

Appendix 1e

The Other MA Year 2: Interviews

TOMA 2 Interviews referred to in Dialogue, 01 Topologies: The Other MA

Year 2											Total
2017/18	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	M	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	9F 1M

The following are extracts from the interviews with TOMA Year 2 participants. Three are selected here you give an account of

TOMA 2 04.03.18	IS	M 29	BA: Fine Art Painting	2009-2012	Anglia Ruskin Year 1 Southend Year 2 & 3
Guiding Questions	Descriptions				
	Representative Statements				
What led you to TOMA?	<p><i>I fancied not doing London institutions</i></p> <p><i>[Art in the institution] It's become something unattainable for someone working full-time with a family.</i></p> <p><i>I had financial difficulties living away, I've always been hard up, money wise.</i></p> <p><i>I always imagined I'd do a Master's before 30</i></p> <p><i>I looked at Turps Banana</i></p>				

	<i>TOMA participants as peers</i>	<p>The course is an excuse to be driving the studio work and pushing other things</p> <p>A good excuse to do art</p> <p>The lack of having to have an end.</p> <p>I just take what I can learn from certain things</p> <p>I see what correlations are between (a) person, (a) person's work ethic and my own work...</p> <p>The smaller groups work...</p> <p>The lack of concentration on one discipline is kind of its flaw.</p> <p>I find it hard to take criticism from someone or give criticism to someone when I am not fully aware of their practice.</p> <p>I'm getting better criticism from my peers.</p> <p>Some artists just aren't relevant to me, full stop. I've found that with them, I'm happy just not attending. I took what I could from it.</p> <p>It seemed like foundation level sort of workshops. I quite like it when you're critting on a level where it's your practice....</p> <p>It's very closed which is how I like it in a way...</p> <p>I come to TOMA once every couple of weeks...which is great for me as I value my studio time.</p> <p>I think that with TOMA, what could benefit it is if it sort of outreached or had a particular way that it wanted to push itself, like an old school...they've been swaying more towards school of the Damned.</p> <p>My mums got a BA in Fine art and my dad I think has as well.</p> <p>I'm also a harsh judge of others, so I have to keep my mouth shut a lot of the time.</p>

		<p>Yeah, we did crits., but we haven't organised them that well...we haven't structured the years as properly ourselves as much as the last year.</p> <p>New Contemporaries Bloomberg have said we will take alternative art schools on(board)</p>
	<i>Working outside TOMA</i>	<p>Self-generating /self-motivated</p> <p>Communication in [a] group with similar interests</p> <p>Studio- directed towards the individual</p> <p>Self -directed shows as outreach to other artists</p>
Thoughts	5 artist tools	Linen, spray-paint, oil paint, memories-visual, daily occurrences

TOMA 2 20.03.18	LA	F 28	BA: Fine Art	2009-2012	Byam Shaw
Guiding Questions	Descriptions				
			Representative Statements		
What led you to TOMA?	<i>Being part of something in Southend</i>		<p>When Open School East was in London, the first year I applied. Didn't get into that. I think there aw just so many people applying. And I went for open days for TOMA.</p> <p>I realised how much was going on in Southend, which is really exciting.</p> <p>It something I could be part of.</p> <p>I definitely like the idea of School of the Damned (SotD), and I actually did apply and didn't get in.</p> <p>SotD. They want to shape the future of the next year. They've managed to join forces with TOMA and they've got to know each other.</p>		
	<i>Building a TOMA of wider families.</i>		<p>What am I going to do for that.</p> <p>"Students who got to art school lack something"</p>		

		School that do not recognise what students lack should rethink what they are doing. I was the first in my family to go to University ...
	<i>TOMA has given me confidence</i>	I feel a lot more confident now than ever...and TOMA's given me that confidence...
Thoughts	<i>Thoughts</i>	Thoughts as a tool.
	<i>It can be a glitter ball.. a little circle of sharing</i>	How I view TOMA as a place of sharing.

