

ISSUE 1:  
**ual** ■ london college  
of fashion

What does it mean to be  
ANTI-FRAGILE for GEN Z?

# we are the ANTI-FRAGILE

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## CREDITS

Published by Charlotte Troy

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With special thanks to Daniel Caulfield-Sriklad & Kelly Dearsley Strange.

This publication was made possible through The Innovation Fund budget awarded to Charlotte Troy from the School of Media and Communication, London College of Fashion in 2020.

With gratitude to all those who gave their time, energy and vulnerability to this year long research and knowledge exchange project.

# What does it mean to be ANTI-FRAGILE for GEN Z?

‘HAVE A CARE, HERE IS SOMETHING THAT MATTERS’

Alfred North Whitehead.  
*‘Civilized Universe.’*  
Lecture Six in Modes of Thought. New York: Macmillan (1938)

Chaos as a Catalyst! Here in lies the seed that spawned the current Anti-fragile Manifesto and indeed the works that underpin and surround it. In March 2019 I spent time with a group of undergraduate second year fashion communication students and working with a cultural analyst we attempted to practice philosophy with them to uncover our contemporary zeitgeist. We explored their relationship with the world, how they feel about their place in it, their agency and capacity to affect change. Our collective investigations of their experience, their fears, hopes and desires formed a collectively produced manifesto of what felt most urgent for them as a generation. Of particular note was their desire to experiment and explore their identities, to consider alternative subjectivities as a way to access freedom; something the practice of art and design and fashion and remixing contemporary culture enables us to do.

Being a university that deals in the production of knowledge the strategy of bringing philosophy into the classroom enabled us to flatten hierarchies and as a community develop knowledge collectively through the co-investigation of our thematic universe (Friere, P 1970). The pedagogic strategy of each of the projects featured in the issue foregrounds the psychic wellbeing of the student and consciousness-raising sessions where we identified with each other’s experiences facilitated a connection to one another that forms the very basis of wellbeing. This collective energy provided a motivational force, the potential to develop one’s agency both individually and collectively through creative expression. This potential can be felt as a kind of positive desire (Deleuze & Guattari) not bound in lack as in consumerist desire, but bound in excess, with an increased capacity to be in the world. This furthering of the self, something I recognized as inherently aesthetic, led me to consider its relationship with epistemology. How the development of knowledge is an aesthetic experience, where ‘the concentration in a point of all stages of the argument, the immediate grasp’ (Badiou, A 2019 pp35) is understood by Spinoza as the third kind of knowledge experienced as an embodied joyful affect. That moment in the classroom where we feel inspired, connected and alive, of infinite potential, this is the aesthetic. Alain Badiou talks of this in terms of the ‘event’ and happiness, ‘Happiness is the affect of the true’ (ibid). The pursuit of truth, and in that sense I refer not to objective truths but subjective ones where we momentarily access a sense

of ourselves, a pulsation that feels joyful and expansive and true, must surely be the primary site of all wisdom. Exploring that when we experience it in education gives us scope to pursue what is meaningful for us and is why knowledge production must be centered around creative and critical play, and where possible self-directed. Each project since that first manifesto in 2019 has been an iterative exploration of how practicing philosophy through creative workshops might lay the foundations for ‘collective joy’ (Gilbert, J. 2019) to emerge.

Clause from *Student Manifesto*, 2019

‘WE ARE FLUID IN OUR IDENTITIES AND WILL WRITE OUR OWN IDEAS OF SUCCESS’

Crucial to my pedagogic brief has been a persistent recognition of the term, ‘the personal is political’ coined by feminists of the 1970s, and borrowed by theorists such as Mark Fisher et al, which is this consideration that mental health is not strictly a personal issue, ‘The self is formed by social practices and effects of power’ (Atkinson, D. 2018). We are subjects of our socio-political and physical environment and collective responsibility needs to be taken as we move away from the entrenched neoliberal ideas that privilege the competitive individual and the idea that education should be considered as the primary exercise of climbing out of a particular socio-economical status as spurned by late capitalism. What if the fundamental goal of education was joy? A productive joy as discussed by Spinoza and Badiou, where this ‘expanded’ capacity to act facilitates a creative understanding of self that we experience as ‘infinite potential’ that Deleuze states as ‘relating to the increase in power through the affect of joy that produces the new individual.’ (Atkinson, D 2018)

What this generation would benefit from is the opportunity to consider big egalitarian ideas where the wider community both locally and globally are seen, considered and valued; the current COVID 19 situation is offering that perhaps. They are the generation who will be able to lead on making these changes from the micro to the macro, the local to the global; and the theoretical and practical work we share with our students offer, I hope, inspiration to consider these. The development of our subjectivity both individually and collectively can be dynamic if we find ways to practice being human and expand into our potential. Foucault said ‘Life as a work of art’ I stand by this, to commit to the path of creatively in all our affairs, to take creative risks, to explore, to apply ourselves to what we believe in, this is where growth lies. The Anti-fragile Collective if nothing else is exactly that, solution based philosophy in action.

# INTRO

## What does it mean to be ANTI-FRAGILE for GEN Z?

The term Anti-fragile comes from the philosopher Nassim Nicholas Taleb who explores this concept in-depth within his book *Anti-Fragile: Things That Gain from Disorder*. The Anti-fragile, takes resilience and pushes it on, it uses chaos and the unknown as a catalyst for growth and transformation; stress is what it likes. He references the serpent like creature, Hydra from Greek mythology, 'that has multiple heads and each time one is cut off two grow back. So harm is what it likes. Hydra represents Anti-fragility' (Taleb, N.N. 2012)

This title, alongside Donna Haraway's book, *Staying with the Trouble* provided the theoretical context for an exploration of our moment in time as felt by our Gen Z students. 'The Trouble', was very much here before CV 19 brought us all to our knees, global warming, post-truth, social inequality, a mental health crisis in society and rising in children, each considered here. Both books offered inspired solutions, the first in a set of attitudes and the second through provocative and collaborative ways of 'making with' in our relation to the earth and its inhabitants.

The development of subjectivity through the exploration of our mental ecologies and how this contributes to psychic wellbeing is at the heart of what I am passionate about. My research into wellbeing ranges from the psychological to the philosophical, including ancient Vedic philosophies that value physiological and action based philosophies including asana and meditation,

to Lacan and his appreciation of the tripartite and how one forms an idea of the self, to various poststructuralist philosophers who critique the impact of capitalism on the individual and collective social ecology including Deleuze & Guattari, Virillio who discusses the impact of speed and capitalism, and more recently Alain Badiou's discussion of the 'event' and who's most recent

‘STAYING WITH THE TROUBLE IS BOTH MORE SERIOUS AND MORE LIVELY AND INDEED MORE FUN, STAYING WITH THE TROUBLE REQUIRES MAKING MORE ODD-KIN, THAT IS WE REQUIRE MORE CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS, WE BECOME WITH EACH OTHER OR NOT AT ALL.’

Haraway, D (2016)  
*Staying with the Trouble*

book addresses the nature of happiness and claims that 'happiness can be defined as the affirmative experience of an interruption of finitude' (Badiou, A. 2019 pp.35).

The word 'interruption' is important here, and resonates with many of the writers with whom I have spent time with when considering the aesthetic. That the aesthetic experience is provoked by a semantic or symbolic re-shuffling to create an 'interruption', a space or gap, into our psycho-sociological matrix where one then feels themselves when we experience the 'new' with a certain intensity. Deleuze and Guattari refer to this as a 'Deterritorialization' as the movement that takes place when one leaves a territory and in that 'line of flight' extends and finds new ground, these ideas underpin their theories around a radical becoming. Laclau uses the term 'dislocation' from a social structure, where 'the

In relation to my theoretical understanding of the aesthetic I had been researching the defining characteristics of 'radical creativity' alongside the attributes of wellbeing in order to develop my pedagogic practice. Wellbeing had become a buzzword taking hold both within university and in wider socio-political context; radical creativity and wellbeing both seemed to employ ideas such as autonomy and taking risks, creative and critical thinking and experimental practices, collaboration and connection to others and the environment in which practice takes place. My hypothesis was that working with the attributes of radical creativity in a strategic way can support and develop the determining characteristics of wellbeing. The relationship between creativity and wellbeing, was no new concept and The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (APGAHW) was formed in 2014 to improve awareness of the benefits that the arts can bring to health and wellbeing and in their paper of 2017 defined wellbeing as 'a dynamic state in which the individual is able to develop their potential, work productively and creatively build strong single positive relationships with others and contribute to their community' (Creative Health Enquiry, 2017).

Taleb's and Haraway's ideas thus offered real inspiration for us to consider, not only how we might use the Anti-fragile individually and personally, but how we might

perhaps think about the trauma felt collectively; socially, politically and environmentally. Presenting these solution-based ideas to our students, those that are about to inherit this world, who are hyper-woke, distrustful of authority (rightly so I might add), aware of their responsibility, struggle to relax and yet full of emotional intelligence, optimism, courage and humility felt an ethical imperative. We were excited to share and overwhelmed by how our students took to the ideas and the opportunity to think politically through their creative practice. Through consciousness-raising sessions we addressed how we think about, and behave within, the realms of love and ecologies of care, art and culture, politics, science and technology; through critical and playful workshops including character-building and world-building we speculated upon the world we wish to live in and our contributions to it concluding in manifesto-making.

