Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education

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Editorial: Whiteness and Art Education

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"The white power bloc develops a bag of tricks to mask its social location, making use of disguises, euphemisms, silences, and avoidances" (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2009, p. 16).

In my graduate course, "Critical Analysis of Multicultural Art Education," I assign the 2009 book chapter, "Smoke and Mirrors: More Than One Way to Be Diverse and Multicultural," by Shirley R. Steinberg and Joe L. Kincheloe. To frame the chapter, the authors critique the way liberal educators and scholars have historically failed to account for the power dynamics within institutions, especially schools, thus maintaining systems of domination and subordination. Steinberg and Kincheloe (2009) then build on John Fiske's concept of "power blocs," which "describe the social formations around which power politics operated in Western societies in the late twentieth century" (p. 8), to make suggestions for how critical multiculturalists can elevate their understanding of educational equity. In the chapter, three power blocs, "the white supremacist power bloc," "the patriarchy power bloc," and "the class elitist power bloc," are conceptualized as as an ever-shifting set of social alliances, and as being representative of the way power flows in varying directions. Steinberg and Kincheloe (2009) explain,

> Along lines of race, class, and gender, individuals can simultaneously fall within the boundaries of one power bloc and outside another. While no essential explanation can account for the way an individual will relate to power blocs vis-a-vis their race, class, or gender, such dimensions do affect people's relationship to power-related social formations. In most cases individuals are fragmented in relation to power. (p. 9)

The recognition and understanding of the power and also inequity that these varying social alliances produce is critical if teachers are to be able to identify and attend to the material and emotional needs of their students. Further, Steinberg and Kincheloe (2009) assert that teachers who fail to recognize these systems will "always be limited in their attempts to understand, provide for, and help empower their marginalized students…" (p. 9).

To activate Steinberg and Kincheloe's chapter, I assign an artmaking activity in which the graduate students must visually represent the

three power blocs and place themselves within the bloc framework for each category. I ask them to then consider, "What implications do your bloc positions have on how you navigate your role as an art educator/artist/researcher, etc.?" (See Figure 1)

Figure 1. Courtesy of Miranda Koffey, graduate student enrolled in 7767

In most cases, this is the first time that my white students have named and positioned their whiteness on a hierarchical plane in any visual way. Further, for many, it is the first time they realize that their positionality actually *does* and *should* impact how they perform their art educator/artist/researcher identity. The students' task to visually represent the three power blocs, and moreover, entangle themselves in the system has been significantly more impactful and ignited more critical reflection than most other readings and assignments throughout my course. Steinberg and Kincheloe (2009) write, "The white supremacist power bloc assumes its power from its ability to erase its presence" (p. 14); however, students' ability to *see* the power blocs, represented in color and dimensionality, counters its ability to maintain invisibility. Additionally, visually representing this power system makes clearer that individuals can indeed move in and out of empowered and disempowered positions depending on access to certain identity-based privileges (e.g. race, class, gender). This mobility inevitably impacts an individual's *overall* social location. However, certain social alliances, certainly those that align with whiteness, will always supercede others simply because that is the way power systems have been set up to work. The visual representation of Steinberg and Kinchloe's "power blocs" provided a constant reminder of these systems for my art education graduate students–such a continuous consideration forced introspection, reflexivity and accountability. Likewise, jCRAE's *three* issues on whiteness aimed to be a constant reminder of these systems and prompt introspection, reflexivity and accountability for the art education field at large.

Whiteness is one of the most powerful "nothings" we can conjure (Steinberg & Kinchloe, 2009). As senior editor of *jCRAE*, my goal for developing three consecutive issues on whiteness was to model the way the art education field must continue to face and challenge this "nothingness." Our collective failure to recognize what whiteness entails has resulted in centuries of gatekeeping in the arts and art education. The articles published in *all three issues* of Volume 36 need to be read *over and over again* by art educators around the world, assigned to preservice art teachers in our university classrooms, forwarded to practicing art teachers who mentor our preservice students in their classrooms, shared with art museum professionals and community partners, etc. Considering the clear and direct content offered in these three issues of *jCRAE*, there should be *no more excuses, no more gasps of disbelief, and no more denying that white supremacy is a problem in the art education field.* Volume 36 has presented over 20 essays, research articles, creative writings and artworks in which art educators of varying races and nationalities have theoretically and empirically demonstrated the ways whiteness and white supremacy manifests in art education. Therefore, any further and ongoing attempts to deny responsibility or maintain

"neutrality" must be called out for *willful ignorance* (Alcoff, 2007), or even further, *colorblind racism* (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). The authors provide us with ammunition to publicly push back against the perpetuation of racial injustices, as well as the construction and maintenance of *white ignorance,* which refers to the cognitive tendency to engage in "self-deception, bad faith, evasion and misrepresentation" on matters of race, racism, and racial domination (Mills, 2007, p.17; See also Mills, 1997).

Beth Link opens Volume 36, Issue 3 with a research project, grounded in Critical Whiteness Studies, that investigates varying public school districts' art curricula and their attention to race and whiteness. Link presents an analysis that suggests that district curricula reinforces racial inequities by omitting artists of color, reaffirming racial hierarchies through the master narrative of white progress, and decontextualizing the socio-cultural concerns of non-white artists. Link makes suggestions for schools to reform art curricula so that is explicitly anti-oppressive and critically multicultural. Then, **Melissa Crum** investigates the ways in which a public art museum engaged in an iterative reflection process that resulted in culturally responsible exhibition practices. Crum identified the ways in which white museum educators and practitioners assumed the role of "white accomplice" during the planning, curation and exhibition of art from varying regions of Africa.