TOMA 2 22.10.18	GP	F 28	BA: Fine Art	2009-2012	Kingston University
Guiding Questions	Descriptions				
			Representative Statements		
What led you to TOMA?	<i>Keeping my arts practice alive</i> <i>Given me a network.</i> <i>Given me the impetus to make work.</i> <i>TOMA allowed me to be more playful.</i> <i>If its temporary that's fine, if its rubbish that's fine.</i>		<i>I think females take up that kind of degree and they are just underrepresented everywhere else...</i>		
	<i>TOMA Is financially viable</i>		I would have had to sort of pay up front in chunks or take out a personal loan.		
	<i>It was in Southend</i>		I want to meet people doing the same level of work...		
	<i>A very traditional application process...probably reassuring at the start</i>		So TOMA appeared on my Twitter feed...it just started ticking every box for me		
	<i>More than one person doing it (alternative art schools) is strength in numbers...</i>		Being part of TOMA your aware of all the other models doing this instantaneously.		
	<i>Who knows what's going to happen?</i>		I had thought in the past of an MA at Open University or Goldsmiths... Certain areas [TOMA] has surpassed expectations		

		<p>I didn't know what to expect because it is an alternative model...So, what going to happen? How thorough will it be?</p> <p>How organised will it be? How will other people be?</p> <p>The interview, talking parts really important. Not just sending in JPEGs. Emma was quite good a selecting a similar group of people in a similar place in their art life.</p>
	<i>An environment where you don't have to do anything</i>	<p>I thought we would do a bit more theory and writing work. ...because nothing is forced on you</p> <p>Why would you do long pieces of written work...because we've all got busy lives.</p>
	<i>You've got to do it yourself, it is much more self-directed.</i>	<p>Sitting down and seeing those texts, what's relevant to us, or relevant to the group...</p>
	<i>I feel much more productive after [TOMA] crits...</i>	<p>I enjoyed the crits, I think it's mainly because the hark back to being in art school.</p> <p>I think the main difference between the crits in the TOMA framework and university framework is they've been much less negative. everyone can say whatever they want without being mean. Talking together in a group scenario.</p> <p>It's a crit model that everybody does and it's just lovely.</p>
	<i>Having your own space has just allowed TOMA to do what TOMA does.</i>	<p>Working outside the constraints of Metal. For the Saturday sign up: It has been more visible, who's doing the most work.</p> <p>Who's in it and who's drifting out?</p>
	<i>Opportunities to exhibit</i>	<p>Doesn't matter that it's a shop in Southend or a London show, who actually cares or writes or knows?</p>
	<i>The project space changed the structure.</i>	<p>We're not as tight knit group as we were at the start...</p>
	<i>Working with the Sarah Lucas pillar.</i>	<p>I did a set design for the window as part of the Sarah Lucas commission.</p> <p>Sarah Lucas sponsored the front window and a pillar.</p>
	<i>Building link with London</i>	

	<i>A model for alumni where you drop in...pay as you go.</i>	I'm looking at the alumni course.
	<i>TOMA is financially viable</i>	People can't afford to be doing a really expensive course and they are time poor.
	<i>Non-hierarchical structure</i>	Taking things off Emma: it's almost like you're a different level in this weird non-hierarchy.
Thoughts	1 artist tool	Photography

TOMA 2 20.03.18	MW	F 42	BA: Fine Art	2013-2016	South Essex College
Guiding Questions	Descriptions				
			Representative Statements		
What led you to TOMA?	<i>[TOMA is] more cohesive that evening classes or separate workshops.</i>		I knew MB and IW from last year's TOMA. I was following their journey and going to their events and their open evenings and seeing what it was all about. It's actually a better model anyway, because the money you spend is a tick box exercise a lot of the time.		
	<i>TOMA Is financially viable</i>		This does everything for a fraction of the cost.		
	<i>TOMA as space to make</i>		I dream of having my own studio space.		
	<i>Definitely more sharing, sharing of skills.</i>		I couldn't get my little film for the big screen to do what I wanted to do so she's helped me with that. <i>There is...</i> more collaboration.		
	<i>Collective thinking can help you move on.</i>		I think crits are incredibly important. I think we're more open. I think because we've all gone through that process, I think we're not afraid to say what we really think. <i>We do have crits, they still terrify me.</i>		
	<i>Trusting in the group.</i>		It's about trusting that the person who's giving the crit has your best interest at heart		
	<i>It's much more open.</i>		Open to suggestion of okay, we don't think that works but have you thought about this. ... <i>whereas here they're like oh, I know someone</i>		