This issue looks to present this research considering our pedagogic practices, our Knowledge Exchange initiatives and the student response, both in their feedback and in the work produced. The projects include teaching that took place within the curriculum (with a brief designed to meet learning outcomes), outside the curriculum (thus not restricted by timetables and assessment criteria where we might collectively feel the affect of these experiences instead), through a radical

more a social structure is dislocated, the more subjective freedom there is' (Gilbert, J 2013). It is in those 'gaps' (Adorno, *Minima Moralia*) where we fall between an understood psychology, and access infinite potential that remains of most interest to me, where in this sense the subject is not fixed to a historical, social and cultural identity, not static or stable but dynamic, creative and adaptable and inherently Anti-Fragile. If we consider the aesthetic experience as a furthering of one's capacities where I feel myself, then the space of epistemology is this moment that follows this ontological shift (the interruption, or Gap) that emerges as new knowledge, of the self and its relation to the world. Critical and creative pedagogies can facilitate this liminal space where the subject is able to resist a state of petrification, cope with the threats of contemporary life and become Anti-Fragile in the process.

teaching intervention at a secondary school in east London as a collaboration between undergraduate second year students and academics, and an online initiative in response to the college moving online titled *The Body in Isolation: Prototyping New Rituals*.

The collective work forms the basis of an ethnographic study in many ways, though none of us are social scientists, nor are we philosophers, merely we are teachers committed to the practice of finding new ways of working creatively and critically with our brilliant students. By developing joyful and inspiring experiences in the pursuit of knowledge, our objectives are to expand our understanding of the self and its relation to others, our industries, our affect on the world and where we wish to place ourselves in a bid for freedom.

As we write this we are nearly 12 weeks into lockdown, with a campus of staff and students now splintered around the world, we are supporting each other as a community. There seems to be no way back to before, we need to take this pause to really reflect on what was working and what was not. With the world in a state of emergency we are presented with an opportunity to practice the philosophy of Anti-fragility both individually and collectively, where we might experiment with new ways of being in the world that fosters the creativity and wellbeing of the collective.

# ANTI-FRAGILE collective Takeover with SUPERIMPOSE

In January 2020 Daniel Caulfield-Sriklad and I were asked by the Associate Dean, Kelly Dearsley to develop an extra-curricula, week-long intervention open to all first year students at the school of Media and Communication, LCF. We were to be as experimental as we wished, to take over the building and work with an industry partner. Our objectives were to cultivate a sense of collaboration and community for our students whilst sharing our research and inspiring them through the process. By the end of the week and working alongside the progressive creative studio, Superimpose, our wonderful and adaptable technicians and students we would put on an event to showcase the ideas and work. The brief offered opportunities for both Daniel and I who share a set of ethical values around teaching, whilst having distinct roles.

Staying with the Trouble: The Anti-fragile (as discussed in the introduction) provided an empowering and motivational theories we wanted share with our students; that damage, personal, social, cultural and even environmental could be used as an opportunity for growth. With our theory in place and our objectives set we began to sketch out what the week might look like. Five full days with a collection of students that might reach a cohort of 300 or none at all, the project was not timetabled as part of their courses so attendance was completely dependent on their interest, we sent out the following teaser:

Inspired by the term Anti-fragile, how can we create collective wellbeing invested in

the idea of the tribe and our ability to connect with, and express ourselves with others about being human, as a way to emerge from the trouble?

Working with first years whose disciplines included illustration, creative direction, styling and photography, and make up meant our brief had to be broad, creative and inclusive, to be playful and critical and achievable in a week. We developed the following brief:

You are invited to feed on a collection of insights and respond by co-producing an Anti-Fragile Manifesto that sets out a series of provocative clauses, values and aims. These will then manifest as mythical creatures imagined by you that will emulate the values, personality traits and powers of the Anti-fragile.

Our pedagogic strategies to support this brief were largely developed from the previous teaching I had carried out when attempting to track the Zeitgeist with cultural strategist Miriam Rayman with whom I had developed a student-led manifesto before (see preface).

The manifesto as a format provides a structure through which the collective sets out what they for and against and with its political and aesthetic potential it felt like the perfect medium we could collectively work towards given the learning I had done around wellbeing and radical creativity.

For this pedagogic iteration I felt we needed some distinct themes through which we might raise our collective consciousness of, and Science and Technology, Love and ecologies of Care, Politics, Art and Culture provided us with the appropriate lens. These themes were derived from my reading of the philosopher, Alain Badiou who discusses the development of subjectivity through the 'post-eventual process of (political) emancipation, (artistic) creation, (scientific) invention or of alteration, in the sense of becoming other-than-itself (love).' (Badiou, 2020 pp91). Through these themes we were able to explore with our students notions of identity, relationships, the risks they feel capable of taking, the power they feel they have, what needs to change, their rights and ideas of inclusivity within the society they exist.

Badiou in this book specifically discusses the relationship between happiness and the development of the subject in the creation of new knowledge of a thing, that this 'truth differently illuminates the ontological situation' (ibid pp96). We were clear that through creative and critical workshops new knowledge would materialize about our collective experiences and the nature of being, and that through working collaboratively our ability to relate to one another would cultivate a sense of wellbeing and collectivity.

We offered a series of prompts and questions on each theme to get our students talking and by the end of day one we had spent the whole day in conversation, something that felt luxurious and connecting, we shared so much on that day, hierarchies were

flattened as we listened, questioned and speculated.

We considered in our relationships what intimacy looks like, how digitally networked to friends and family around the globe the tonality of voice was crucial, how to be close to one another to share a meal and hug was valued. We considered intergenerational relationships and how the Anti-fragile might be a Blue Zone, where our priorities would be to care for each other and be socially responsible. We determined Art and culture is a public good. We discussed the ideas of the Movement of Cultural Democracy and that culture is by the people and for the people, we reflected on article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that; 'Everyone has the right to enjoy freely



Image: Ethan Hart



Image: Ethan Hart

Danchev, A. (2011)  
*100 Artist Manifestos*,  
Penguin

the cultural life of the community to enjoy the arts and share in scientific advancements and its benefits.'

In Science and Technology as the first truly post-digital generation there was an offline / online balance being fostered here, and an appreciation that technology is here for life to fulfil its potential alongside a distinct and sensual appreciation for the analog and man-made. In considering our relationship to nature, we liked the idea of rewilding, both our environments but also ourselves. Time and our experience of it became a focus, how might we have more of it, feel less constrained by it, and perhaps given the neoliberalist pursuit of productivity, do less with it. Politically, we were clear the Anti-fragile is not a vertical regime, but horizontal where all are welcome to explore ideas of identity and pose ideas for how we might live collectively, this was a democracy that wishes to push against neoliberal ideas of individuation and towards cultivating relationships of collective care. We discussed notions of freedom what that looks like in a super woke world where responsibility is key, we considered how disciplined practice in our rituals might facilitate freedom and how it is unlike the individualist freedom I knew as a young person in the 90s, and that freedom might be felt more in political acts of solidarity and of course still on the dancefloor.

In order to develop these philosophical and political ideas and values into a manifesto we leant into Taiye Selasi's appreciation of how rituals, relationships and restrictions define cultures, we posed the following questions:

‘TO MAKE A MANIFESTO IS TO HALLUCINATE THE PROMISED LAND, WHEREVER THAT MIGHT BE. IT IS IN IT’S OWN WAY A UTOPIAN PROJECT. THE CHARACTERISTIC STANCE OF THE ARTIST-MANIFESTOIST IS A SORT OF SPIRITUAL RESILIENCE’



Image: Jenny Lafer



Image: Jenny Lafer

1. WHAT RITUALS CAN WE DEVELOP TO RESPOND TO OUR ANTI-FRAGILE VALUES? WHAT ACTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE 5 TIMES A DAY?

2. WHAT IS NOT ALLOWED IN THE ANTI-FRAGILE SPACE. WHAT SPECIFIC BEHAVIOURS MUST WE LEAVE AT THE DOOR?

3. WHAT ARE THE ETHICAL AND SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES OF OUR ANTI-FRAGILE RELATIONSHIPS?

These enabled the students to think specifically about what they would be for and against. The rituals we discussed included how we might care for ourselves and others, how we might put down our phones and make our beds and attend to our pets; how prayer in the Muslim tradition offered a structured pause five times a day where we might connect with something larger than ourselves, how we might borrow from that; that before we retire at night we might reflect on our day and present ideas for the next. As the manifesto came together we edited it collectively and developed something we felt we could all stand behind.

In attempting to take these ideas into specific characteristics and to ideate how these might manifest as creatures we tasked the students to create an Anti-fragile entity, we rolled out sheet of paper so big we could climb on and draw and we sketched out the superpowers, the values and personality traits that we might need to facilitate the design of these creatures.

This was a pedagogic experimentation with the structure of a Brand Onion, a marketing tool used to develop or analyse brand identity something I had worked with a lot in my Art Direction and Branding units; touchpoints became superpowers, whilst values, personality and essence all worked as a way of entering the ideation process.



Image: Jenny Lafer

Directors, strategists and creatives from Superimpose worked alongside academics and students throughout the ideation and prototyping phase of the week to enable students to further realise their creative ambitions for this week-long project. Superimpose invited their extended network of collaborators and creatives to work with students and contextualise their ideas in through a range of mediums across print, digital and live experience.

Within this co-creative environment, ideas were shared and developed that enabled students to determine the ways in which they were aiming to respond to, interpret and perform the clauses and values of the Anti-fragile Collective Manifesto. At this point confidence from the students noticeably began to rise as they presented their ideas to industry and worked with specialist technicians to prototype their ideas using a range of media. The students formed three groups with an aim that each group would activate or 'take-over' a specific area of the building: the entrance foyer to the building, two flights of stairs and a large lecture theatre.

Throughout the prototyping phase of the week students were given access to a range of materials to create their activations: projectors, speakers, lights, fabric, mannequins, plants and plinths. The collective ambition to transform, activate and takeover these spaces was driven by the students working alongside the team from Superimpose and a range of staff from the University including: academics, building managers, security, technicians, managers and senior management. Students became leaders, practice-based philosophers and activists, championing the ethos of



Image: Ethan Hart

this Anti-fragile Collective. On the final evening of this week-long event, we opened the doors to industry guests, editors, press and alumni, inviting them into the communal world of the Anti-fragile Collective. Audiences were greeted with the hanging ten-clause fabric manifesto alongside a guided journey through each activated space.

