

Pentimento and Palimpsest: Blurring Rituals in the Studio

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ABSTRACT

While the benefits of curated environments and provocations in emergent curriculum for young learners have been documented, less is known about the effects of emergent curriculum for adult learners and instructors in a studio art context. This work investigates what happens when art education foregrounds and follows students' interests and questions, using arts-based tools, processes, and approaches to explore the creation and interpretation of 2D artwork. The author reexamines rituals in studio teaching practices and engages narrative inquiry to reflect on the effects emergent curriculum and contract grading have on both students and the instructor. The curated environments of the classroom, campus art museum, city streets, and students' homes influenced questions, materials, research, conversations, and artistic possibilities while blurring studio traditions. The resulting emergent curriculum forged new connections among the students, the instructor, and their community while shifting learning toward dispersed, collective power rather than concentrated, individual power.

KEYWORDS: Emergent curriculum, studio art, student engagement, scholar-artist, artist research, conceptual art

What happens when autonomy replaces authority? When curiosity replaces control? These questions fueled a critical reexamination of my teaching practices in fall 2021 following my relocation to Richmond, Virginia amidst the circumstances of a global pandemic and recent civil unrest in the wake of George Floyd's murder. The reexamination of my teaching practices echoes frictions between art education teaching methods and theories I noticed at the beginning of my career. When I began teaching middle school art in the early 21st century, my approach to curriculum was deeply rooted in Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE). Despite an ideological shift from teacher-centered to student-centered curriculum and teaching supported by art education research in the early 2000s, highly routinized and formulaic art education approaches persisted. This routinization of curriculum development, instructional processes and methods, and assessments is ritualistic in nature, and is often immediately overwhelming to new teachers. While certain artmaking processes require strict adherence to repetitive sequences, understanding the complexity of visual art production and reception requires openness and variability in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Nearly two decades after I became an art teacher, high-stakes standardized testing—with its emphasis on con-

trolling students, curricular content, pacing, and outcomes—permeates art education. This desire for formulaic art education runs counter to what many art education scholars (Barney, 2019; Chapman, 1985; Eisner, 2001; Hegeman, Sanders-Bustle, Hanawalt, 2020; Jebe & Hetrick, 2020; Powell & Lajevic, 2011) consider the strengths of art education, including complexity, nuance, and emergence. Emergence in art education curriculum (May & Baker, 2011) draws on descriptions of emergence theory where individual components of a large system work together to give rise to more complex forms. Osberg, Biesta, and Cilliers (2008) state emergent curriculum does not seek "...more accurate understandings of a finished reality, as it is. Rather, the question for knowledge is about finding more and more complex and creative ways of interacting with our reality" (p. 215). Emergence, complexity, and nuance in art education curriculum resist the tendency towards reduction and certainty underlying approaches such as DBAE that are fueled by standardization. In critically reexamining my teaching, I hoped to depart from some of the rituals and reductionist approaches that formed some of my teaching foundations.

Rituals of Critical Emergence

In planning "Two Dimensional Art Experiences," an undergraduate studio course for art education majors, I wanted to explore what happens when a class collaboratively uses a framework for research, teaching, and learning that questions and disrupts current ritualistic adherence to an outdated, unproductive banking model of education (Freire, 1993). What happens when art education foregrounds and follows students' interests and questions, using arts-based tools, processes, and approaches to explore 2D artwork? What happens when autonomy replaces authority? When curiosity replaces control? When boundaries blur, outsiders becoming insiders (Wang, Coemans, Siegesmund, & Hannes, 2017) and artist/educator/researchers become *scholartists*¹ (Hofsess, 2018; see also Knowles, Promislow, Cole, 2008)? When we embrace indeterminacy and emergence, opening ourselves to wonder (Emme, 2007) what new, more inclusive rituals can we create?

Teaching prior art education undergraduate courses involved sneaking studio practices into methods/practicum courses as supplemental readings or suggested activities; "Two Dimensional Art Experiences" was my first undergraduate studio art course exclusively for art education majors. Shifts in my own scholartist practices influenced my desire to create a less teacher-dictated, more student-centered course centering inclusion, responsiveness, and connection. The research that follows is an autobiographical narrative inquiry into this course

¹ A scholartist engages in qualitative research where art serves as the framework for research inspiration, conceptualization, process, and representation. This artist researcher identity intentionally intermingles the art as research, artist research, and research as art.