In an engaging personal essay about teaching, **Heath Schultz** illuminates the ways some of his white art education students have internalized white supremacy, and thus developed a "white savior complex." Schultz presents the antiracist pedagogical strategies that he has used (sometimes with failure) to attempt to disrupt white supremacy in the art education classroom. Next, **Alphonso Grant** pulls back the curtain on the ways whiteness drives how gay Black men, specifically Black gay men "on the DL," are represented in visual culture and literature. Using his personal lived experience as data, Grant interprets how these (mis)representations of Black gay men may impact students' ability for meaning making in varying art education contexts. **Sarah Travis** presents a research study that examines the ways whiteness intersects with and drives students' of color development of artist identities. Travis worked with youth engaged in a teen arts internship program at a contemporary arts center in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA. Even in this predominantly Black and brown city, Travis' study demonstrates the ways that artworld identities and spaces remain within the milieu of whiteness and related power structures. Issue 3 of "Whiteness and Art Education" wraps with **Kevin Slivka** work, which "critically examines the deployment and pervasiveness of Whiteness defined

by structural power/knowledge relationships related to Indigenous ways of knowing and the arts." Slivka. Overall, Volume 36, Issue 3 of *jCRAE* continues to work to interrupt the normality of whiteness (Bell, 2017), making it visible and holding those who benefit from it most accountable for its destabilization.

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White Lies: Unraveling Whiteness in the Elementary Art Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

This article presents three case studies of elementary art education curriculum in districts across the United States. The study uses content analysis, which is grounded in Critical Whiteness Studies in order to examine the ways district art curricula address issues of race and whiteness in elementary art education. Findings suggest that district curricula reinforces racial inequities by omitting artists of color, reaffirming racial hierarchies through the master narrative of white progress, and decontextualizing the socio-cultural concerns of non-white artists. The article ends by suggesting reforms in order to create anti-oppressive multicultural art curricula.

Keywords: Art education, Critical Whiteness, Curriculum Analysis, Multicultural Education, Anti-oppressive Education

> *Lying is done with words, and also silence.*

Adrienne Rich

Art educators are embedded in the daily work of curating knowledge, spinning stories into lessons, and drawing inspiration from art history. This process is highly subjective and the weight of our position as arbiters of truth and shapers of history is not often taken up in critical ways in our field (Gaztambide-Fernández, et al, 2018). Art education is not neutral, and we are not neutral tellers of an objective art history (Desai, 2000). As anthropologist, Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) states, "the presences and absences embodied in our sources…are neither neutral or natural. They are created" (p. 48). If our art historical sources are built upon the enduring ills of racial inequity then we are not impartial transmitters of history, we are implicated in the system as we reproduce it in our classrooms. Educators should not "assume that…by not taking a political stance we are being objective," our experiences and the values of the institutions we participate in mold us and "work through us" often unconsciously (Apple, 2004, pp. 7-8). As educators we are shapers of thought, and as art educators we curate and present an official view of the history of humanity through images—this is a powerful act and we should acknowledge this

power and wield it responsibly (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004).

Department of Labor statistics indicate that art teachers today are over 70% white and female (Art Teacher Education, 2014). At this same time our student population is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse (Bauman, 2017). In the face of this demographic mismatch, it is vitally important that white art educators critically reflect on their roles in reproducing pernicious narratives that reify racial or gender inequities (Acuff, 2018). Critical reflection involves not only considering how we teach non-Western artists and artists of color, but also how our curriculum presents the story of whiteness.

As a white art educator taking up issues of race/racism in art education, it is important to acknowledge my bias and reflect on the ways my embodied experience and lived privilege affect my research. Throughout this analysis, I speak as a white art educator engaged in a process of "unraveling" my complicity in the systems of privilege and oppression I am attempting to disrupt (De Lissovoy, 2010, p. 419). Many of the projects and practices I critique I have also participated in as an elementary art teacher. As Sonia Nieto (2003) says, "white educators need to make the problem of racism *their* problem to solve" (p. 203). It is my hope that this research will help myself and other white art educators to consider the power of our practice and enter into our work critically engaged with the stories we teach our students. Through working to unravel the white lies underpinning our curriculum, we can make power visible and transform our practice with honesty, vulnerability, and self-reflection.
This analysis argues that art education should address the overwhelming whiteness of the art historical canon in order to compare how images by/about artists of color and white artists are regulated, contextualized, negated, or legitimized in the curriculum. In order to take stock of how district mandated art curriculum intervenes in or perpetuates harmful art historical narratives, I will present three case studies analyzing elementary art curriculum guides from districts across the country. The content of these curriculum documents are then analyzed using a framework of Critical Whiteness.

Whiteness in Art Education

This study is grounded in literature on Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS), a branch of Critical Race Theory. Critical Race Theory is interested in centering the knowledge and experiences of people of color (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002), while CWS "focuses on problematizing the normality of hegemonic whiteness" (Matias, et al., 2014, p. 291). Charles Mills (1997) claims that "whiteness is not natural," it is constructed and cultivated (p. 104). He says that white people are invested in whiteness and white privilege and employ

an "epistemology of ignorance" that produces "the ironic outcome that whites will in general be unable to understand the world they themselves have made" (Mills, 1997, p. 18). It is in the self-interests of those who call themselves "white" to not name it, and to remain ignorant of the way it moves in and through them (Leonardo, 2009). Naming and understanding whiteness and white privilege is often quite uncomfortable for white students because it "inevitably challenges the self-identity of white people who have internalized these racial justifications" (King, 1997, p. 128). Once white ignorance is disrupted it may cause a crisis as the perceived reality of white subjects is called into question (Kumashiro, 2000). If the crisis is productive it can lead to interpellation where learners experience "a profound unraveling of the self and its refounding on a new basis" (De Lissovoy, 2010, p. 428).