The first activated space was a projection mapped film installation with a voiceover script written by students. This voiceover self-proclaiming the 'Anti-fragile' reality for this generation. The installation was interspersed with natural plants as a metaphor for using your vulnerabilities as a catharsis for growth and transformation.

As audiences walked up two flights of stairs the students designed an experience that would take the audience through the feeling of 'emergence'. A Year 1 Fashion PR & Communications student created two bespoke sound pieces that resonated throughout the building and reinforced this emergence from the darker side of vulnerability to a feeling of calm and serenity.

The final activated space was in a large lecture theatre where students guided the audience through an Anti-fragile ritual. This multi-channel sound and light video installation was designed to enable viewers to leave the takeover with an image of themselves finding a sense of calm and acceptance, within the chaos.

During this five day event the exchange between students, academics and industry illustrated the importance of supporting new systems that celebrate uncertainty, conscious vulnerability, collaboration, agency and collective wellbeing. This is the spirit of the Anti-Fragile Collective.



Image: Ethan Hart

# REFLECTING ON YOUR EXPERIENCE OF THE WEEK LONG PROJECT WHAT WAS THE HIGHLIGHT?

B

For me, the most important aspect of the project was the chance to make new valuable connections with students, tutors, technicians and people from the creative industry. Throughout the week, we have created a unique sense of community that I have never felt before while studying.

G

During the course of the Anti-fragile week I had several highlights, one being the week interaction and process of working through something as a collective, alongside meeting new individuals from LCF and essentially being thrown the deep end of working together and getting to know each other. A big highlight was also have Superimpose working alongside us and highlight parts of the industry I had never thought about before, I really enjoyed meeting people that had worked at Superimpose and hearing their journey.

# HOW DID WORKING PHILOSOPHICALLY WITH IDEAS OF LOVE & CARE, POLITICS, SCIENCE AND TECH, ART AND CULTURE EXPLORE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF BEING IN THE WORLD?

B

I found the workshops extremely inspiring. Talking about all of these important things with peers and the creators of the Anti-fragile was eye-opening and refreshing. I think that such philosophical discussions are crucial to

G

Working in a philosophical way, was a therapeutic process, I felt I could release inner thoughts and spiritual comings within this group of people I had any known for a day or so. During that week we created an environment



Image: Jenny Lafer

form positive changes in our lives.

that felt safe and warm, I felt part of a secure space where everyone was valued. Highlighting different elements of peoples views and understanding was also an interesting factor, delving into people private rituals and processes was a very philosophical moment for me, it was a nice time of reflection and also self growth. We created a belt of unity

## HOW THE HAS THE IDEA OF ANTI-FRAGILITY IMPACTED YOU BOTH PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY. HAS IT PROVED USEFUL TO YOU DURING THESE COVID19 DAYS? IF SO HOW?

B

The philosophy behind the Anti-fragile was very freeing in a way. As creative, I am very sensible to the happenings that are taking place during Covid19 and the notion of embracing vulnerability of this moment and expressing it through art practices feels especially empowering.

G

The Anti-Fragile has given me a massive insight into the beauty of collaboration and equality. We worked in an environment where status' were non existent. Personally gave me a sense of growth and confidence to enable to communicate and voice my thoughts. Professionally the Anti-fragile gave me an insight to the importance of speech behind creative works, it hasn't occurred to be before the importance of voicing meanings and definitions behind artistic practises, I enjoyed the looseness of speech and sense of discussion before any practical elements were involved

in the process of making.

During Covid19, Anti-fragile has given me a sense of reassurance and knowing. Knowing that we still remain out there and willing to continue our manifesto no matter the conditions. It brings me hope that maybe anti-fragile maybe the new world, and we may be granted with the pleasure of being able to paint our new future.

## HOW WAS THE EXPERIENCE OF COLLABORATION?

B

I just loved the experience of collaboration, it was not only extremely fun, but useful as we combined our knowledge and creativity to produce some extraordinary work in such short time.

G

It was a great experience, pulling a range of skill sets and concepts together enabled us to produce strong outcomes and build relationships. I enjoyed working alongside tutors and the team of Superimposed, it gave me an insight to how amazing the importance of diverse collaboration can be.

## REFLECTING ON THE MANIFESTO DO ANY CLAUSES FEEL PARTICULARLY PERTINENT TO NOW?

B

The clause about active experimentation of thought and action to enlarge my comfort zones is very present in my life as well as another one, which says that Anti-fragility is about action as well as inaction. The current period of isolation forms a good place to reflect and rediscover oneself.

G

I feel many of the clauses pertinent to now, especially number 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9. Reflecting on the clauses I definitely relate to one that enhance on the sense of coming together and appreciation of sharing energies and being grateful for this. The manifesto also brings a light of positivity in clause number 9 strengthening the importance of courage and curiosity, and throughout circumstances we have to remain open-minded to the potentials of our situation.

# DO YOU FEEL YOUR CAPACITY TO HAVE AN AGENCY IN THE WORLD WAS MOTIVATED DURING THE PROJECT?

B

It certainly was motivated. And I am looking forward to the future projects with Anti-fragile.

G

Yes, I do feel a capacity to influence from the motivation gained during the Anti-fragile project. It has given me a confidence in which to voice and project views when approaching a creative project. The Anti-fragility has also given me an insight to the umbrella of art, and how art can be portrayed in many forms, most importantly the sense of interaction and coming together. -Don't know if I answered this question properly, but I've answer from my understanding of the question.



Image: Jenny Lafer

1\_\_\_we **PRACTICE** active experimentation **OF THOUGHT** and **ACTION** we **UNFOLD** our identities; we **ENLARGE** our **COMFORT** zones.

2\_\_\_we **GAIN** a **DIFFERENT** perspective when we **ENGAGE** with **EXPANSIVE** vistas, **INTERNAL** and **EXTERNAL**.

3\_\_\_our **RITUALS** pause time, we **GREET** the day with **GRATITUDE**, we respect our **REST** and make our **BEDS**.

4\_\_\_we **PRACTISE** philosophy, where the **SHOCKS** of the **NEW** manifest as **OPPORTUNITIES** for growth.

5\_\_\_**SCIENCE** and **TECHNOLOGY** help us to **MEET** our full potential.

6\_\_\_we **VALUE** the sensuous tonality of **VOICE**, the **ABILITY** to hug and the **CONNECTION** of a shared meal.

7\_\_\_we take **RESPONSIBILITY** for **EACH** other; **HUMILITY** and kindness are our **CODE**.

8\_\_\_the **ANTI-FRAGILE** has its own **MOMENTUM**. We **CELEBRATE** collective energy.

9\_\_\_we take **CALCULATED** risks determined **UPON** our **PRINCIPLES** of **COURAGE** and curiosity; we remain **OPEN-MINDED** to the potential of now.

10\_\_\_the **ANTI-FRAGILE** is not only **ABOUT** action but also **INACTION**, we **RESIST** the race of **TIME**.

00:01

We profess our weakness in the pursuit of Catharsis.



00:09

terrified. But in the face of fear, find the



00:13

opportunity to be courageous.



00:17

We admit that we are



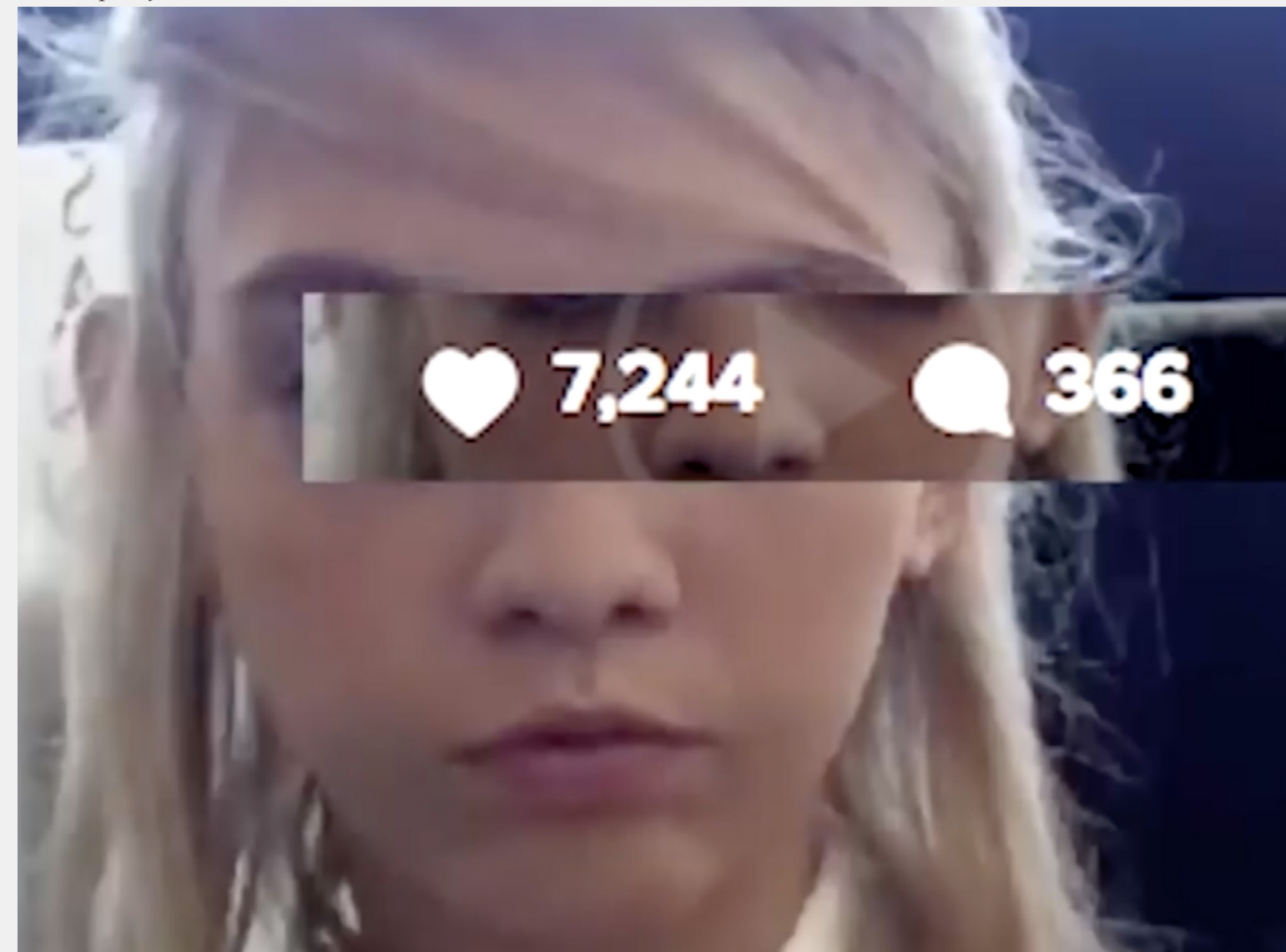
00:07

We acknowledge that we are



00:18

unappreciative. But in the depths of self pity, see



00:22

the light of perspective.