(Broome, 2014; Clandinin, & Connelly, 2000). My study data includes field notes, memos, and teaching artifacts with analytic memos addressing each course theme.

This study examines using emergent curriculum and contract grading in a blended online/face-to-face undergraduate studio course during a global pandemic. I am attentive to the unique place 2D studio courses occupy in undergraduate art education programs. This research was impacted by the prior year's civil unrest after George Floyd's murder. Historical and contemporary racial inequalities and tensions are particularly publicly and politically visibly salient in Richmond, Virginia where this study occurred. These inequalities and tensions moved between the background and foreground of our work together in the course.

Another major course design intention was to facilitate a co-created and emergent curriculum sufficiently open for critical discourse (Rhoades, Davenport, Wolfgang, Cosier, Sanders, 2013). My desire to facilitate the class this way is supported by research demonstrating emergent curriculum as beneficial to P-12 students (Kaplan, 2020; Sunday & Conley 2020; Yu, 2021). Teacher candidates learn how to enact emergent curriculum in their future classrooms when they personally experience it, and faculty simultaneously model these kinds of pedagogical approaches in their undergraduate courses. After explicitly informing students about these aspirations for incorporating emergent curriculum and infusing student-led research, I shared a generic syllabus and four course themes on our first day together. We began the co-creation of the course with a few questions:

1. Which studio practice traditions are essential for a studio course?
2. What should we prioritize in reframing our two-dimensional studio course: technical skill, conceptual development, media mastery, composition, combinations of these or something else?
3. How can we reconsider habits of using sketchbooks for individual and group planning/research processes?
4. How can we reconsider the role of research about art and engage in art as research?
5. What can we learn about cultivating artist/educator/researcher identities through disrupting customary approaches to studio teaching?

This framed our critical re-examination of traditional media-centric approaches to artistic production and visual reception as a springboard for research about art/art as research. Our emergent curriculum/pedagogical approach engaged four central processes throughout the curriculum: research about art, art as research, reconsideration of traditional media-centric curriculum/pedagogy, and intentional blurring

of boundaries between artist and educator identities. We iteratively examined these processes across four guiding themes in the course: Curriculum as 2D Work, 2D Works That Are Curricular, Historical and Contemporary 2D Works as Product, and Historical and Contemporary 2D Works as Process.

For Wang, Coemans, Siegesmund, and Hannes (2017), research about art “investigates art-related topics without artistically shaping the object or installation under study, or without necessarily (re)creating a material or bodily reality to understand the process of art making itself” (p.14). Our research about art occurred informally as preparatory research for art-making processes and as formal assignments for Look Books². We also engaged in art as research, where art making was research inquiry. Through making we-as *scholartists*—developed “a better understanding of the potential of [artmaking] to introduce a change, either in terms of personal experiences or environmental circumstances,” acknowledging that “research facilitates the study of the artistic process” (Wang, et al., 2017, p.15). Our art-as-research stimulated us to reevaluate prior notions of artist and educator identities, when/how those identities blur in generative ways, and to critically reexamine the colonizing history and present problematics of Western aesthetics. In the following sections, I demonstrate how these four processes surfaced and receded within each of the four course themes.

Searching for Unknowns

In the course's first weeks, the students and I positioned ourselves as conducting research about art using two related sketchbook prompts intended to reveal prior perceptions about what constitutes 2D art:

- Using the media of your choice, use images and or words to respond to the following question: what do you know (without doing additional research) about 2D works of art?
- Using the media of your choice, use images and or words to respond to the following question: what is NOT a 2D work of art?

Along with these prompts, I loaned each student a college-level drawing, 2D foundations, or design textbook. Students critically evaluated the textbooks' images and writing. Students also considered the kind, quantity, and quality of images. They then evaluated the organization, number, length of chapters, and writing tone. Their resulting research drawings and informal presentations of their textbook analyses pro-

2 Look Books are typically collections of images compiled to quickly convey an artist or designer's recent product work. In the context of this course, we adapted the form of Look Books. Our Look Books were student compilations of preparatory and reflective research on works of art and artists that demonstrated the students' range of understanding of course themes. For an example of traditional Look Books in a fashion design course, see Zhang (2022).

vided a rich substrate for accumulating drawing experiments and art as research, research about art, reevaluations of artist and educator identities, and reconsiderations of how 2D art making has been taught.