The art education field has taken up issues of multiculturalism in various iterations over the years, but often the focus is on non-white/non-Western art and culture leaving whiteness and power unexamined (Acuff, 2015; Buffington, 2014). Over time the label "multicultural" became diluted and was used to mark approaches that often reinforced rather than challenged stereotypes (Desai, 2000). Contemporary art education scholars call for a more critical approach to multicultural education that deals with cultural complexity (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001), critiques power (Acuff, 2015; Buffington, 2014), and reflects on the identity and position of the teacher and the learner (Desai, 2000). Art education scholars in the 1990s began to categorize individual lessons, projects, and curriculum artifacts into multicultural taxonomies. Elizabeth Manley Delacruz (1996) conducted a content analysis examining multicultural merchandise marketed to teachers by developing a four tier rubric assessing the ways teachers engaged with each artifact ranging from a focus on ethnic tourism to a concern with social issues. Delacruz concluded that products used in multi-cultural curricula were "perpetuating stereotypical misconceptions, reinforcing monocultural myths, and miseducating students" (1996, p. 85). James Banks (1999) also outlined four different categories for multicultural inclusion including the Contributions Approach that focuses on heroes and holidays, the Additive Approach where culture is discussed but leaves curriculum largely unaltered, the Transformation Approach where curriculum is changed by the inclusion of diverse perspectives, and the Social Action Approach where students take steps to solve social problems. While Delacruz's rubric assesses the ways students relate to art objects, Banks' approaches are more concerned with the relationships between objects in the overall curriculum.

Amy Kraehe (2010) uses this literature on multiculturalism to conduct a content analysis comparing Texas' shifting criteria for teacher certification of candidates' understanding of race, culture, and

diversity in 1986 and 2007. Kraehe notes that while the state standards made shifts towards inclusivity, they stopped short of incorporating explicitly anti-racist or critical views of culture suggesting a "color-blind ideology" (p. 171). Fiona O'Rourke (2018) also applies a critical multicultural analysis to the English National Art Curriculum. Her curriculum analysis reveals that the history of art taught in English schools is often Euro-centric and seeks to "valorize the contributions Europeans have made to the world's artistic heritage [and] implicitly constitute the visual arts curriculum as the property of imagined "'white' populations" (p. 206). She argues that the subtle ways the curriculum affirms white supremacy "may be tacit or unintentional, but are not accidental" (p. 207). In both of these studies we see themes of maintaining racial and gendered hierarchies, preserving and promoting white norms of aesthetics and culture, and a persistent attempt to include diverse art/artists without attending to the sociocultural issues and contexts that inform their life and work. While the literature on multicultural art education proposes there are methods to disrupt these harmful processes of social reproduction, content analysis from the field suggests these approaches are not often employed. The literature presented here shows analysis of commercial products, national curriculum, and state standards revealing a shortage of literature analyzing how race and culture are taken up in district art curriculum documents. This study addresses this gap in literature by examining K-5 curriculum documents evidencing challenges to or investments in whiteness.

Methodology

This study takes a snapshot of American curriculum at this specific cultural moment. How do district curriculum documents approach culture and race in these divisive times? By conducting a discourse analysis on elementary curriculum documents, I explore how images by/about artists of color and white artists are regulated, contextualized, negated, or legitimized in the curriculum.

Content analysis encompasses a range of approaches including "systematic, objective, quantitative analysis" (Neuendorf, 2016, p. 1) and also more qualitative approaches which go "beyond mere word counts to include latent content analysis" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1283). Content analysis uses frequency counts to look at the manifest meaning (surface/textual) and also considers rhetoric to find latent (deep/implied) meanings (Neuendorf, 2016). This study employs summative content analysis where significant terms are counted and tallied and then analyzed to find the latent meaning behind the text (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In order to apply summative content analysis to the district curricula, I will analyze the text for the presence, frequency, and organization of specific artists, styles, stated goals, and vocabulary addressing culture. I begin by examining

the identity of artists suggested in each unit to produce racial and gendered frequency counts. Next I analyze the ways artists are contextualized in each unit by considering the descriptive words labeling artists' identities and associated artistic movements. I also investigate the unit goals, suggested projects, and accompanying vocabulary in order to compare units with higher/lower mentions of artists of color. The frequency, organization, and description of non-white/non-western artists is then compared to white/western artists to consider both the manifest meanings and the latent implications of this data as I attempt to understand "the dual creation of mentions and silences" (Trouillot, 1995, p. 50).

The purpose of this study is not to single out specific districts, but rather take up the conversation of how race is addressed in the broader field of art education through curriculum. While curriculum documents cannot tell us how teachers enact these guidelines in their classrooms, it is worthwhile to see the priorities and values districts suggest. Unlike national and state standards, the curriculum scope and sequence found in district guides is more specific to pinpoint time periods, cultures, artists, and projects in order to synchronize study across the district. These documents reveal the values and priorities of district leaders, which are codified and passed on to teachers through district curriculum.