		<i>who can help with that or I can work with that or have you thought about this? I can lend you the equipment.</i>
	<i>They're human and they will talk to you. And offer advice. They're incredible.</i>	<i>the art critics to talk More confidence. Definitely more confident. The advice I was given by most of them was you should really work with others, collaborate, push yourself, do something different to what you would normally do.</i>
	<i>Let's just see what we can make.</i>	<i>So I've now got about three collaborations going on.</i>
	<i>Having my qualifications is important.</i>	<i>The degree part was important to me. Incredibly important, just to prove to myself and to, not my family but my in-laws, that I wasn't just mucking around. First degree, showed I was serious to others. I think if you don't have some kind of education, you're not taken seriously.</i>
	<i>You have the tools but are organising yourself.</i>	<i>You've got a print exhibition, here's a print room, here's a dark room, go and get someone to teach you.</i>
	<i>It's the experience I want.</i>	<i>If I want a certificate I'll print one off or create one for myself</i>
	<i>If people don't challenge anything, nothing will change.</i>	<i>And the old system, it needed changing. It really did need changing.</i>
	<i>Tools: Darkroom</i>	<i>Does a darkroom count?</i>
	<i>Myself as my art model.</i>	<i>I'm selfishly putting myself as my art model, as me. But I actually mean artists, not just me physically, but the centre of an artist's world starts with them.</i>

TOMA 2 01.08.18	GM	F 29	BA: Costume Design	2009-2012	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States. And London College of Fashion
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Guiding Questions	Descriptions	
		Representative Statements
What led you to TOMA?	<i>Finding TOMA</i>	<i>Look at the MA the dramaturgy course, I think, at Central St. Martin's (MA Performance Design and Practice). UAL ...because they gave you a discount if you were alumni.</i>
	<i>An environment that harbours the arts</i>	<i>I couldn't believe how lucky I am to live in an environment that actually harbours the arts and where I come from in the States, there's none of that.</i>
	<i>Informal education systems</i>	<p>No. Not really. Not a first. Because, coming from formal education, and I was looking at Sotheby's briefly.</p> <p>I was just trying to wrap my head around what it was, and at first, you're explaining it as an informal educational system. It's still hard to explain to people now who don't understand what it is, isn't it?</p> <p>When I go back to the states and people say how's your Master's going, or what you doing? It does make their eyes look a bit like, oh. It's harder to explain it to people. I kind of use the word collective to help. It's group run. It's a collective of people, as well as being a master's as well as being all these things.</p>
	<i>Working collaboratively, the experience or empowering each other</i>	I like interacting, I like having a takeaway item as that as well as just the experience or empowering each other just for the pure sake of doing
		...the community sense of people sending you stuff that you might be interested in, and just that camaraderie and group mentality in a positive sense.
		These groups of people that get together just to create. That was always a dream of mine...
		Certain people take different roles within the group at different times depending on obviously how busy they are.
	<i>A space dedicated to TOMA</i>	It was much more calming at Chalkwell, it was much more calming around the park, the artists like coming there, I think. It was very

	<i>The Royals Space – the lighting made to keep you awake</i>	natural and has multiple floors, very quiet. It was a little bit more meditative. Whereas this is a bit more like stimuli. Especially this type of lighting which is made to keep you awake and alert. And I know some of the artists struggle being in a space that has this kind of lighting.
	<i>A space dedicated to TOMA</i>	And some of the visiting artists come and say Wow, this is different." They have much more to say about this space obviously because it's a space dedicated to TOMA.
	<i>Crits are learning what you do</i>	So as far as critiques go, I have a little bit less in that respect, because it's not much tangible, but ideas. Just bouncing ideas.
		With the crits it's learning what you do.
		And the informal critiques that you have. Just talking, when we're all hanging out here and we're not even having a critique, and someone says something; "Have you thought about this?" It's an ongoing life experience, the critique of understanding your work.
		...having that critical discourse of discussing education in an old garage seems like something everyone should be doing.
	<i>The alternatives are so different from each other</i>	Interesting to see how all the schools are so different.
		School of the Damned seem like they're tight knit in a different way. They go and hang out a lot more maybe. Maybe if I was 23 I would love to be a part of School of the Damned.
		Whereas TOMA we really have that sense of everyone works really hard as well as doing this... because they have pretty busy external lives.
	<i>Making work in a day</i>	They force you to create something in a day. Which I think is phenomenal.
	<i>Visiting artist bring a different perspective</i>	Those have been really invaluable just getting their input and seeing you from a different perspective that you can't see yourself

	<i>A sense of learning</i>	I think we're migrating to a different time personally. I think it's a bit antiquated.
		I love education from the pure sense of learning.
	<i>TOMA is financially viable</i>	It put this pressure on you as an artist. You also felt negative about it, because you knew you were graduating with that debt. \$40,000 a year for art school.
	<i>Rethinking education</i>	...to be open and versatile to what actually it can be an umbrella window that can cover.
		I did the manifesto film.
		I just think as a whole society should be rethinking education and why it has turned into what it is.
		Why we long for things that we don't create. And that's why Emma's so inspiring. To just create just to do it.
	<i>Be open</i>	It's open.