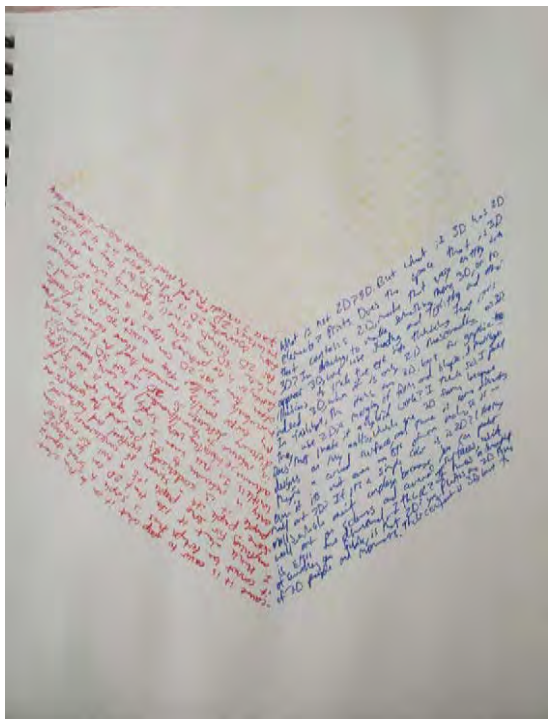


Figure 1: Lilly's "What is 2D" sketchbook work

This enabled envisioning alternative possibilities of teaching 2D art reframed to respond to contemporary methods for artist research and to support continuing development of students' scholar-artist identities. We also reflected on how media-centric presentations of 2D art making obscures the prioritization of Western aesthetics through positioning example images, discussions of composition, subject matter, style, and instructional content as innate to 2D art making. Conversely, students noted, few textbooks actively question Western aesthetics, instead tokenistically incorporating non-Western images.

We began exploring the first course theme, Curriculum as 2D Work, by reviewing video excerpts from Jorge Lucero's (2020) Zoomposium "What Happens at the Intersection of Conceptual Art and Teaching?" and reading Lucero's interview (Medina, 2018). Next, students engaged in research to identify at least three examples of curriculum as art. Be-

fore doing independent research, we discussed historical examples of formal 2D curricula, including Arthur Wesley Dow's (1899) "Composition," noting how his education in painting and printmaking, and study of Japanese art at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts influenced the contents and style of Dow's textbook and teaching. I intentionally contextualized Dow as an artist instead of an art educator to build a bridge between thinking of his artistic practice broadly and "Composition" as a work of art specifically. I also presented research in curriculum reconceptualization as another field concerned with the creative potential of curriculum. We read and discussed Pinar's (1994) essay, "The Method of Currere," to complete a bridge that begins with curriculum as a performative text artifact of schooling understood as a set of instructions and arrives at a recognition of curriculum's potential to be understood as a work of art.

Subsequent to this conceptual bridging, we engaged in more research about art. Students conducted research to identify at least three examples of curriculum as a work of art. Most examples they submitted were conceptual and neo-conceptual, such as artworks by Mark Weiner and Lenka Clayton. We analyzed the works' curricular form and function, eventually recognizing that mundane artifacts of schooling and education might be reconsidered as works of art, given the similarities between planning and executing written conceptual art and curriculum in the art room. With this revelation in mind, I introduced a range of Sol Lewitt's works, including his letters to Eva Hesse, urging students similarly to "just DO!" and to quickly imagine a 2D artwork they would like to see in the world. Students considered the limitations and possibilities of curriculum as a work of art as they recalled Lewitt's drawing instructions and other conceptual works. Next, they decided what information another artist would need to precisely execute their imagined 2D works, then they wrote a curriculum using text alone for another student to execute. Students shared their curriculum documents with their classmates, each selecting at least one curriculum to follow and bring completed 2D works back for a critique.