This data comes directly from online elementary curriculum documents from three districts across the United States. These districts were chosen because their guides were publicly available and detailed enough to list specific artists, artworks, and projects. They were also chosen because they represent three distinct geographical areas of the country: the west, the northeast, and the south. Additionally, only districts with significant populations (over 25%) of both white students and students of color were considered. What follows is a concise description of each district and a curriculum overview. Demographics and regional information are included to situate curricula in a particular place serving specific populations. For the purposes of this study, I present only a snapshot of each curriculum through curricular vignettes revealing their approach to issues of culture and whiteness in the arts. After discussing individual case studies, I analyze trends across all three studies using the lens of Critical Whiteness. I then conclude with discussion, implications, and recommendations for furthering the goal of anti-oppressive art education.

Williamsport, Pennsylvania

Williamsport is a small district in central Pennsylvania within driving distance from Philadelphia. Less than 20% of residents have bachelor's degrees with an average family income under $40,000.

Williamsport school district is majority white (66%) with Black and multi-racial students making up 15% and 14% respectively, and Hispanic students composing 4% of the student body. The Williamsport Elementary Art Curriculum Guide[1] is only six pages long and has one page for each grade. Every grade studies artists that fit into a larger theme for the year. Each page of the guide is divided into headings that lay out objectives, vocabulary, production, art history, art criticism, aesthetics, and interdisciplinary connections. A list of artists accompany each grade level, most years this list consists of 7-10 artists with the notable exceptions of 2nd grade, which focuses on cultural diversity and only has three named artists and 5th grade which studies ancient art and has no individual artists listed. The list of suggested artists in Williamsport reveals a stark racial disparity [Table 1].

Table 1: Demographic breakdown of suggested artists

District	Male Artists	Female Artists	White Artists	Black Artists	Latino/ Hispanic Artists	Asian Artists	Native American Artists	Total Artists
Williamsport	26 (81%)	6 (19%)*	30 (94%)	0	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	0	32
Granite	32 (97%)	1 (3%)	31 (94%)	2 (6%)	0	0	0	33
Spring Valley	85 (79%)	23 (21%)*	88 (81%)	10 (9%)	4 (4%)	1 (1%)	5 (5%)	108

*Women of color fit into multiple categories and are counted in both their gender and racial category. Williamsport has 1 Latina artist, Spring Valley has 2 Black females, 2 Native American females, and 2 Latina artists, Granite features no women of color.

Although, 15% of the student body is African American, their curriculum guide does not recommend a single African American artist. Out of the 32 artists, they list only two artists of color.

Although Williamsport's curriculum focus is on exploring universal themes, there are designated entry points containing non-white artists. This is most striking in their year-long units on Self Discovery in Kindergarten, Exploring Imagination in 1st Grade, Inspired by Nature in 3rd Grade, and Art and Artists (from Pennsylvania) in 4th Grade. Each of these themes is explored exclusively with white artists. By solely including white artists the curriculum suggests that white imaginations and white self-discoveries are more worthy of study. This also implies that the only important artists to come out of Pennsylvania have been white. The goal of the 4th grade unit on Pennsylvanian artists is that "students will expand their appreciation for the beauty and history of their state, region and community" (Williamsport Curriculum, n.d., p. 4). However, by excluding artists of color, the document indicates that not every community has "beauty

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1 This version of the Williamsport curriculum was accessed in 2017 and is no longer accessible online. A representative from the district confirmed that they are in the process of revising their curriculum.

and history" worth including, sending a message of inferiority to the students of color who make up 34% of the student body. Artists of color only enter into the Williamsport curriculum during the years with explicit themes on diversity like 2nd grade's unit on Cultural and Community Diversity and 5th grade's Art Through the Ages. Even in the 5th grade historical unit, Egypt is the only non-white culture they instruct teachers to study. The stated goal here is to explore "all civilizations throughout time" (Williamsport Curriculum, n.d., p. 5), but their omission of non-white civilizations implies value judgment about whose cultures contribute to the progress of civilization. Depicting the advancement of history as led by white cultures marginalizes non-white artists and equates the story of human progress with the story of whiteness.

Similar to the curriculum documents examined in O'Rourke's study, Williamsport relegates non-white art and artists to "neatly fenced-off areas…correlated with essentialist systems of representation…that do not convey the diverse artistic practices within these cultures" (O'Rourke, 2018, p. 214). This partitioning marks them as different and may lead students to surmise that the artists studied during these years are somehow "other," rendering them deviant from the "normative points of reference" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 28). This view of non-white artists as outside of the norm is emphasized during the 2nd grade unit on Cultural and Community Diversity which contains three artists (including the only two non-white artists) and has the stated goal that "students will discover how art is influenced by cultural differences" (Williamsport Curriculum, n.d., p. 2). The implication here is that culture is possessed exclusively by non-white communities leaving whiteness to exist outside of a marked cultural space studied every other year and thereby remaining unexamined. This location of culture outside of white bodies is reinforced by the inclusion of Betty La Duke, a white artist whose subjects are exclusively people of color. Here non-white cultures and bodies can be mimicked and possessed by white artists without substantively critiquing power or legacies of colonization. This suggests a surface-level approach to understanding the influences of cultural differences in art that does not challenge students' worldview or make whiteness visible.

