any big gaps that you think Oh no, we should have done more of this or should have learned more about that?

 **R3:** No, no, no. I think CTS2 was really impressive, like the structure of it or like the quality of resources there and the fact that I can also kind of like chip into the other aspect as well and kind of see how it's what kind of reading they have. I think that was really good. I think that's almost like a master's level right now that I'm doing. I can compare that to that. So it's like good.
CTS1. I feel like it's a bit choppier when there was like lecturer I didn’t like.
I don't know. I don't recall a lot, but I don't think it was very helpful. I don't think there was a lot of like going in and out kind of process with a true discussion in this one because of the structure, not because of the tutor.
But it was really impressive because UAL the whole CTS1, you know, writing unit starts with “Rhodes Must Fall”. That's crazy. That's really crazy. I really think that's really something really different. LCC may be only, but like that's really informed me so much. That being a first time 'cause everyone reads the first text, right? It's still informing till now. Yeah. So for me that one is good.
They don't give much about like design history, context, so people cannot differentiate Art Nouveau, design to modern design to whatever they are interested in. They might instinctively know it, but they actually don't know where is it coming from? The line of genealogy coming through? So I think that made a lot of people struggle when they started dissertation because they couldn't even figure out what kind of art they like.
Like knowing about space is great. But that's more of a general universal thing, right? So maybe, I don't know, like a guideline to help people understand art history. People don't even need it as a lecturer, but like as a brief guideline, right?
It's OK if you can start from here, if you like this type of art or just the little images I'm showing and then people can kind of skim their… or I like animation. You know, like the moving images. That type of information is really lacking. But in design, education universally in general, I feel like because I was talking to like Seoul National University over the summer. And they also had the same problem. Like they don't think design students need a history.
But then that ended up being they don't even know what kind of design they're performing. They just instinctively know, as it's been as a universal theme, but they cannot call it and me now starting the MA…. So our course also touches about the design history. Now I am so sad for other people. […unclear….]
And they could have benefited more if they knew right away to put it in the search engine. And I remember all of my friends were really, really struggling in the beginning of the dissertation. I had a head start because I was already coming from, like kind of artist circle. There's your background. I was already into it. So I knew what I wanted to talk about, what kind of words I wanted to use using the search engine whereas my friends are like, oh, I like video games, but what video game? And then they were like, oh, I'm struggling to find the word to search more references. So that's kind of a thing.

 **RR:** Yeah. No, that's a really good point, being able to position where does your practise come from and not think that you're kind of creating in some kind of a historical vacuum. But I agree there's also kind of push almost against historical knowledge for whatever reason. Those are all of my questions. I don't know if there's anything else that you want to say or anything…

 **R3**
Yeah, all good for you.

 **RR:**
OK. Well, thank you so much.