TOMA 2 27.07.18	GS	F 35	BA: Fine Art	2003- 2006	BA Academy of Fine Arts Florence
Guiding Questions	Descriptions				
			Representative Statements		
What led you to TOMA?	<i>Building artistic networks.</i>		Since 2015 in London to improve career and build networks. I didn't have any network.		
	<i>I found in TOMA really a little family.</i>		Being polite, very gentle, which is good. Though sometimes in crits I would like to know more of my week points. Level of care for each other [in TOMA...]		
	<i>The alternative different form of education. More accessible. About learning from each other.</i>		Alternative not possible in Italy – due the hierarchical culture and classical position of art. Compares favourably to the Hierarchy of Italian educational...very classical standard. Tutors were very direct.		
	<i>TOMA was affordable.</i>		<i>Couldn't afford MFA Slade/RA/RCA/ CSM</i>		

	<i>The alternative is exactly what I need.</i>	Saw the previous peer artist's at Wysing. Applied to Wysing but did not get in. Accepted on TOMA. As I figured out what the alternative was, I was like, oh my god this exactly what I need. Found through Art Rabbit.
	<i>Institutions are a good place [spaces] to realise work.</i>	Important to work with institutions. Working with galleries in Italy is very difficult.
	<i>Differences within the alternatives, some are more professional than others. Some are more political.</i>	We met SotD, they were young and very political. Very anti system, against the university marketing system. It was old fashioned way to be, it is obvious I am feminist, anti-fascist. I think we are already above this. Wysing seemed more professional, more mid-career, they presented their own course.
	<i>Expecting a little more engagement.</i>	Being at Royals Shopping Centre. Shape of the space as a meeting place as a base different from Metal. It's hard as it's a busy schedule and you have to manage the shop. It's hard to engage with people visiting the exhibitions.
	<i>It's very important to share with other people.</i>	I never had a group crit before like that.
	<i>Sharing knowledge.</i>	We share reading texts, or if we came across something inspiring. It's an interesting way to get feedback, sharing inspiration, reading, text or if we came across something inspiring or other artists...in an official [context].
	<i>I got self-confidence out the crits.</i>	Even when a piece is not finished, it is great to see and learn from feedback of other people. How to evolve it, how to present. The artist doesn't speak other than to introduce a space or approach that they want the audience to explore, the group discuss the work.
	<i>Building knowledge of an artist journey.</i>	Visiting artist, it is interesting to see their path, in a professional way.
	<i>I was expecting more collaboration, you learn so much. Talking and making things.</i>	I would like to propose a collaborative exhibition in the shopping centre, to work with an external artist. The group chose individual exhibitions [group shows but now producing work together].

	<i>Everybody should be constant with their commitment, for the group, everybody.</i>	I do quite a lot compared to other people.
	<i>I feel stronger as an artist being in a group.</i>	Talking about each other's work is important.
	<i>It is important how you experience the qualification.</i>	How you engage with the group.
	<i>Asking questions is important.</i>	The visiting artists has five hours, decide if they want to do a lecture, a practical workshop, a crit. It is interesting to [understand] their creative process, if they have routine, interesting how they put in practice their creativity.
	<i>With the alternative, art education is more accessible.</i>	Thinking about ideas of art education.
	<i>The alternatives are so different from each other</i>	The artist in the alternative is so different.

TOMA 2 07.07.18	KB	F 22	BA: Photography 1st	2015- 2018	South Essex College
Guiding Questions	Descriptions				
		Representative Statements			
What led you to TOMA?	<i>Working with a small group to form bonds</i>	Module preparing for after degree. Research on postgraduate education, led to TOMA			
	<i>Staying local</i>	Its local to the area. Commutating or living away from home currently not an option Being convenient. Living at home and working			
		More personal time with Emma and the group.			
	<i>TOMA as a space to test things</i>	Was on a technical, commercial photography programme. Wanted to push photography within a fine art context.			
	<i>Community of practice was important</i>	Heard about other alternatives after applying			
	<i>Interested in participatory art</i>				

		Looked at Master's programmes within the institution. Would be interested in doing an accredited masters in the future.
		<i>Studio in shed at end of garden</i>
	<i>Self-led Opportunity to try collaborative projects</i>	Developing your own way of working. An opportunity to test things out outside what are perceived to be the boundaries of photography. TOMA is much more self-led, artists we want to meet, much more diverse.
	<i>Crits with peers</i>	Critical feedback from peers is important. Positive and constructive results in us feeding information to each other. Obtaining feedback, not just from tutors.
	<i>Broader thinking A wider range of workshops</i>	Impacted work and thinking of photography in much broader contexts. Practical workshops across different disciplines.
	<i>Comfortable in discussions</i>	Talking about work in a normal fashion. A comfortable way of talking about work. Not always talking about yourself in the most expressive way possible.