The strength of this curriculum is Williamsport's desire to investigate larger themes like self-conceptions, relationships to nature, and local artists. However, in exploring these topics, they uphold racial divisions and hierarchies by utilizing an approach to multiculturalism that positions students as anthropologists and ethnic tourists (Delacruz, 1996) and engages with culture in ways that cognitively separate students from the artists of color they study. This separation is achieved by locating culture outside of white body leaving whiteness to represent the unmarked normative body against

which deviations can be measured (Wynter, 2006). This is further emphasized by including artists of color only in limited categories based on essentialized understandings of race, while presenting a robust view of white art and culture. The Williamsport curriculum also does not name a single African American artist and therefore misses opportunities to acknowledge the assets found in students' heritage and culture (Acuff, 2015).

Granite, Utah

The Granite school district in Utah is a suburb near a large city where over half the students (57%) receive free or reduced lunch. Granite reports a majority of its students are white (64%), with 25% of students identifying as Hispanic and around 3% of students identifying as Black, Pacific Islander, or Asian. The Granite Visual Art Curriculum Map (2013) is 24 pages long (four pages for each grade) and is broken down into nine sections each quarter detailing individual units of study, additional resources, and accompanying images. Sections contain key concepts, skills, standards, objectives, lesson ideas, and assessment options. The Granite curriculum emphasizes the elements of art and gives little attention to thematic connections. This is evidenced through the organization of each semester by the basic elements of shape, line, color, and texture. In fact, these four art elements are studied over and over again at the same time each year with increasing depth. Themes are not a centerpiece of this curriculum, and many of the concepts, skills, and suggested activities focus on a mastery of these repeated elements. Art historical movements and specific artists are referenced throughout and the suggested activities engage with these artists in relation to their use of the elements by prompting students to identify color schemes in artwork (3rd grade) or to practice drawing various lines (1st grade). This curriculum suggests 33 artists, of which only two are artists of color (both African American) and a single female artist [Table 1].

Table 1: Demographic breakdown of suggested artists

District	Male Artists	Female Artists	White Artists	Black Artists	Latino/ Hispanic Artists	Asian Artists	Native American Artists	Total Artists
Williamsport	26 (81%)	6 (19%)*	30 (94%)	0	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	0	32
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Spring Valley	85 (79%)	23 (21%)*	88 (81%)	10 (9%)	4 (4%)	1 (1%)	5 (5%)	108

*Women of color fit into multiple categories and are counted in both their gender and racial category. Williamsport has 1 Latina artist, Spring Valley has 2 Black females, 2 Native American females, and 2 Latina artists, Granite features no women of color.

In a district made up of 25% Hispanic students, Granite did not mention any Hispanic artists.

In 3rd grade they include Indigenous art in a unit on petroglyphs. The curriculum authors contextualize the art by suggesting books about ancient Indigenous art. However, over the course of six years the curricula never advises that students learn the name of Indigenous tribes or artists. Additionally, the projects during this unit suggest students "create personal petroglyphs using charcoal or chalk on flat rocks" and "make a pinch or slab pot out of clay and use Native American designs to decorate" (3rd grade Granite Visual Art, 2013, p. 1). This approach to multiculturalism engages in what Delacruz calls "cultural consumption" which "relegates the artistic and symbolic expressions of unfamiliar or exotic peoples to the status of recreational cultural consumables" and trivializes non-white cultures turning their art into "anthropological specimens and aesthetic curiosities" (Delacruz, 1996, p. 91). In this curriculum, Granite depicts Native American culture as primitive, antiquated, and easy to mimic thereby removing it from the vital contemporary concerns of Indigenous artists today. In this way, Indigenous art is portrayed as stagnant and stuck in the past, while students continue to learn about white artists over the course of many centuries who grow, progress, invent, discover, and push boundaries into the 21st century. This sets up a comparison portraying Indigenous artists as static and irrelevant and white artists as innovative and progressive.

Despite attempts to add cultural context, Granite still devalues the spiritual meaning of sacred objects by distorting their intended purpose through imitation (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001). This mimicry and the racial (and gendered) hierarchy they preserve through their choice of artists perpetuate a level of cultural engagement that is shallow and often characterized by reproducing cultural and racial divisions. Additionally, Granite's Hispanic population (25% of the student body) is left out of the curriculum, sending a message of inferiority and missing opportunities to engage with their cultural wealth and contributions to art history.

Spring Valley, Florida

Spring Valley[2] is a school district in a coastal city with an aging middle to upper class population. The Spring Valley school district is majority white (59%), with 19% of students identifying as Hispanic or Latino, 16% Black, and 2% Asian. The *Spring Valley County Schools ART Curriculum Map* (2015) provides 61 pages of curriculum for every grade level totaling 366 pages for all six years combined. Each grade-specific curriculum begins with the yearly focus and list goals, which repeat verbatim every year. They also provide two artists that teachers should focus on annually. Every grade level includes an extensive

2 This district requested a pseudonym, therefore no citations referencing the curriculum are provided here.

list of the elements and principles of design paired with suggested textbook images. Months are broken down to designate specific focal artists paired with biographical information and helpful websites. Each quarter of the map includes essential questions, dates of important community art events, visual art standards, and suggested academic vocabulary. The Spring Valley Curriculum Map is markedly distinct from Williamsport and Granite. Not only is it extensively longer and more in depth, but they also pay closer attention to the identity of the artists they suggest. Over the course of kindergarten through 5th grade they suggest 108 different artists, 23 (21%) of which are female, and 20 (19%) are artists of color [Table 1].