Figure 2: Lilly's digital artwork interpreting Rae's curriculum

The critique was a surprise twist for students focused on critiquing the curriculum as a work of art rather than critiquing the completed 2D works created using a classmate's curriculum. This critique helped reframe curriculum as a work of art. Although we referenced the completed 2D works as one tool to assess the curriculum as a work of art, the bulk of our critique focused on determining the clarity of artistic concept and expression conveyed within the parameters of the assignment. This created several generative moments, including a curriculum written by a student to convey their sensorial entanglements of sitting and experiencing a busy public space on campus. The student—concerned it would be impossible to convey their experience of synesthesia using traditional curriculum writing styles—opted to write a poem. The resulting curriculum artwork vividly conveyed a sensory map that another student was able to follow, producing a drawing that clearly represented a space our class recognized. The first course theme, Curriculum as 2D Work, facilitated opportunities for students to recognize their preconceived notions about artist and educator identities—where they converge, diverge, and blur. This established a range of possibilities for reconsidering their previous conceptions/creations of 2D artworks.

Rewriting Stories

The second theme, 2D Works That Are Curricular, followed the critique week. We began by reading and annotating Wallace Stephens' (1954) poem, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," and Thomas McEvilley's (1991) essay about content in art, "On The Manner of Addressing

Clouds." We discussed the poem and essay in relation to each other and McEvilley's assertion that, "If there is no such thing as neutral description, then all statements about art works involve attributions of content, whether acknowledged or not" (p.70). Taking this statement into account, the class turned its attention to discussing how we might identify examples of intentionally curricular 2D artworks, which we defined to be when the work's subject matter, composition, media, relationship with history, context, or verbal supplements supplied by the artist emphasized specific, narrative content that is both clearly understood and informative or persuasive in nature. Following our collective development of this working definition, the class discussed works of art we could easily recall that fit our definition. Some of the artists that students mentioned were Kara Walker, Catherine Opie, and Carrie Mae Weems. Students recalled predominantly contemporary artists whose narrative subject matter was drawn from recent history or social conditions that the students could directly identify.

In our next class meeting, I shared a presentation about the genre of history painting and the impact of the French Royal Academy and other European artist academies on Western art. We discussed the emergence of the term "high art" in relation to history painting and reviewed key artists associated with the genre spanning nearly three centuries, with students surprised that a painting genre could dominate Western art for so long. Students raised questions about the sociopolitical aims of maintaining tight control on who could enter art academies, how artists were trained, and why subject matter in painting was largely restricted to allegorical, religious, and mythological scenes. As this class day concluded, I asked students to continue considering these questions for our next class meeting at the university art museum.

At the museum, we dove into research about art through a slow looking and gallery sketching exercise in the Ibrahim Ahmed (2021) *It Will Always Come Back to You and Dineo Seshee Bopape* (2021) *Ile aye, moya, là, ndokh...harmonic conversions...mm* exhibitions. The title of Bopape's show signified the four elements (earth, wind, fire, and water) conveyed in various languages from West and Southern Africa. The exhibition features video, sculpture, installation, and animation. The installation reflects on the transcontinental slave trade, paying homage to people taken, those who struggled, those who fled, and those who still seek sanctuary in spaces between captivity and an illegal freedom. Ahmed explores powerful mythic narratives in his first U.S. institutional exhibition. A Kuwaiti-born, Giza-based artist, Ahmed utilizes photo collage, sculpture, video, and large-scale installation to examine cultural forces that prevail in Giza and within his family. I encouraged notetaking and sketching in the exhibitions as critical comparative analysis based on prior discussions on the history painting genre. We then spent two hours in the galleries. Afterwards, we convened in the outside garden seating area to discuss their analyses.

Students shared thumbnail sketches of whole works, detail sketches of some works, notes, and digital photographs on their mobile devices to illustrate our discussion. One contrasted Bopape's work with Titian's (1556-9) "Diana and Actaeon," a work we discussed in the prior class on history painting, noting Titian's reliance on representational depictions of figures to constitute the curricular, or narrative, content of the painting. The student commented on Diana's subordinate position to Actaeon in Titian's composition, as well as the radically different style used to depict the clothed Black female figure at the lower right side attempting to shield Diana from Actaeon's view.