00:25

We are guilty of cognitive dissonance, but

00:28

in the age of information, ignorance is

00:31

not an excuse.



00:34

We define ourselves by a lack of

00:36

time. But will hold ourselves accountable for our choices.

00:42

We foresee that as in the past, life will overcome us again from



00:45

time to time. But with each slum we find stronger motivation.



00:55

the gratitude is the key to satisfaction.



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00:52

We are prisoners of our expectations, but recognize

## Things will Never be the Same, That's the Good News

The past few months have been so turbulent that I feel wholly unequipped to try and summarise them. I suppose it is fortunate then that there is really no need to; we all share an understanding of the pressure and anxiety that has defined 2020. We should all take pride, therefore, in our resilience and remember these times as a period of growth, conquering adversity individually and as a worldwide community. This is not to say all our plights have been equal, I acknowledge my privilege, I am grateful that I haven't had to sacrifice my creature comforts; my heart goes out to those who have. I believe it is the majority of people who feel this empathy, which is evidence to me that our society is Anti-fragile. The level of compassion that has arisen from our collective struggle is a beacon of hope. I urge you to actively seek the good and leverage your findings against the stream of fear we are fed by mainstream media; this is what we must do to have a balanced view of the world. It is in the interest of the few that the injustices we face seem insurmountable, real liberation will come when every individual realises they can change the world. This is all very well but begs the question: where do we start our personal journeys on the path to Anti-fragility?

Being Anti-fragile is a lifestyle informed by philosophy. Most of us can't stomach Nietzsche in his pure form but as artists I think we can get behind his message here. Simplified to an extent that would have him roll in his grave, he says fuck what you know; our creativity doesn't just make us beautiful it's what defines us. In fact we must first become art ourselves before we can spread this positivity. Now he certainly wasn't talking about fashion when he said this but I'm going to have to invoke my artistic license. I genuinely feel that I create therefore I am and the way I dress is a daily source of self-expression. Continuing to take pride in my style helped me to retain my identity in a period in which it was so easy to feel devoid of purpose. This is, however, a reciprocal relationship. Continuing to engage with fashion helped me keep my head during quarantine, but isolation also helped my style.

It is hard to articulate in a way that makes sense but we are simultaneously living in a time of deafening noise and absolute silence. While history is being written at a furious pace, most of the things

‘ONE MUST STILL HAVE CHAOS IN ONESELF TO BE ABLE TO GIVE BIRTH TO A DANCING STAR.’

Friedrich Nietzsche

happening feel so far out of reach that our day-to-day lives remain mundane. This really is a double-edged sword; the silver lining of such uncertain times is that they act as a petri dish for ingenuity. In the words of a more contemporary philosopher: 'the darkest thoughts are always beside the most beautiful' (yes it's Ye). Being physically removed from the rest of civilisation can change our perspective. Often others subconsciously influence our actions in a way we might not realise. We have been given a rare chance to escape the tremendous pace of every day life and being in isolation gives us the chance to reflect on why we do things and whom we are doing them for. Having identified and dropped the aspects our creative identities that are not genuine, we are left with the framework of our artistic potential; enter the 'chaos'. The raw emotion that we feel overflows from our direct response to the stimulus and seeps into all forms of expression. That's it. That's Anti-fragile. The chaos has become a catalyst for the 'birth [of] a dancing star', in this case manifest as a true individual. The

nature of my other outlet, music, means it speaks for itself better than words ever could ... if you are prepared to listen.

All images: Hugo Taylor



# What does it mean to be ANTI-FRAGILE for GEN Z?

The Anti-fragile Manifesto, this poetic and political force that managed to articulate the values and mindset of Gen Z provided a document that I wished to take further in my teaching practice. For the next iteration I would need to fold in particular learning outcomes for the brief as the cohort was a group of cross-platform second year students from the communication program who unlike their peers would not be going out on work-placement. Traditionally a challenging unit due to logistical concerns (cohort numbers unclear until the day and attendance is poorer than other units) it also afforded the opportunity to be more experimental and change year on year determined by what we believe as a program to be relevant to fashion communication practices and areas of research we felt urgent.

My reflection upon the previous experience was one of joy and excitement. It felt truly collaborative. Daniel and I shared that we'd never felt so inspired, enthusiastic and connected. My job was to critically reflect, draw on what worked, deepen it, experiment with it, and design a new iteration for this project.

At the time I was reading for the first time Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and had been listening to leftist political podcasts from ACFM (Novara Media). A relationship emerged between what was termed 'consciousness-raising' sessions that have a lineage to feminist activism in the 70s, and what Freire talks of within education as 'Thematic co-investigations'. These ideas resonated with me on what I was trying to do by practicing philosophy in the classroom.

To pull this method familiar within activism into education as a way of developing agency both individual and collective, felt aligned to my understanding of the qualities of wellbeing that the subject who feels motivated and inspired develops agency. This was qualified by Freire who states

'Thematic investigation thus becomes a common striving towards awareness of reality and towards self-awareness, which makes this investigation a starting point for the educational process or for cultural action of a liberating character' (Freire, 1970 pp.80)

‘CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING IS CONSIDERED AS THE ACTION OF CONSIDERING YOUR POSITION IN THE WORLD, YOUR AFFECT ON THE WORLD AND HOW IT AFFECTS YOU, AND TO CONSIDER HOW YOU MIGHT EXPAND YOUR REALM OF FREEDOM’

(Milburn, K. 2020).

‘THOSE WHO ARE ANTI-FRAGILE ARE DRIVEN BY A CURIOUS NATURE, A DESIRE TO EXPLORE THE INNER WORKINGS OF SOCIETY AND HOW TO NAVIGATE WITHIN IT.’

These strategies underpinned my exploration for a critical and creative pedagogy, where my wish was to foster a greater sense of questioning and cultural enquiry into the creative process itself.

Our industry is fashion, not politics and society, so the question was how this might relate to Fashion and how we can we work with these very philosophical and political approaches for our students? Fashion is often villainised as an emblem of capitalism, considered as a pretentious and vacuous medium, at its worst fast fashion exploits the environment and its workers globally; but things are changing, and as a creative discipline just like music and art it is a dynamic and exciting industry that at its best intellectually and creatively responds to political, structural and cultural shifts and translates these into a rich contemporary visual culture. Thus the better our students understand the wider context that fashion sits in the more progressive the work. Fashion is a tool to play with, it is about your ability to express yourself as you play with ideas, and creative practice from styling to making enables one to find out about themselves, their identity and their position in society and the world.

Freire discusses the 'dialogic teacher', one that converses with one's students through a pedagogy that is problem based and co-investigated, thus the hierarchies of such a 'depositing' method of teaching are done away with. He refers to the dialogic method par excellence is: 'constituted and organized by the students view of the world, where their own generative themes are found. The content thus constantly expands and renews itself. The task of the dialogical teacher is [...] to 're-present' that universe not as a lecture but as a problem' (Freire, 1970 pp.82)

This seemed to present the ideal structure for the unit. Present the manifesto and the findings from the previous project for our second years to engage in and extend the narrative. The unit is titled Situating your Practice: Industry project so I had to think strategically about how this might work with industry. I spent time bouncing ideas off our new Creative Director, Aleksandra Szymanska previously and LS:N and Daniel Caulfield-Sriklad who is a vital collaborator in these projects. We talked about ethnography, tribe reports and trend forecasting. Ethnography as a practice explores a tribe's experiences, values, identities and ways of life through their perceived experience of the environment, what is known, memory and where our imaginations might take flight. The action of furthering this work by tasking our students to study their generation's thinking and behavior felt exciting and relevant as the insights sector of consumer behaviour and trend forecasting is an industry that many of our graduates with a real aptitude for cultural analysis and research often moved into. Thus I set the research question: What does it mean to be Anti-fragile for Gen Z?

The brief was for students to address this question through Badiou's thematic lens of Love & Ecologies of Care, Politics, Art & Culture and Science & Technology and develop a 'chapter' for a tribe report. We introduced Alain Badiou to our students through these themes explaining the philosopher's theory that we come to understand truth, what matters to us, through these themes 'Because they mark out the possible instances of the subject as variously individual or collective.' (Badiou, 2019 pp48)

We discussed that Philosophy is a non-religious way of understanding the world and our relationship to it. And that anyone could perform philosophy in a series of actions:

1.  
DETERMINE THE STATE  
OF THE SITUATION  
(RESEARCH & CULTURAL  
ANALYSIS)

We explored the relationship between philosophy and wellbeing addressing how Ancient Greek philosophy is a direct influence in the development of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), stoics; in particular the philosopher Epictetus who stated 'Men are not disturbed by things but by their opinion on things'(Evans, J. 2013). We explored that emotions follow our beliefs, and that beliefs can be unconscious if unexamined we can become fixated by things, but if you reflect and explore these and work to develop our character through practicing a personal philosophy, 'we achieve what the stoics call 'a good flow' (Ibid).

