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## Eventalising Critical Theory through the Video Essay format in Long Distance Learning.

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This presentation will engage with the themes of improvisation, creativity and innovation by exploring the possibility of using the 'video essay format' to negotiate key tensions between traditional and contemporary practices in a Fine Art education. The video essay has a long history of application within the context of audio/visual studies, where it has often been used to define a medium specific language of critical analysis. Although the video essay has taken on such a formal pedagogical function in media studies the use of this format as a pedagogical tool in disciplines outside of media studies is limited.

Of particular relevance to this presentation is the development of a unique pilot project in a remote context of the West Coast of Ireland called Sherkin Island. Designed as part of a long-running distance education Bachelor of Arts degree (BAVA) at the Dublin School of Creative Arts and Media (DIT), this project engaged with adult learners to explore the video essay format as pedagogical mode of production. This pilot project addressed a number of concerns regarding the teaching of Critical Theory as a theoretically oriented subject in a studio-based program, the reduction of complexity in teaching critical theory in long distance educational contexts, and the relation between text and image in the video essay format. Exploring the potential of the video essay to foster a praxis-oriented understanding of critical theory by using a less instrumental platform for teaching and learning this project assigned the production of an audio/media video essay equal weight with the production of a written text. This presentation will reflect on the potential and pitfalls of the 'video essay' as an 'educational event' within the context of a fine art program.

Exploring the potential of the video essay format to be used pedagogically within the context of an arts based degree program this project tested the boundaries between pedagogy and performativity, distance learning and embedded knowledge, the textual and the visual. Within this context, the video essay format can be helpful to navigate the relationship between text and image in a way that supports a more aesthetic exploration of critical concepts in a fine art context.

Engaging with these dynamics the project employed a series of critically reflective interventions developed within the tradition of critical pedagogy, and reflecting upon the relations of power and education. As an extension of these themes the presentation engages specifically with the work of educational theorist Gert Biesta and his analysis of the economic ethos of exchange, which links life-long learning with the formation of human capital. Within this context, the project engages with the Michel Foucault's concept of eventalisation as that which 'pluralises truth' through the transgression of normative pedagogical frameworks. For Foucault, eventalisation counters rationalisation by 'rediscovering the connections, encounters, supports,

blockages, plays of forces, strategies and so on which at a given moment establish what subsequently counts as being self-evident, universal and necessary. In this sense, one is indeed effecting a sort of multiplication or pluralisation of causes. (Foucault. P.76) The plurality of the video (image, sound, text) essay enables a discourse of multiple perspectives for critique to occur. In Foucault's conception of eventalisation, this exploration takes on a micro transgression of disciplinarity, which, for the artist and academic Hito Steyerl, can be understood as an "aesthetics of resistance". Steyerl recognises an embedded interdisciplinarity in the Video Essay that is specific to its historical context. In her text the 'Aesthetics of Resistance'(2010) she argues that as a result of its emergence in the early twentieth century, a time of conflict and change, the video essay provides an alternative approach to scientific conceptions of research that can challenge or 'resist" the reduction of complexity in artistic research. At stake within this suggestion is not only an alignment between the video essay form and the emancipatory ethos of Critical Theory, but also the relationship between the video essay and disciplinary conflict.