

# ACTIVE IMAGINATION

## Students From Birmingham Institute Of Art & Design International Project Space (IPS), Birmingham, UK January 2006

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As the third part of an international exchange project, 'Doppler Effect', between artists Kelly Large, Ruth Claxton (Birmingham UK) and Ocular Lab (Melbourne), I was invited to partake in a one month artist's residency at IPS, located in the Cadbury Bourneville model village school hall in Birmingham, Institute of Art and Design (BIAD). I devised a project that would engage Undergraduate and Post Graduate Visual Art students as participants in the occupation of the IPS as a way of precipitating 'exchange'.

For *Active Imagination* I invited 14 local art and curatorial students and graduates from the local area to envisage the 'show of their dreams' through active visualisation onto a sample space within the IPS. Each participant was allocated a portion of the project space (about the size of an undergraduate painting studio) and over a two-week period they worked intensively, rendering up an image of either a solo or curated exhibition imaginatively projected onto the entire IPS space. The group were invited to give their imagination broad rein, allowing their vision to trespass the boundaries of what would be merely possible for their show—there was no limit on their imaginary funding allocations, historical moment or geographical location, set up time, legal requirements etc. Several conjectures for curated exhibitions summoned up artists from the dead, such as Pablo Picasso, Andy Warhol and Felix Gonzales-Torres to assist them to illustrate their curatorial premise.

The students presented an Artist's Statement to accompany their installation in the sample space that described their intentions for an entire exhibition in the IPS. We saw a range of conjectures for exhibitions to occupy the entire gallery, either as samples or fractions of a larger exhibition, or notation towards that exhibition. Due to the fast tracking nature of the project, two weeks only for the gestation *and* execution of their installations, all artists had to 'get their skates on' to think and act fast. In the IPS exhibition we saw often rough-hewn drafts and beginning points for work to come.





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