Throughout the teaching delivery we continuously pulled in the Anti-fragile Manifesto as a way of encouraging dialogue about such ideas.

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Throughout the teaching delivery we continuously pulled in the Anti-fragile Manifesto as a way of encouraging dialogue about such ideas.

WE PRACTISE PHILOSOPHY, WHERE THE SHOCKS OF THE NEW MANIFEST AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH.

In setting up the consciousness-raising sessions we attempted to inspire our students with cultural findings that might illustrate the Manifesto clauses. Friere talks of this in co-investigation that the dialogic method of teaching is to learn from each other, a teacher should inspire to bring their experience and wealth

2.  
CHALLENGE IT  
(CRITIQUE IT)

of knowledge to the students. In Science and technology we looked at how micro-dosing is being used in mental health and how Xenobots the world's first living robots constructed of biological material taken from the *Xenopus laevis* frog, illustrate Haraway's theories of 'odd kin' (Haraway, D. 2016) how they remove plaque from human arteries or remove toxic microplastics from the oceans.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HELP US MEET OUR FULL POTENTIAL

In art and culture we referenced the work of photographer Maria Pasenau who took a self-portrait every day for a year as a ritual and a way of pausing time: 'I'm scared of forgetting things – that's why I take pictures. The good, the bad, everything,' Maria Pasenau (Dazed Digital). In politics we introduced the term: The Personal is Political a phrase coined by Feminists of the 70s who recognised that how they felt, what they thought and how they acted was formed by historical, socio-cultural and political factors, and that 'No aspect of human experience, however intimate and emotionally intense, is not affected by wider distributions of power and by the nature of social institutions' (Gilbert, J. 2019) This acknowledgement liberates our mental health issues from the strictly personal recognizing that it is also our historical, cultural and political and environmental position governed by distributions of power. We focused on collective activism as and how the 'Greta Effect' fueled by a super woke, post-truth backdrop was politicizing Gen Z and giving them more power and how we might find agency in that power. In our appreciation of these issues we hope to push against politics being done to us and find ways for us to find our voice whilst acknowledging that certain practices and rituals, might foster ideas of a post-structuralist subjectivity that is in fact dynamic terrain and not defined or socially fixed by our socio-historical narrative of identity, as Badiou states 'The subject cannot be closed by an identity. [...] the emancipatory process is open and infinite.' (Badiou, A. 2019)

3.  
SPECULATE  
(PROPOSE AN ALTERNATIVE)

THE ANTI-FRAGILE HAS ITS OWN MOMENTUM. WE CELEBRATE COLLECTIVE ENERGY

In love and ecologies of care we looked at how we can foster a greater sense of love and respect in all areas of our being, from care for ourselves, to thy neighbor and into the spiritual realm, how in certain theologies each action could be performed as a way of showing one's devotion to some greater good: 'Underneath all the complexities of today I believe we all long for a simplicity of self that is full of wonder and magic. It can be tending piece of ground, growing flowers or vegetables, playing music, or sitting in silence.' Llewelyn Vaughan-Lee, Sufi (Dazed Digital)

WE TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EACH OTHER; HUMILITY AND KINDNESS ARE OUR CODE.

As our students interrogated these thematic universes they aligned themselves to a subject and formed groups. Over the five weeks of the unit through primary and secondary research their subject knowledge developed and they created chapters that offered original and thoughtful insights about their experience of the world. As the final weeks closed and the disruption of Covid 19 took hold their reflective work became ever more personal as they considered what they learnt and how the Anti-fragile might provide a structure through which to use in this moment of cultural and social interruption.

' THIS PROJECT HAS HELPED ME TO DEVELOP IN MY OWN PRACTICE, BECAUSE IT PROVED TO ME HOW ADAPTABLE I CAN WHEN FACED WITH UNCOMFORTABLE AND UNFAMILIAR BRIEFS. THIS PROJECT FORCED ME TO PUT ASIDE THE ADVERSITY THAT I FELT TOWARDS THIS PARTICULAR TOPIC (LOVE AND CARE) IN MY PERSONAL LIFE SO THAT I COULD LEARN ABOUT IT. '

S, aged 22

# Pamela Gorak the ANTI-FRAGILE GEN Z: Art and Culture

Due to our early life experiences, Gen-Z is likely to be less narcissistic and will focus our role in a larger, more collective society. We are seen as the 'True Gen', not only focusing on the self but willing to accept more diverse points of view, we experiment with different ways of shaping our identities whilst being in a constant state of development. With these values in place and our minds open to new experiences, the idea of 'subcultures' has shifted and is now becoming a 'remix' of culture which stands for unity and flourishing.

Exploring our identity is vital as we prioritise equality and value diversity across, race, gender, sexual orientation etc. more than any other generation. We avoid 'labels' and stereotypes, but rather work to accept ourselves as we continue to evolve our identities. We make decisions in highly analytical ways with a bigger picture in mind, in order to solve conflict and improve our surroundings. When making these decisions we consider not only the self but our wider community. This change is due to the technological advances and access that the previous generations did not have. Gen-Z is a generation that has been exposed to the internet and social media all our lives. This makes us comfortable consuming information from various sources and cross-referencing these, this knowledge means that we are very socially and culturally aware.

As consumers, Gen-Z is looking to invest in things that are not only extensions of ourselves but visions of our fantasy selves which makes us aspirational shoppers – putting in greater consideration to what we consume as we are also concerned with dressing the 'inside of our minds' seeking deeper meanings to garments. We have a desire for fashion to be more transparent and to engage with its audience through our values.

Being culturally, socially and politically 'woke' has given Gen-Z the opportunity of greater unity and a deeper understanding of various cultures, enabling us to have richer connections to one another. Unfolding cultures and exploration creates a hybridity of all these different cultures, this pushes the idea of be-

ing open-minded and taking calculated risks that get us out of our comfort zones which is an Anti-fragile aspect that Gen-Z resonates with. Subculture and group rebellion are about fighting for rights to express ourselves, whether it be through fashion or music, this is an Anti-fragile quality that Gen-Z value deeply.

Gen-Z crave for tangible ways of consuming information, seeking inspiration from outside the algorithm and offline ways of presenting one's art and craftsmanship. Due to the fact that the digital is all we have known since youth, Gen-Z yearns for experiences away from the screen such as magazines, record players and film cameras. We appreciate experiential communication beyond all else, reviving the analogue aspects that previous generations may have discarded due to the advances of technology.

Magazines and zines that explore our values are becoming mediums where our creativity can be expressed via several forms from photography, collage to written pieces and poetry.

The tactility of magazines and zines in particular is what draws this generation in as it is an embodied way of expressing their passions. In a world where just about anyone can be a 'publisher' and post fake news, audiences are starting to question the validity of their sources and Gen Z trust print publications over other media to deliver credible information, a study found. 'Some 83% turn to newspapers for trusted information and content, and 34% turn to magazines' (MNI Targeted Media Inc., a division of the Meredith Corporation.)

However, this is not to say that print is the replacement for consumers' digital lives but instead, is an addition which provides deeper channels of self-expression which is a missing piece in the lives of individuals which crave for authentic ways of communication. The two offline and online worlds work hand in hand for Gen-Z. Using social media to promote and share their work whilst remaining alive entirely in their physical tactile form where they can fully indulge in these experiences. The Anti-fragile aspect of this is the idea of taking calculated risks and remaining open minded which is exactly what reviving magazine culture is.

花卉, FAR-NEAR, Art Director & Photographer Roxy Hervé (2019)



花卉, FAR-NEAR, Art Director & Photographer Roxy Hervé (2019)



'Seen Not Heard', FAR-NEAR, Photography By Mary Chen (2019)



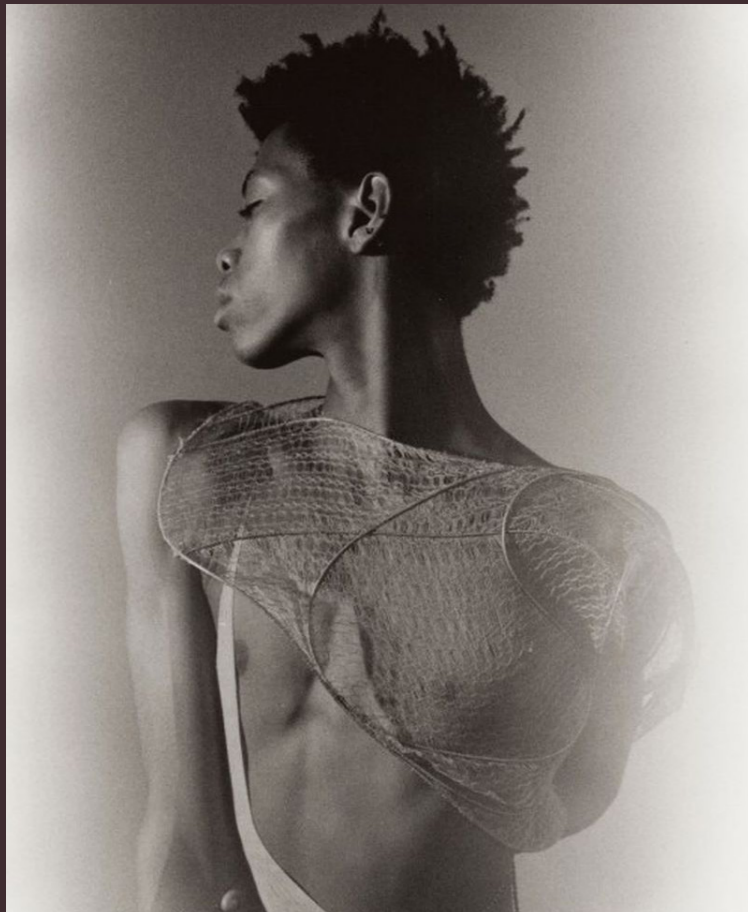
A publication that embodies such qualities is FAR-NEAR, this is a cross-cultural book series which is all about broadening perspectives of Asia, this is done through mediums such as photography, art, writing, exploring historic references... all in one publication. The motive and intention behind this being the importance of celebrating and exploring cultures which are overlooked and unseen in the 'conventional' media. Gen-Z values such considered concepts which hold deeper meanings and are contributing to further educat-

ing people and uplifting communities. The Anti-fragile aspect of this is within the idea exploring and embracing identity without being afraid of change, conflict and adaptation. It is highlighting the importance of the process which is needed for growth through a wider lens and thinking ahead to a future which gives equal opportunity for all.