TOMA 2 20.05.18	FB	F mature student (Access course)	BA Fine Art (photography/print)	2007-2010	Anglia Ruskin University (Cambridge)
Guiding Questions	Descriptions				
			Representative Statements		
What led you to TOMA?	<i>Didn't fit into a category.</i>		Both my parents dabbled with art. Hobby creative family. Trying to find my way, floundering through is hard on your own. Felt very much on my own.		
	<i>Freedom to be able to find out</i>		Every time I looked at an institution it stated you did painting, sculpture...you can do a photography degree but you can't do it in photomontage...my photography didn't fit in any context in any field.		

	<i>See what I want to do and start making</i>	Have a studio at Gatehouse Arts, Harlow. Trying to find out what I wanted to do and where I was going. Got into the RA Summer exhibition and exhibited at Gatehouse. Go back and see what I want to do and start making
	<i>No modules, No one to one permanent tutor, up to you to find a way to move forward as group.</i>	TOMA advertised through Gatehouse. Looked at SotD but it was too far, too young.
	<i>TOMA having your own group and a network.</i>	Opportunities to meet a group at a similar stage. More free to look from different perspectives. Guest artist's bring in different perspectives.
	<i>TOMA is building our own structure within the structure of TOMA.</i>	Emma is building the structure, but we are choosing our own time. (in discussion with GS also).
	<i>You have to buy into institutional education.</i>	You have programme to follow and put into this.
	<i>The opportunities are outside not within the academic world.</i>	We have group tutorials, programme of exhibitions is similar to the institution. Yet outside the academic structure, working in the non-academic, 'real world'.
	<i>Feeling more supported.</i> <i>Gained more confidence.</i>	Precise, accurate and didn't feel my approach fitted. People were guarded so it wasn't about sharing. An ability to make work that I thought I was able to.
	<i>Overcoming the fear of being in the group.</i>	Struggle with spontaneity. Fear of speaking, a talk is difficult.
	<i>Qualifications are an acknowledgment from the outside world.</i>	It would be nice to have the certificates. It is recognition that the qualification gives. But working with artists is important.
	<i>Another way of looking</i>	Perhaps the alternative art schools will forge forward and change [the view of qualifications]. So, you are not stuck in a particular way of looking.
	<i>The golden handshake [of the gallery institution]</i>	The art world is very secular, single minded. If I know who you are and you do this work...I know you will produce the work to the standard of the gallery...the gallery is risk free.

	<i>Understanding the way, you work in relation to other artists.</i>	Comments are good, as they give you a different approach and artists to look at you don't know about. Learning about artists and. For example, not heard of Sarah Lucas.
	<i>Building your own programme</i>	Working with a group of artists, building your own programme, your own concepts. Able to present work.
	<i>Sharing and building together.</i>	Knowing that other artists are struggling. More fun working with other people. Don't feel alone.
	<i>Opportunities to show work, Opportunities are there is you wish to take them.</i>	I'd like a space where I can put work and people will come and see it. To be noticed for what I do, not what I am. A space [the public] can ask questions.
	<i>University [the institution] is within its own fold.</i>	Aspects of professional practice are missing in the art school; you need to know how to work outside. A business that doesn't move on. Institutions get stuck in space, student becomes tutor then professor, 17-60.
	<i>I don't know where the goals are.</i>	I don't know how to measure myself in TOMA.
	<i>Building your own approaches, insights</i>	The journey, not sure where it's going but I'm in for the ride.

TOMA 2 25.10.18	BM	F	University of North London	BA Fine Art	University of North London / Holloway Road University
Guiding Questions	Descriptions				
			Representative Statements		
What led you to TOMA?	Looking for something else		Margaret Thatcher was in power when I first came to the UK. Worked at the National theatre.		
	BM interview took place in the Railway Hotel in Southend. This was until 2021 a vibrant and eclectic live music venue. Although I recorded the discussion with BM the volume of noise made it impossible to continue with an interview consistent with the others I had undertaken. I opted to weave BM's comments and my own observations into the overarching study.				