In contrast, students noted that Bopape utilized indirect references to the body, including numerous clay sculptures made by living relatives of former slaves. The sculptures were created by firmly clenching a ball of clay, resulting in a record of the shape and details of each hand that squeezed the clay. The student noted that viewing dozens of these absent hands presented an open-ended, complex representation of the people who constitute Bopape's curriculum as opposed to the curriculum of Titian's portrayal of Diana and her nymphs as passive objects. Other students offered similarly incisive analyses from their in-depth visual research. We concluded by reflecting on the numerous socio-cultural shifts necessary for the content of 2D artworks to drastically change since the end of the history painting genre. Students analyzed evidence of shifts by juxtaposing history paintings and the ICA exhibitions which included: differences between strict medium adherence to large-scale oil paintings in history paintings versus identifying the media best suited to convey a concept in contemporary works; Western, colonizing themes and contrived representations of sitters in history paintings versus the global, decolonizing³ themes and dynamically represented models in contemporary works among other juxtapositions. Arising from our analysis, several students discussed ways the current exhibitions provided personal, emotional connections for them in making sense of their own experiences of racism and other forms of bigotry. Specifically, students said Bopape's work lent greater context to their anger with the use and abuse of Black bodies including George Floyd's murder, and subsequent local and national protests following his death. By contrast, one student said, "I never had much to say about history paintings. I can talk about them formally, but they aren't meant to mean anything to me." Following this powerful discussion, I previewed the exploration of campus for our next class meeting.

3 Beginning in the latter half of the 20th century, postcolonial studies and critical race studies scholars critically examined Western art's role in colonizing the global majority, promoting, and maintaining white Western cultural values. Over the past two decades art historians, critics, curators, collectors, artists, and audiences have been increasingly reevaluating the academy and cultural institutions such as art museums for their roles in colonization. This reevaluation has caused some institutions to undertake changes to decolonize practices. For numerous discussions on decolonizing art history, see Grant and Price (2020).

The next week, we met outside our building to escape the confinement of pandemic anxiety and to deepen connections with the rich visual and material cultures of campus. I asked students to work individually or in groups to explore the nearby built environment, taking digital photographs to document any vernacular or street art such as graffiti, wheatpastes, stickers, or other works students felt were curricular in nature for their second Look Book titled "Word on the Street." We reconvened after two hours to share.

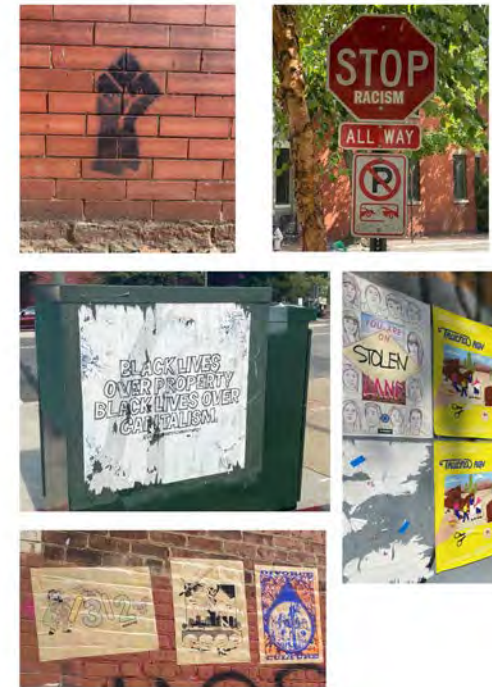


Figure 3: Ren's photo collage from "Word on the Street"

A few students were critical of the conspicuous absence of artifacts and artwork on campus from the 2020 protests after George Floyd's murder versus how plentiful these artworks were just outside the campus perimeter. Students raised thoughtful questions, including trying to discern the differences between street art and functional visual communication (e.g., advertising and wayfinding signage) regarding their purposes and visual qualities. We considered how such subtle differences relate to larger aesthetic arguments regarding boundaries between art and design. We concluded by discussing expanded understandings

of the roles of media, subject matter, and context in an artwork's ability to communicate an instructive message. Students developed a series of sketches for possible artworks that would convey specific stories or instructive messages to viewers for our next class meeting.