Table 1: Demographic breakdown of suggested artists

District	Male Artists	Female Artists	White Artists	Black Artists	Latino/ Hispanic Artists	Asian Artists	Native American Artists	Total Artists
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*Women of color fit into multiple categories and are counted in both their gender and racial category. Williamsport has 1 Latina artist, Spring Valley has 2 Black females, 2 Native American females, and 2 Latina artists, Granite features no women of color.

In addition to explicitly highlighting more diverse artists, they also feature artists of color repeatedly; in fact their most frequently suggested artist is African American painter, Jacob Lawrence [Table 2]

Table 2: Most suggested artists across districts

Artist	Williamsport	Granite	Spring Valley
Alexander Calder	1	1	4
Mary Cassatt	2	0	0
Paul Cezanne	0	2	1
Dale Chihuly	0	0	3
M.C. Escher	0	2	1
Wassily Kandinsky	1	1	3
Jacob Lawrence	0	1	9
Henri Matisse	1	2	4
Joan Miro	1	1	4
Piet Mondrian	1	0	3
Claude Monet	1	1	4
Henry Moore	0	0	3
Grandma Moses	2	0	1
Georgia O'Keeffe	1	0	5
Pablo Picasso	2	3	3
Faith Ringgold	0	0	3
Henri Rousseau	3	1	1
Vincent Van Gogh	2	2	7

*Female Artists are underlined
**Artists of Color are Italicized

Spring Valley's curriculum outlines specific artists to study weekly and details the "culture" of each artist. For white, male artists like Wassily Kandinsky, they give specific context about his culture and

the art movements he is involved with saying that he was "Russian" and associated with "Expressionism/ German Expressionism/Blue Rider" (Spring Valley Kindergarten, 2015, p. 15). We see this same depth of identity context with other white male artists like Paul Klee listed as "German born, Swiss" and associated with "Expressionism/ Surrealism/German Expressionism/Blaue Reiter/ Bauhaus" (Spring Valley Kindergarten, 2015, p. 15). This specificity is lacking when artists of color and/or female artists are featured. In Spring Valley non-dominant artists often are deprived of their place-specific cultural context or they are untethered from the art movements situating them in the canon of art history. For example, white artist Louis Comfort Tiffany is specifically linked to a city listing "Amer. + Orlando" while Japanese printmaker, Katshushika Hokusai, is deprived of the context of his country and regional community listing him only as "Asian" (Spring Valley 4th grade, 2015, pp. 15-16). For Jacob Lawrence (their most cited artist) they list his culture as "African American" and his associated movements as "Mixed Stories" (Spring Valley 2nd Grade, 2015, p. 11). Here again they include his race as a stand in for his cultural and community identity while omitting place-specific ties to regions and artistic movements that are important to understanding his work during the Harlem Renaissance in New York City. Whiteness is not made visible in these cultural labels, white artists are never named as white making whiteness the hegemonic norm as "unmarked humanity is white" (Trouillot, 1995, p. 81).

What does it mean for Jacob Lawrence to be the most talked about artist in Spring Valley (suggested nine times), but for the Harlem Renaissance to be omitted from his story? Does this reflect an authentic inclusion of his work and the ideas informing his practice, or a tokenized surface-level insertion? In the Spring Valley curriculum non-dominant artists are more likely to lack an anchor to a specific art movement. Of the seven non-dominant featured artists, six lack art movement classifications and/or cultural labels. This disparity is striking because it shows that even when non-dominant artists are included they may still be stripped of ties to their communities and art movements thus distorting the meaning of their work and removing it from the larger narrative of art history.

Spring Valley's curriculum is ambitious, detailed, and contains extensive resources. Its strength is in its clear appreciation of art history and a desire to include diverse artists throughout. However, Spring Valley still provides only shallow and decontextualized engagement with the sociocultural issues affecting the artists of color they include. This suggests a level of cultural engagement that prompts students to appreciate cultural artifacts without reflecting on their own identity or privilege. Dipti Desai (2000) claims that this type of cultural representation flattens and essentializes as it "overlooks the politics of location and positionality" presenting only a partial

truth (p. 114). Maintaining the separation of art from the cultural, ideological, historical, and political processes that inform it may in fact perpetuate violence as it attempts to be inclusive (Desai, 2000).

Discussion

Each district involves diverse artists only in shallow ways that do not reveal or disrupt whiteness thus contributing to the social reproduction of racism (Alden, 2001). Although Spring Valley and Granite make attempts to move towards inclusivity, their flattened and tokenized inclusions enact the very oppressions they attempt to disrupt (Desai, 2000). Critiques of power and attention to the sociocultural contexts of artists and their communities are notably absent across each of these documents illustrating a benign and a-political multiculturalism (Delacruz, 1996).

Across all three curricula, whiteness is linked with progress. This is exemplified most in the cases of Granite and Williamsport, which contain minimal artists of color compared to robust narratives of white civilization, including lessons focusing on Greek and Roman art, Medieval and Renaissance art, Early (white) American art, Modern art, and Contemporary white artists. Telling the story of human progress through the advances of white cultures establishes a hierarchy upholding the myth of white progress that situates white culture as dominant and relegates cultures unable "to fit within the dominant ideal" to the margins (Alden, 2001, pp. 36-37). As in O'Rourke's (2018) study, "these discursive practices reproduce the idea of an imagined white racial identity, through a story or 'grand narrative' that describes them as a unified social group" (p. 213). Presenting this lineage of great white artists as the norm creates a dichotomy with curricular portrayals of non-white cultures that seem stuck in time and irrelevant to the flow of artistic progress. When students in Granite learn about Indigenous art, they are fixated on ancient petroglyphs, and when Williamsport students study Egypt, they look only at ancient Egyptian art. While these ancient and traditional works are important, they should not represent the majority of non-white/non-western art studied. This creates a stagnant view of artists of color that contrasts with the vibrant and relevant work of highlighted white artists, creating a racial hierarchy that may "hinder the development of a positive self concept" for students of color (Alden, 2001, p. 27).