1 Granary is another publication which expresses the Anti-fragile, a platform which is about creating opportunities for young talent by sustainably helping them develop their careers.

1 Granary Morocco B In Rui Zhou By Zhi Wei For November (2019)

'Seen Not Heard', FAR-NEAR, Photography By Mary Chen (2019)



‘ WE PRACTICE ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION OF THOUGHT AND ACTION WE UNFOLD OUR IDENTITIES; WE ENLARGE OUR COMFORT ZONES. ’

‘Empowered by students and recent graduates, we wanted to show that we are not interested in waiting for anyone from within the industry to start making a change. Instead, we were convinced that we could start influencing things by ourselves and take control of realizing our dreams’ founder and editor-in-chief Olya Kuryshchuk says. This publication wants to revive and reinvent the purpose of magazines.

We live in a world and culture where content is consumed and digested in a way which

is very dismissive – we spend our time scrolling through endless feeds of imagery without truly grasping what we are seeing. This makes us nonchalant and unable to efficiently appreciate the art as we are just dismissing it from our screens, a cycle that seems never ending. To adhere to this shifting era of the digital and analogue, it is important that we are bringing these two worlds together cooperatively to form a future that embraces them both and works in unison, so that we can all fully experience art organically through various realms.

take this opportunity to engage in the pleasure of being alone, to explore the relationship with our inner selves through masturbation and self-care. It is perhaps a truly anti-fragile opportunity for women in the process of female empowerment where we might harness this energy as we emerge back into the world.

‘WE GAIN  
A DIFFERENT  
PERSPECTIVE  
WHEN WE  
ENGAGE WITH  
EXPANSIVE  
VISTAS,  
INTERNAL AND  
EXTERNAL.’

Anti-fragile  
Manifesto 2020



The Anti-Fragile allows us to deal with the unknown, to foster a trust in our instincts as a guide between our embodied relationship with the world. The fragile body wants tranquillity and stability whilst the Anti-Fragile body is cultivated from chaos and disorder.

Outside, the global atmosphere is tense and uneasy; the air is filled with doubt, fear, and insecurity; the sensations of this moment resonate in isolated, yet vital and organic bodies; where we experience feelings of boredom, listlessness, irritability and confinement.

As women, drawing on the inherent freedom of our bodies and our corporeal longings, might we then see this moment as an opportunity of collective power and boundless potential, to embrace the possibilities of the erotic as a source of potent energy, and to explore our relationship with pleasure through our bodies in isolation? As an opportunity to look inward, to connect to our potency, to empower ourselves,

and to harness the energy within?

‘We typically call sensation the experience of taking in phenomena that makes us feel – that is, experience that moves from out outer senses, ears, and eyes, into our bodies where we feel – we are less prone to consider the reverse direction: the transmission of energy from the inside of our bodies back toward the outside world’ (Williams 2008, p.17).

When a woman enters the room with the knowledge that her pleasure is her own and that she has not only the power over it, but also to demand it, is testament to my feminist grandmothers. Indeed, the personal is political, to the point that such personal behaviour as that of self-pleasure (i.e. female masturbation) can be the means to change sexual scripts amongst partnered sexual relationships between men and women. At this moment of isolation, where casual sex is currently far too risky, if not illegal, and thereby not oriented to the partner, we

All images: Victoria Severo Gazzola

# the ANTI-FRAGILE collective SCHOOL INTERVENTION

This pedagogic intervention was developed through the Innovation fund, a LCF award to develop innovative teaching and learning strategies. My motivation for the proposal was to consider what role education can take in countering the 600% increase in poor mental health in children. The national curriculum has rolled out Personal, Social and Economic health (PSHE) as statutory this year (2020) in response to this epidemic and I am keen to develop learning events that engage with this part of the curriculum through arts and design strategies.

As discussed in the introduction my re-

## 1. A NASCENT SUBJECTIVITY

He claims 'individuals must become both more united and increasingly different' (ibid) and in this process produce what he calls a 'heterogenesis, which is a process of continuous resingularisation' (ibid) of the subject, as part of a collective within its environment. He states that by these means:

Subjectivity is able to install itself simultaneously in the realms of the environment, in the major social and institutional assemblages, and systematically in the landscapes and fantasies of the most intimate spheres of the individual. The reconquest of a degree of creative autonomy in one particular domain encourages conquests in other domains – the catalyst for a gradual reforging and renewal of humanity's confidence in itself starting at the most miniscule level. (ibid)

Our ability to take risks however has slowly been eroded due to the nature of neoliberalist capitalism, 'a world in which the necessity to calculate security reigns supreme' (Badiou, A. 2019). This shift within the economic environment over the past 20 years and an appreciation that the world is a competitive place has heralded a general move towards intensive and target based parenting as an appropriate response. The child is trained and prepped for a set of criteria and assessment both inside and outside of school that are 'aimed at enhancing their cognitive development' (Miller, T. 2020) to ensure academic achievement from

search learnt that the fundamentals of wellbeing are invested in self-expression, our relationship to our environment and connection to others. This deepened my appreciation of Felix Guattari's view of the subject which registers itself through its environment, its social relations and the development of human subjectivity (Guattari, F. 2000). Guattari a psychoanalyst, social theorist and radical activist best known for this work with Giles Deleuze co-developed a theory of poststructuralist subjectivity that is creative and dynamic, one that is based on an 'ethico-aesthetic' discipline, where the subject articulates itself through:

## 2. A CONSTANTLY MUTATING SOCIUS

These mirco actions of risk taking that are centered initially in the subjects mind, where some inspiration is felt or an idea is sparked might crack open a new terrain, which then might then be explored through self-expression situates our experience of life back into realm of an adventure, where new vistas might be imagined and agency felt. This relinquishes us from a 'pervasive atmosphere of dullness and passivity' (ibid).

My consideration then as a creative practitioner and teacher, who felt this sense of freedom each time I experienced aesthetic and politic force of the beatitude of a brand new thought would be the relationship between epistemology and psychic wellbeing. Crucially, my aim is to reclaim Whitehead's statement that the 'adventure of life cannot be disjoined from intellectual adventure' (Whitehead, A.N 1967) as understood as joy of the new as it lays itself out before us in multiplici-

a young age. This is confounded by the marginalization of arts and humanities from the curriculum to privilege Science, Technology, English and Maths (STEM). This state of anxiety most at play within the middle classes, but felt throughout society, further exasperates the socio-economic gap. In mitigating these risks for our children we are subconsciously conveying the message that experimentation is a risky business whilstnot offering the time and space for self-exploration. Badiou goes on to discuss risk taking and education:

'Nothing is more striking in this regard than

## 3. AN ENVIRONMENT IN THE PROCESS OF BEING REINVENTED (IBID PP.45)

ties, it is something I feel passionate about and something that has personally given me great happiness and driven my creativity and career into a multitude of different directions.

An important pillar in developing a state of 'ethico-aesthetic' wellbeing is the ability to take responsibility for one's self, this means learning to trust ourselves in order to make decisions. We hear about 'age appropriate responsibility' and in a recent podcast by ManualLabours on parenting and pedagogy (available on sound-cloud) (Hope, S. & Richards, J. 2020) Jo Bardsley, a secondary school teacher, stated that the most valuable attribute she wishes to impart on her daughter was to develop an ability to trust herself, to take calculated risks and understand where her boundaries lie, this she felt was the most crucial skill to take into adulthood and there is solid research within the social sciences to qualify this.

'THIS WORLD IS INAPPROPRIATE FOR THE WAGER, FOR THE RISKY DECISION, BECAUSE IT IS A WORLD WHERE NOBODY ANY LONGER HAS THE MEANS TO DELIVER THEIR EXISTENCE TO CHANCE.'

the fact that teaching is organized in such a way that the necessary prioritization of the calculation of a professional security and its adjustment to the dispositions of the job market is increasingly important. And thus, in a certain way, it is very early taught that the figure of a risky decision must be revoked and suspended' (Badiou, A 2019 pp45)

Thus this ability to experiment and self-direct has been weened out of state education at the expense of this calculation of security, but as Badiou states 'We all know that real happiness is incalculable' (ibid). Happiness is often a by-product of our ability to traverse new terrains, to span time without pressure but there is no room for this in the productive goal-based objectives of tomorrow where certain inequalities may be mitigated for our kids if we 'manage' them carefully enough.

So, this relationship between pressure and lack of risk taking is something we might need to address given the increase in poor mental health for children and rather than isolating their mental health issues as being individually bound we need to collectively consider how these personal issues are political and society bound: 'Both psychotherapy and progressive political action must focus on the material roots of oppression, rather than the psychic processes that are the oppressions outcomes.' (Fox, N.J 2002)

In my limited research addressing wellbeing, creativity and state education (Troy, C. 2020)

I discovered through the hermeneutic interviews I conducted the intense pressure students are experiencing which is no doubt heightened by their 'hyper woke' psyche due to their post-digital experience. Through this research I had the opportunity to interview a teacher who works in a AP (Alternative Provision) unit. This is a secondary school setting where students have been excluded from school due to certain behaviours, many have EHC (Education, Health and Care) Plans. The Teacher, let's call her M, works with a small group of students to develop their ability to take GCSEs. These adolescents were extremely anxious when nearing exams and would push against any type of work where there was a wrong or right answer, these are kids however who love a debate. She ran a unit called World View, not part of the curriculum but a space to consider current affairs, they came alive in these sessions, she said they valued the opportunity to talk about issues that affected them and their community. In talking about her strategies she told me how she would often take ideas to them for an activity or a problem that needed to be solved, and that often humour played a part, that even though the hierarchies were in place and necessary, when these collapsed through the collaborative acts of linguistic play through jokes and banter or in the conceptual terrain of problem solving there emerged an atmosphere of productive collectivity.