Their completed artworks resulting from historical, museum, and vernacular explorations were deeply thoughtful narrative pieces reflecting each student's individual understandings of how visual works are integral to culture as colonizing and decolonizing tools. Students created digital and traditional 2D artworks reflecting themes of colorism in the Black community; self-sabotage versus self-love; gentrification; physically and emotionally navigating foreign cities represented as psychological mapping; student learning as colonizing experiences represented through mixed-media quilted notes, drawings, essays, and assignments stitched together with red and black thread; body dysmorphia and gender identity; and more. We approached critique for this from a generative, open-read position.



Figure 4: Rae's Triptych for Theme 2

Students and instructor were able to view documentation of the works on a shared electronic drive prior to critique and all participants were asked to identify strengths and areas for improvement prior to meeting. Students reported this approach to the critique process increased overall engagement in the discussion of artworks, as well as increased interest in accepting suggestions or applying advice to subsequent projects compared with traditional studio critiques. Secondly, several students reported realizing critiques can be valuable formative processes rather than anxiety-producing summative evaluations. As one student noted, "I've been able to give classmates feedback that they're able to apply it to edits. I'm giving my peers a lot to read and go off on, and they do the same for me." This was a significant realization for students as they began the third theme of the course.

Blurring Boundaries

We began investigating the third course theme, Historical and Contemporary 2D Works as Product, after the semester's midway point and for a shorter time than the prior two. This theme was loosely intended to prompt students to recognize and interrogate mainstream, market-driven, capitalist/anti-capitalist approaches to creating 2D artworks for commercial and fine art consumers. We began with an open class discussion about art economies, relationships and tensions between commercial art and fine art, and whether it was possible to create anti-capitalist art today. Following our discussion, we watched two videos from the PBS Art21 (2018) "Consumption Revisited" playlist. Students then chose another video to watch outside class to report back on ways that artist's work connected to our initial discussion of art commodification and artists' efforts to resist or reverse it. While students expressed skepticism reversal was possible, they willingly began investigations for their third Look Book.

Students expressed interest in extending their research about art as a product for these Look Books, so we co-developed the assignment as preparatory research for their third studio assignment. They identified 2D artworks that explore consumer products, mass production, mass media/advertising, and anti-consumerist or anti-capitalist themes. They chose to identify artists who use media or visual language of consumer culture or anti-consumer aesthetics to embrace or critique consumer culture. Through research, we learned about the rise of Pop Art and subsequent related art styles, as well as designers who incorporated visual elements of Pop Art into their commercial products. They identified contemporary artists incorporating commercial styles into fine art illustration to critique consumer culture.

Our class Look Book discussion led students to start taking notes and making sketches for this theme's largely student-defined/student-led artwork assignment. Students adopted fashion icon Tim Gunn's phrase "Make it work" as the assignment title. They wanted their Look Book research to inform three to four concept sketches for sharing and class feedback for help choosing their most conceptually robust ideas for their finished artworks. Students discussed project parameters and agreed to leave media choice open but limited works to A4 paper size or smaller. I was unsure how this project would work without me leading, but I leaned into trusting students' decisions about parameters and their collective process. Most students produced digital artworks emphasizing strong anti-consumption sentiments, such as the work here depicting a person attempting to acquire items to meet their basic needs from a claw machine.



Figure 5: Rae's digital work entitled "Everything You Could Ever Want"

This student-led assignment successfully energized participation and increased work completion; final works reflected connections to prior art research, preparation sketching, and the robust feedback session. The final works did not reflect themes or media I would have prescribed for the project, and as a result, I learned more about my students' thinking about themes and media. The collective energy that resulted from our shared learning in this project helped propel us into the fourth and final course theme.

Altered Fellowship

A zine served as provocation for our fourth theme, Historical and Contemporary 2D Works as Process. For final works, students had to incorporate a zine template and demonstrate the role of process in art-making but were free to choose any research and making processes to meet their collaboratively-developed parameters and outcomes. Students were initially frustrated with the limitations of the zine. They discussed making one zine together, a few zines by groups, or one zine by each student. They discussed ideas as I typed in a live document

during class. The document had four zine themes students developed: losing touch with nature, experiencing music, identity and intersectionality, food access and production. They decided everyone would make their own zine. The document also outlined four classroom work sessions, zine section completion schedule, and links to student-identified resources. Students decided the zine could be created digitally or analogically, provided it fit the template.