The narrative of white progress is also upheld through curricular organization dictating when/how they include non-white artists. In Williamsport and Granite we see inclusions relegated to specific entry points promoting racial divisions and affirming the status of artists of color as "other" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Artists of color are most often included during lessons on global art, folk art, or ancient

art implying white supremacy through suggesting that American artists, "fine" artists, and Contemporary artists are mostly white. This tendency is also seen in Spring Valley where artists of color are decontextualized and untethered from the canon of art history while hyper-contextualizing the importance of white male artists. Including artists of color without explicit links to their community context and failing to critically examine the "root causes" of oppression makes race/racism an issue that only concerns people of color and prevents white students from recognizing their own bodies as raced subjects (Urrieta, 2004).

Towards Anti-Oppressive Art Education

How might we reform curriculum to make whiteness and power visible? Kevin Kumashiro (2000) argues that in order to truly make invisible power dynamics visible educators should incorporate knowledge that disrupts student assumptions. According to Kumashiro, these moments of disruption can cause students to enter into a crisis where they become "unstuck" as they question their assumptions and reflect on their role in oppressive systems made visible (2000, p. 44). The visual arts are a rich space to take up Kumashiro's project of anti-oppression because of arts' power to "break through the crust of conventionalized and routine consciousness" (Dewey, 1954, p. 86). Art education scholars suggest harnessing this power in a range of interlocking methods that can move our practice towards addressing whiteness, oppression, and inequities through art curriculum and pedagogy. These approaches include using counter-stories to critique the master narrative of white progress (Knight, 2006), providing space to acknowledge and critique oppressions and inequities (Acuff, 2015), and reflecting on our positionality as educators while attending to the perspectives of our students (Acuff, 2015; Desai, 2000; Kraehe, 2010). An art curriculum and accompanying pedagogy integrating these three strands has the potential to disrupt whiteness as the hegemonic norm.

The first strand for disrupting white supremacy in curriculum is to use counter-stories to "rupture the storylines" of the master narrative (Langer-Osuna & Nasir, 2016, p. 731). Counter-stories flip the perspective of the master narrative to challenge its legitimacy (Delgado, 1989). Contemporary artists like Fred Wilson, The Guerilla Girls, and Kehinde Wiley create visual counter-stories by talking back to histories based on stereotypes and oppression. These artists use tools like appropriation, layering, and juxtaposition to expose and critique the biased perspective of the canonical master narratives. Williamsport could prompt students to question the master narrative by juxtaposing white artist Betty LaDuke's depiction of smiling Black field workers (included in 2nd Grade) with a counter-story by Latina artist Ester Hernandez whose *Sun Mad* prints criticize

conflict-free representations of migrant workers' labor conditions. Granite's curriculum could gain a deeper understanding of Native American art and sociocultural context by including Indigenous artists like Nicholas Galanin or Wendy Red Star in addition to ancient petroglyphs to have deeper conversations about how Indigenous identity is constructed in American society. Using visual counter-stories in this way can "reveal the very bones and skeletons of domination, re-cast the workings of subordination, and re-tell the history of how things came to be" (Harris, Carney, & Fine 2001, p. 14). In this way counter-stories are both creative and destructive and move curriculum from essentializing culture to exploring larger thematic concerns across cultures and time periods (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004).

The second strand builds on counter storytelling to acknowledge and discuss issues of oppression and inequity in classrooms. Introducing the disruptive knowledge of counter-stories into curriculum can be intimidating because it signals a moment of crisis and unknowability when white students and teachers may "realize their constructions of selves were perforated with lies" (Marx, 2006, p. 149). Grappling with disruptive knowledge in the classroom is unpredictable and as educators we are often taught to "[equate] learning with control" and treat "any condition of uncertainty…as a threat" (Britzman, 1986, pp. 449-451). Therefore a move towards curriculum that questions white supremacy must correspond with rethinking our teacher preparation programs to equip teachers to have conversations that may be uncomfortable.

Embracing an anti-oppressive curriculum also involves a third strand grounded in vulnerability and reflexivity as we learn alongside our students and challenge oppression and inequity using art as a "terrain of defamiliarization" (hooks, 1995, p. 5). This requires white art educators to "unravel" our own complicity in oppression as a continuous process of learning and unlearning (De Lissovoy, 2010, p. 419). This reflexivity should extend to our students as we consider their needs and perspectives. How can art educators strike the appropriate balance between disrupting racist assumptions while giving space for students of color to process and heal from the "psychic wounds inflicted by assault from the forces of imperialist, racist, and sexist domination" (hooks, 1995, p. 5)? How can we cite violence without being violent? Reforming our curriculum in this way needs to go beyond discussions of principles of design and aesthetics. It may require a new vocabulary (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004).