# ‘ I FEEL LIKE I BECAME MORE AWARE OF MYSELF AND MY FEELINGS ABOUT THE WORLD ’

B, aged 14

In art they felt a freedom to take risks and explore their place in the world, photography, writing poetry, clay, these were activities that were embedded with a deeper value in this setting for their therapeutic capacities. She told me any sort of craft activity where they could make would facilitate a jovial and peaceful classroom; a rather beautiful tale she told me was of them all making digestive systems in clay for science and that she kept the clay figures around the classroom and that in seeing these where they worked they felt pride and as if ‘they existed’ (Troy, C. 2020). Their confidence through this relationship with their teacher supported their wellbeing and their academic development and Freire’s ideas of the dialogic teacher are very much at play here. These were creative and smart kids who when assessment was removed were keen to take risks within the

space of education, both in sharing their opinions and in the work they were making. In these moments where they felt safe in their environment, connected to others and able to express their ideas, what was being produced was an emergent ‘Collective Joy’ (Gilbert, J. 2019). Gilbert states empowerment is bound up in joy, this is a sense of feeling as through your capacities to act are expanded (Atkinson, D. p. 52) which aids to the development of self-esteem and motivation and thus our ability to take responsibility. Being empowered in that sense joy is like a creative affirmation of pure potential, there is no lack in it. Deleuze & Guattari in their critique of Freud / Lacan state this is a positive desire, not bound in lack but in potential.

It is for these reasons joy needs to be reclaimed within educational settings and valued above ideas of ‘hard-work’ and

‘Discipline’ and why art and crafts and indeed, holistically a more creative and critical curriculum needs to be considered within the state rather than reserved for the space of Art Therapy, or socially engaged artistic practices, where so much of these experimental and material pedagogies currently reside. We are however cowed by our economic circumstances, for such a freedom to exist where Joy might be prioritized for the human condition we need a political shift:

‘fundamentally at stake is recognising the importance of physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing and the importance of institutions and social relationships in ensuring that’ (Gilbert, J. 2019)

My interview with Jeremy Gilbert (Troy, C. 2020) provoked further questions, such as:

1. WHAT SORT OF SUBJECTIVITY DO WE WANT TO NUTURE?

These were questions I took into the process of designing an intervention within a secondary school where I would collaborate with a group of undergraduate students from the communication program. Again I had a two-pronged objective, how to develop subject knowledge in the area of fashion communication whilst delivering a joyful experience that engaged with the attributes I understood to be the foundations of wellbeing.

In considering the technologies of epistemology through my discussions with Nick Almond, associate Dean of Teaching and Learning and LCF, knowledge is only situated when you are able describe it to someone who knows nothing of your discipline, your grandmother for instance. Thus the principles and practices of fashion communication would be compounded within my undergrad students through their sharing their knowledge with this younger cohort.

The project took a great deal of collaboration and preparation and throughout the project I found myself consistently leaning into the Anti-fragile manifesto when taking these risks. With LCF moving to Stratford in 2022 we found a

2. HOW CAN WE TAKE COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR EACH OTHER?

suitable partner institution in Chobham Academy and we set about on the logistics. In March 2020 and working with a group of fashion communication second year undergrad students (aged 19-21) who had bravely put themselves forward we collectively developed two workshops for KS4 students (aged between 14-15) with the objective to impart the principles of fashion communication and Anti-fragility through visual communication practices and throughout the process attempt to understand how this generation feel about the world and their place in it.

In order to develop a structure for the consciousness-raising sessions that would act as a warm up activity I reflected on the curriculum drivers for PSHE at this age, which are: Relationships, Living in the Wider World and Health and Wellbeing. Within these themes and facilitated by our second years the group would explore notions of identity, their relationships, the risks they feel capable of taking, the power they feel they have, what needs to change, their rights and ideas of inclusivity. They would reflect on their personality traits, their values, the things that scared them and how they spend their free time.

3. WHAT CAN EDUCATION DO TO DEVELOP WELLBEING IN A SUBJECT?

Following this reflective activity we invited them through the medium of collage to individually design alter-egos or mythical creatures an extension of themselves that would offer the power, protection and wisdom needed to be in the world. In this process we shared that for years artists had been exploring ideas of identity through alter-egos. That artists live experimentally, but that living creatively wasn’t just for artists, what if one was to live like your life is a work of art? (Foucault, 2001). We shared work by Andy Warhol, Cindy Sherman and Marvin Gaye Chetwynd, who talks about this type of performative art as ‘a good experiment. It could work like a shield, or a spell.’

My interview with artist Oreet Ashery (Troy, C. 2020) had been informative and inspirational in developing this strategy. We had talked about how through her socially engaged practice facilitating the design of fictional characters enabled the subject to explore, to speak from a free perspective and try on different identities. Through these strategies agency was developed, ideas were kept from the workshops for the self, while others discarded. This is a strategy I wanted to borrow from. My undergrad students designed the collage element of the workshop and again they facilitated small groups in the nature of collage making as practice-based research through which to explore such potential alter-egos / spirit animals.

# ‘ I GUESS IT MADE ME REALISE THAT SOMETIMES I NEED SOMETHING OR SOMEONE TO HOLD CLOSE DURING TIMES OF TROUBLE. ’

C, aged 15



Image: Daniel Caulfield-Sriklad

Our final session with the students would be speculate a potential common ground that they would wish for their characters to exist in, this was a riff on world-building but specifically to consider the common good of the people and our public services:

'In the beginning of Time, the Great Creator Reason, made the Earth to be a common Treasury, to preserve Beasts, Birds, and Fishes; but not one word was spoken in the beginning, That one branch of mankind should rule over another.' (Winstanley in Gilbert, J. (2013)

Our students led on the practice of mood-boarding and on this occasion we were joined by Superimpose. Throughout the session as they designed they talked and in groups they developed clauses that illustrated their moodboards. At the end of the session we stood around and reflected on how the process enabled them to reflect on the Anti-fragile attributes they might work with in this constant practice of adapting to their environment as they move into a space of more individual and collective responsibility.

For my undergraduates and I coming away from the experience we explored the feelings and behaviours we had observed through the sessions of this age group. My students talked about the affinity they felt in many ways to these kids, what was shared what wasn't (see Catarina Atunes Santos contribution). A distinct lack of trust in authority was felt within

a atmosphere of post-truth, an over-exposure to information with not knowing truth or having trust facilitates a sense of fear of this great unknown they are due to inherit. This is given new complexity for kids whose emotional intelligence is high, they understand their feelings and are developing strategies for a taking care of themselves, yet what to do with anxieties are not strictly personal but area rather structural, cultural and environmental? This is a powerful generation whose agency could be felt collectively for powerful change if we find ways to support them and have their voices heard in a way perhaps that is wider than institution of the state. Surely as educators we have an ethical imperative to consider very carefully the kinds of subjects we wish to cultivate. We have a rare of beautiful opportunity here.

As with each of these teaching iterations the process enabled what I felt was key to the teaching and learning experience, that of developing a relationship with our students where we 'co-investigate' the cultural context of our disciplines and our relationship to it through dialogue. To explore our engagement with the wider world and the affect we wish to have upon it, both through the micro actions and our wider set of values that might impact on the macro. To find creative and experimental ways to express these ideas that might lead to new perspectives both on what we feel about the outside world and our internal vistas.

# Catarina Antunes Santos

# the ANTI-FRAGILE collective TRUST THE PROCESS

When Anti-Fragility was first presented to us, I was instantly drawn to the idea of discharging my own stress and anxieties from negative connotations so I could instead simply recognize them as a challenges or opportunities for growth. Although imagining this shift in perspective was motivating, the practicalities of embodying the Anti-Fragile still seemed quite abstract and my initial perception was that it would take a very individual and long-term effort in order to really do so. In this sense, the intervention at Chobham academy was crucial to my understanding of how this philosophy can be brought to life and the importance of it being facilitated by the collective. I found that the Anti-Fragile mindset is about process, which can be practiced and cultivated by anyone through every small decision or thought in the day.

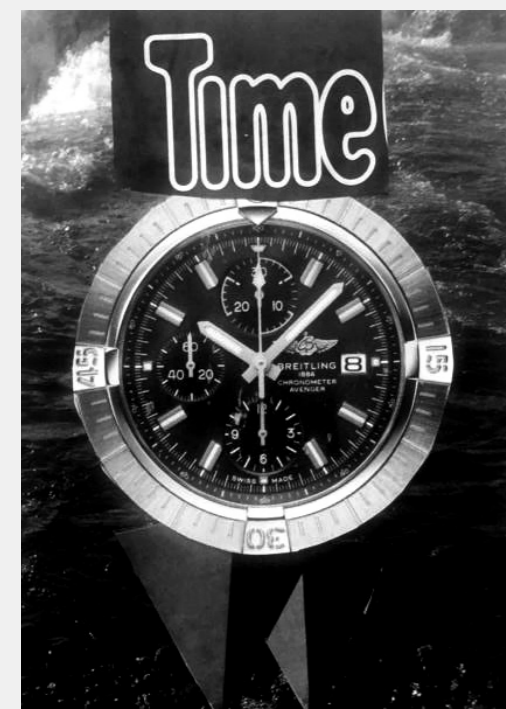
The initiative enabled us to engage in conversation with a younger generation, a group that I wouldn't normally have access to and had imagined to be extremely distant from myself and my own generation. As we worked our dialog through a series of thought-provoking activities, I was more and more surprised by how honest and vulnerable these students came to be around us. I felt that working from the basis of the Anti-Fragile has allowed us to trust each other and trust the process, without a calculated goal in mind we were simply motivated by our aim to learn and share. This openness was key for us to dig deeper into our own values and behaviors, ultimately evidencing a range of parallels and nuances in the ways in which we perceive the world. The first thing I identified in their generation was a standard of radical inclusion in the collective, which I feel is still in the process of becoming established in my generation. The students proved to be extremely open to dialog and accepting of each other's differences. Even though they were very confident in their own views and individual identities, they really understand the value of divergent opinions and push themselves to build an environment where all of these can coexist.