Students then decided their Look Book would include images of process-oriented artworks, processes they planned to use for the zine, or examples of artwork by one or more artists they planned to feature. After students expressed interest, we visited the university library's special zine collections. Our next work session was highly productive, and the library visit inspired several students. At its beginning and end, students shared their progress and new ideas emerging from this library visit. They were highly engaged in providing each person targeted formative critique during the third and fourth sessions.

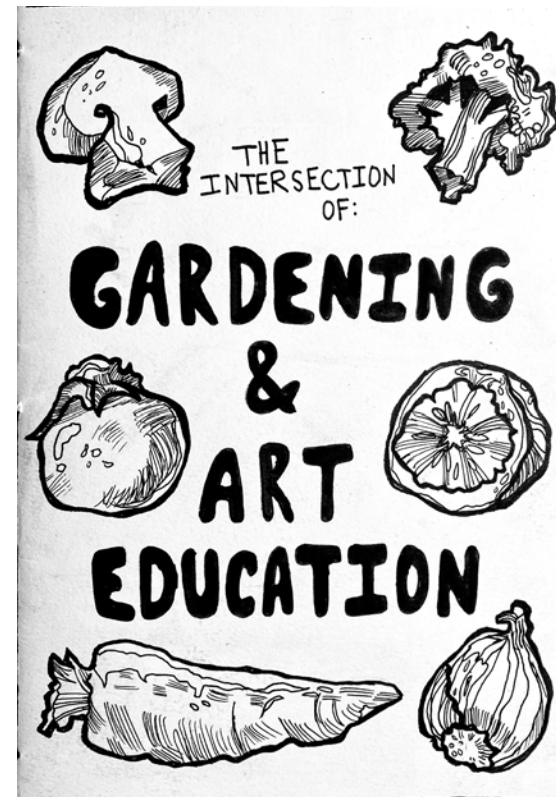


Figure 6: Cover for Ren's Zine

In our final class meeting, students shared and discussed their completed zines. As conversation ended, we shifted to reflect on ways our course addressed the initial questions about studio teaching and scholar-artist identity. We reviewed the questions verbally, and I incorporated them into prompts for students' written self-evaluations. In lieu of a final exam, I met one-on-one with students to discuss their written self-evaluations, sketchbooks, Look Book assignments, and the artworks completed for each course theme. These meetings provided students a degree of privacy to discuss any concerns about their work or the course, as well as a safe space to talk about their efforts across assignments. Some students confidently embraced this meeting, comfortably discussing their self-assessments. A few were skeptical about whether I would honor their self-assessments—wondering if I would disregard them in favor of “objective” assessments or comparisons to their peers. These conversations with skeptical/self-doubting students were thought-provoking for considering the outcomes of reconceptualizing this studio course. In the following sections, I reflect on the comforts and harms that are produced by ritualistic approaches to teaching studio art classes then consider potential future directions.

A Call to Reflect, Revise, and Reinvent

My analysis of this course revealed many moments when we navigated the process of emergent, co-developed curriculum; a range of instructional approaches; and student-centered assessments. In some instances, we found common paths of understanding when we encountered blurriness in creative practices, research about art, art as research, and moments of teaching and learning. Often, though, each student's paths through themes differed from their classmates'. This variability produced new kinds of anxieties for the students and me. In reviewing field notes and students' midterm and final self-evaluations, some shared anxieties stem from discomfort with learning that unfolds gradually in a course and responds to student needs and interests. While students displayed a high level of engagement and reported feeling empowered by the transparency of student-led learning and emergent curriculum, they also expressed personal doubts about their course performance. This finding indicates a need to help students better understand their contributions in a labor contract graded course such as this one. Despite modeling formative feedback processes, providing guidelines for students to evaluate each other in critique, and to evaluate their own efforts on each of the four components of the course (sketchbook, Look Book assignments, one artwork for each of the four themes, and class participation) some students still expressed uncertainty about summative self-assessment. These self-evaluations were submitted at midterm and at the end of the course. I spoke with each student individually at both points, and we agreed on a letter grade each time. Nonetheless, a few students expressed skepticism about whether they could assess their labor. In a review of research on contract grading, Carillo (2022)

found labor-based contracts can be problematic because they assume for a normative body and thus a uniform conception of labor as the foundation of assessment. This disadvantages students with disabilities, those struggling with mental health or illness, or students who work long hours outside class. It is possible that students were skeptical about their performance because they felt their labor was not uniform with traditional labor conceptions.

