ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
How to Make a Happening (1968/2020): a workshop in virtual space

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• Abstract (300 words):
Historically, universities and art colleges have provided a hotbed of collaborative and collective activities. My current research explores the conditions that spawn these activities and how they intersect with pedagogical practices. This paper is framed as an experimental space to test the shift of conditions in the virtual environment.

This paper draws on student responses to an online workshop held in April 2020. The workshop was designed to question whether it is possible to create the conditions for collective artistic action in a virtual learning environment. Focusing on the rules of Fluxus ‘Happenings’ outlined by Alan Kaprow (Kaprow, 1968), the workshop became an experimental space to re-imagine these rules during a global pandemic and to challenge the notions of place and locality. The concept of the ‘Happening’ was chosen because it provided both a tangible framework for the students to engage with in this current climate and is discursively linked to collective practices. Utilising a combination of different online communication platforms, the workshop became a student-led project which developed over a two-week period. The analysis of this workshop follows
a dialogical methodology and conceptual framework (Montgomery and Baxter, 1988), with the student participants, in order to draw out some conclusions for future research.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Dr John Wright is a researcher, curator and artist working as a visiting lecturer at Leeds Arts University. Wright co-founded artist-led collective The Retro Bar at the End of the Universe (2014-present). Wright has worked in several prominent museums and galleries including Yorkshire Sculpture Park, The National Science and Media Museum and The British Library to develop his curatorial practice. Wright has curated/exhibited freelance projects and interventional works including Leeds Art Gallery (2014), Espacio Gallery, London (2015) and with artist John Ledger at the Bowery, Leeds (2016). Wright’s PhD research, with the University of Leeds, investigated the nature of the contemporary artist-led collective in relation to the wider socio-cultural context. Wright’s teaching practice focuses on the intersections between fine art, history of art and curatorial studies.