Having grown up with easy access to technology, they are used to constantly being exposed to an overload of information regarding the society around them and the state of the world. This hyper-woke perspective was very present in their

discourse, not only when defining their values and needs, but also when expressing their fear of the future. Besides having to navigate their personal problems growing up, their generation feels the urgency to tackle some of the pressing global issues that appear on their feeds every day. Similar to our generation, they value being able to access this from such a young age as it encourages us them to take part in change, but also recognize that the urgency of this responsibility can feel overwhelming at times.

This leads on to another common denominator being the tendency to overthink our place in the world and each one of our actions, which leads to increasing anxiety as we struggle to find distractions on a daily basis. Sometimes social media feels like a response to this need to switch off, but then again, it can provide us both feelings of comfort and pressure. It helps us to feel connected to a community but can also make us feel excluded from another. One of the things I found most intriguing when listening to the students was that, despite being so inclusive and empathic among each other, the expectation and fear of judgement from others still influences many of their decisions as it does for our generation. Realizing the extent to which our behaviors coincide, and how similarly we respond to things like pressure and expectations, has been the most surprising and perhaps most significant insight I took away from the experience.

Getting to see the world through the eyes of a younger generation was very constructive as I became more conscious of my own values and ambitions and also to question these. This experience has encouraged me to look for ways to become more supportive of other communities and generations and continue to access different experiences and perspectives. Taking the time to collectively reflect on how our surroundings have continuously shaped our collective identity and behaviors over time has evidenced what changes need to take place and how important it is to take part in them. In this sense, the process of consciousness raising throughout these weeks has inspired me to initiate more conversations within my existing circles, as I believe that doing so will enable us to navigate any common challenges and uncertainties together.



# REFLECT ON YOUR EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH THIS YOUNGER GENERATION? WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THEM? KEY INSIGHTS? COULD YOU IDENTIFY YOUR MINDSET WITH THEIRS? WHAT IDEAS WERE SHARED?

M

It was really fun and interesting to be working with the kids over a period of 2 weeks. I was interesting to share our knowledge with them and have a clearer understanding of how those kids think. Surprisingly, their thoughts are pretty similar to people my age. The feeling of pressure and having to do good ensure to have a good job/life.

P

I really enjoyed working with this cohort, they were smart, receptive and interested in what we had to say. I was surprised by their level of competence and how they explained the world around them and their beliefs. It inspired me and gave me a lot of fresh perspective when it came to analysing Gen Z. They had strong family values & a deep emotional intellect. They were hopeful yet nervous about the uncertain future of the world & dreamed of a more peaceful and safe place. Being a part of Gen Z myself, their insights were not entirely surprising but hearing it from them made it seem more real and I realised how grave the impact of the current

state of the world has been on their mentalities. While inspiring fear, our uncertain environment has also nurtured resilience.

# HOW DID WORKING PHILOSOPHICALLY WITH IDEAS OF LOVE & CARE, POLITICS, SCIENCE AND TECH, ART AND CULTURE EXPLORE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF BEING IN THE WORLD.

M

It helps me become more mindful of my surroundings and how I treat other people, especially in this weird time we are all going through.

P

Working philosophically helped me look into topics from a deeper & more creative perspective. When it comes to my understanding of being in the world, I found it quite helpful to be able to have new conversations, which is something that this project encouraged, giving me a lot of food for thought. My understanding is dynamic, it continually changes and expands and projects like this, help it do so!

# HOW DID SHARING YOUR CREATIVE PRACTICE AND FACILITATING THE DEVELOP YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR OWN PRACTICE?

M

It gave me a lot more insights to tackle things in life and to become more understanding.

P

I often believed that people in regular schools or people pursuing a more generic line of work would look

down upon our creative practises. And sometimes made me feel lesser than. Maybe it comes from going to school in India, where it was a part of school culture for the science kids to make fun of the art kids. However, being at UAL has helped me develop a pride in my creative process what I do and I truly enjoy it. I remember the students being sad when they were leaving after our last session. They hoped that they could have sessions like this one every week. It made me happy, feel prouder of what I do and glad that I could have had a positive impact on their school experience.

to time acts as a reminder to keep going and to come out stronger from any adversity.

HOW THE HAS THE IDEA OF ANTI-FRAGILITY IMPACTED YOU BOTH PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY. HAS IT PROVED USEFUL TO YOU DURING THESE COVID 19 DAYS? IF SO HOW?

M

Yes, it definitely has. The COVID situation has taught me new things that I never thought I would be able to do, such as, handstand. I have put a lot of time in taking care of myself and checking up with people around me.

P

The Idea of Anti-fragility helped me put a name and explanation to a mindset that I practised somewhat unknowingly. It has taken a lot of experiences to be able to learn from my mistakes and to treat them as life lessons and as characteristics that make me a stronger person. I will continue to fall and grow as life goes on and reading about Anti-fragility has re-affirmed this belief. Looking back, the timing of the project feels strangely ominous, little did we know just how useful these skills would be. The pandemic has offered us all good & bad days, thinking of anti-fragility from time

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# AFTERWORD: JULY 2020

As we close this academic year, we reflect on the teaching and learning experiences we've had and the ways in which the Anti-fragile has been useful to us. We are not yet through the global trauma of CV19 and as we write there are talks of a second wave in the western world, whilst parts of the globe as still within their first. As we set our sights on the next academic year the future rolls in whilst thoughts of another lock-down in winter feels grim, our global community of students still splintered around the world and it is unclear when we will come back together IRL. Yet the Anti-fragile offers hope and a structure through which we might find a way, both for the collective and the individual; there are roots being planted, habits being changed, structural regimes shifting, and ideas of Post-Traumatic growth are beginning to surface.

In order to engage in discussion as a college and tease out the philosophical, political, cultural and aesthetic threads of this unprecedented moment and to consider what might be useful to us next, academics, industry and alumni came together virtually on July 7th 2020. We found joy in being together as we discussed what sort of superpowers we might need to produce new vistas, that if this moment was a sound or a texture what sensual attributes it might take on. Collectively and with the aid of a rather acerbic sense of humour we vented our frustrations, that where we considered the great opportunity that this global pause presented us, would anything really change or all we all too adrenally fatigued to make this final push... Here are our insights, hopes and fears as articulated into four distinct themes.

## 1) FLUID FUTURES

Some say this feels like the end of time. We've experienced narrative collapse. The predictable rhythm of linear time vanished overnight and the days have become malleable and stretchy. Whilst the future we had has slipped through our fingers, multiple futures and vistas now seem possible. These Fluid Futures are full of potential but also disorientating. And we will need new forms of way-finding. Not all will be fully rationalized. We are tapping into our intu-

ition, finding our internal compass. We look to ancient practices to guide us like divining rods that knit us closer to the wisdom of the land.

‘MULTIPLE FUTURES AND VISTAS NOW SEEM POSSIBLE’

## 2) STRONGER TOGETHER

After months of isolation and enforced separation, the need for contact, collaboration and interaction creates a yearning within to be more intentional in our relationships. This renewed urgency to come together and share ideas is like a call to arms because we cannot rebuild and reset alone. We must see ourselves as a living ecology, a collection of agents which will cooperate to come out stronger. The virus has pushed us into the hyperlocal where grassroots communities are thriving. Stronger Together must marry this with a planetary scale of awareness. We are one human ecology.

‘WE ARE ONE HUMAN ECOLOGY’

## 3) RELEASE VALVES

The world has stopped and yet we can't relax, we can't breathe. This gap between then and next comes with a sense of trepidation as we anticipate and attempt to navigate the shifting terrain. We're pumped with adrenalin and the thrill of what could be coming and it's building inside of us. As we face a turning point explosive energy bound up in bodies needs to be harnessed and released. Some choose anger, others choose love, it is manifesting in little pockets, below the radar of the ruling forces.

## 4) THE RESET

Broad consensus across socio-economic groups and geographies is that we don't want to return to a status quo that was flawed and rigged against so many. The great hope that the pandemic is a portal to the reset where values are reaffirmed on an individual, cultural, structural and collectively global scale. This hope of something new to emerge to, is shadowed with frustration and anger, an adrenal energy bound up with fear that things might never change and is it already too late? And as the still old white male guardians of power hold on for their last gasp, we yearn for an alternative to be communicated to the masses, something that might present a structural shift in-line with our hopes. This reset takes courage, an Anti-fragile mentality and collective power to build something new. Transformative habits and a reassessment of what we really need is what will take us to a better tomorrow.

‘THE GREAT HOPE THAT THE PANDEMIC IS A PORTAL TO THE RESET WHERE VALUES ARE REAFFIRMED ON AN INDIVIDUAL, CULTURAL, STRUCTURAL AND COLLECTIVELY GLOBAL SCALE.’

With special thanks to Miriam Rayman who as a cultural strategist supported and helped develop these insights.

‘THE ADVENTURE OF LIFE  
CANNOT BE DISJOINED FROM  
INTELLECTUAL ADVENTURE’

Whitehead,  
A.N. 1967