An important related finding from this research was the recognition that breaking from art education teaching rituals is necessarily uncomfortable. Institutional transformation is usually very gradual, and often in universities, it is too slow to be responsive to students' needs in their relatively short time there. Changing curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and shifting the underlying philosophy of a course can be unsettling for both students and the instructor. Sometimes this kind of unsettling is critical when an institution cannot meet the needs of students within a large system not prone to rapid change. The deeply engaged research about art, generous and generative discourse of critiques, and the critical observations students made about historical, contemporary, and local vernacular art were possible through our mutual willingness to blur the boundaries of teacher/student/artist/educator to become critical viewers/responsive makers/change agents. This willingness to forgo the comfort of being attentive passive participants in rituals of art education did not remove us from the experience of being art educators, rather, we created a mutual space of becoming scholar-artists. We cultivated this mutual space through the emergent curriculum of the course.

In contrast to the carefully curated environments and provocations of emergent curriculum for young learners, our emergent curriculum was less discreetly tied to specific learning spaces and our emergent approaches were scaled and adapted for adult learners. The students and I co-curated environments in our classroom, the campus art museum, city streets, and our homes by bringing questions, materials, research, conversations, and recognition of the possibilities of academic and domestic assemblage in situ. We created and shared provocations from the art world and our lived histories, our bodies, our university, our city, and the cross-hatching overlaps between them. Our emergent curriculum forged new connections among us and with our community, and shifted our learning toward dispersed, collective power rather than concentrated, individual power. This mirrors what Cosier (2021) describes as the Symbiocene: a hopeful but yet-to-be future era that moves humanity “away from the reckless pursuit of profit and concentrated power and toward collectivism and a sense of a shared purpose and fate” (p. 316). We found that smudging or erasing rituals that reinscribe Western aesthetics and White supremacist assessments of learning in art education can be uncomfortable but are imperative. The path through emergent curriculum may not be linear, but it is navigable.

The possibilities these experiences hold for fundamentally changing our philosophy and practice of art education is a necessary endeavor.

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A Review of Visual and Cultural Identity Constructs of Global Youth and Young Adults: Situated, Embodied and Performed Ways of Being, Engaging, and Belonging

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Blaikie, F. (Ed.). (2021). *Visual and Cultural Identity Constructs of Global Youth and Young Adults: Situated, Embodied and Performed Ways of Being, Engaging and Belonging*. London: Routledge. 276 pp. ISBN: 978-0-367519490

The Routledge book series on Research in Cultural and Media Studies now includes the title, *Visual and Cultural Identity Constructs of Global Youth and Young Adults: Situated and Performed Ways of Being, Engaging, and Belonging*,¹ edited by art education scholar and professor Fiona Blaikie. This 276-page volume features thirteen chapters by a range of established and emerging researchers and scholars from across the globe, offering new ways of understanding how the shifting identities of young people are constructed through visual and cultural markers. The transdisciplinary collection is inspired in part by a symposium that Professor Blaikie organized at Brock University in February 2019, “Impression Management: Construction of Visual and Cultural Identities in North American Adolescents.” The chapters represent scholars from art education, anthropology, sociology, child and youth studies, gender studies, literacy studies, and educational studies exploring questions of youth and young adults’ strategies for interacting with society and finding their place within it. The contributors to this edited volume seek not only to illuminate their multi-layered understandings of research participants’ identity constructs, but also to engage with critical and experimental methodological approaches.

Visual and Cultural Identity Constructs of Global Youth and Young Adults embraces a ground-breaking and participatory, less autocratic means of constructing knowledge, drawing on, among others, posthumanism, new materialism, affect, worlding, weak theory, as well as gender and queer theory. The authors avoid invoking “grand narratives” (Blaikie, 2021, p. 1) to explain the results of their inquiries. Blaikie presents fellow authors and thinkers who self-reflexively explore the in-between moments in their data gathering, those hard to categorize or capture, and maybe even undesirable, but that leave a lasting impression. The

1 For the sake of transparency, it should be noted that although this reviewer was not involved in any aspect of the edited volume under discussion, Fiona Blaikie serves as the reviewer’s doctoral supervisor.