To envision what this might look like we can turn to resources offered by museums, critical art education scholars and community arts organizations invested in moving this conversation forward. The educator resource page for PBS's Art 21 contains guides that

investigate themes through prompts exploring diverse contemporary artists and art making across cultures. Dipti Desai and Graeme Chalmers (2007) give ideas for inquiry driven lessons featuring contemporary artists approaching sociocultural issues from different perspectives. In *Art as History, History as Art* the authors provide historical artifacts to pair with contemporary artworks to question the master narrative through critical dialogue grounded in observation and inquiry (Desai, Hammlin, &, Mattson, 2010). Classroom teachers can also take steps to examine their district curricula for underpinnings of white supremacy and amend their lessons to include counter-stories, address sociocultural issues relevant to the lives of their students and the artists they study, and engage in a meaningful process of critical reflexivity.

Conclusion

This research has implications for art educators at all levels. Curricula upholding racial hierarchies and divisions must be rewritten to critically address the narratives they reproduce. Until these revisions occur, art educators need to consider ways to provide the context and counter-stories the curriculum lacks. While the scope of this study is small, it does suggest that districts often use culture to affirm white supremacy rather than challenge it. This does not implicate all district curricula, but it suggests we need to attend to the ways multiculturalism is included in these documents. Analyzing curricula sheds light on district priorities and values, but it does not tell us what art teachers do with these guidelines. While the district may control the written curriculum, it is up to teachers to make choices about how to apply these directives as curriculum-in-use (Cornbleth, 1985). Teachers have agency to navigate this space between written curriculum and curriculum-in-use in order to "fill in the gaps left by the curriculum" (Ellsworth, 2017, p. 7). More research should be done to examine how teachers enact multicultural curriculum to address whiteness in their classrooms.

It is up to each of us to decide how we can unravel the systems of white lies we are caught up in. As individual teachers, district leaders, policy makers, and curriculum developers, we are all accountable to disrupt white supremacy where we can. As Peggy McIntosh (1988) argues, once we see whiteness and power functioning in and through us, we are "newly accountable" to act on this knowledge (p. 292). It is not enough for our curricula to include diverse artists; we need to develop a curriculum that is actively anti-racist. We cannot shield our students from a world built on inequity, but we can provide them the tools to disrupt, challenge, and unravel it in their own hearts and communities.

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A Museum in Progress: The Practice of White Accompliceship with African Exhibitions

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ABSTRACT

Beginning in the late 19th century, museums were places where the "exotic" was shared with White wealthy visitors. These objects were often from various non-European countries and acquired through illicit means. Still today, art museums display these same confiscated objects to a mostly White audience. But as we seek to ensure that complex stories of African cultural objects are shared, museum staff are asking tough questions that push administration to disrupt a paternalistic White supremacist framework that shapes what many museums exhibit and what audiences' exhibitions cater to. The Columbus Museum of Art (CMA) in Columbus, Ohio is working to critique this framework as they shape their identity as a "Museum in Progress." For CMA, to be a "Museum in Progress" is to embark on an iterative, research-centered, and inquisitive journey that intertwines personal convictions, biases, and the professional duty to operationalize self-reflection for themselves and visitors.

Keywords: museums, white privilege, ally, accomplice, African art, decolonize, art

Art museums are institutions that preserve collections of artifacts and creative works that hold cultural, artistic, and historical significance. Such institutions often have a mission to share these important works with the public through permanent collections or temporary exhibitions. From the late 1800s to the early 1900s American art museums modelled themselves after European art museums establishing large collections of artwork (Mayer, 1998). By the early 1900s United States art museums were places where the artifacts and arts works from Black and Brown communities was shared with White wealthy audiences (Berzock & Clarke, 2011). These objects were often from various non-European countries and acquired by European colonialists as trophies of their conquests (Karp & Lavine, 1991). Still today, museums display these same confiscated objects to a mostly White audience (Farrell & Medvedeva, 2010; Kini, 2018). But as we seek to ensure that complex stories of African cultural objects are shared, museum staff are asking tough questions that

push administration to disrupt a paternalistic White supremacist framework. It is a framework that highlights Eurocentric culture through an othering of non-Eurocentric cultures (Morrison, 1992) ultimately shaping the content of museums exhibitions (Crum & Hendrick, 2018). How can social justice oriented museum leaders create opportunities to challenge stereotypical notions of works created by African people? How might these leaders encourage museum administration, who uphold policies that result in African cultural erasure, without upsetting those who control their employment? How do we respectfully give honor to diverse and complex African ideas, culture, and values without romanticizing and essentializing them? How can museum leaders highlight and challenge the contradictory practices of ahistoricizing and homogenizing racial or ethnic groups while valuing the individual and the unique (Morton, n.d.)? How can museum staff and administration honor African cultures and values with which they don't identify?

Challenging Eurocentric narratives imposed on African and African descended people within museums is not new. In 1992, Fred Wilson's *Mining the Museum* was an exhibition of archives and resources from the Maryland Historical Society in The Contemporary. Wilson addressed the history of White violence against Black and Brown bodies historically suppressed by museums across the globe. In particular, Wilson unveils how museums are institutions that uses its cultural power to impact who is or isn't represented and whose history is silenced and whose is not. In his exhibition, Wilson made commentary on power and white supremacy by juxtaposing artifacts, like a silver teapot with iron shackles. He placed a Klan hood in an antique baby carriage, presented a whipping post encircled by Victorian furniture, and took carved nineteenth-century cigar store Indian sculptures and positioned them in a way that turned their backs on the viewer to face photographs of Native Americans. Wilson's curation initiates a revisionist dialogue that makes America's institutional racism and museums' history of cultural bias conspicuous (Corrin, 1994; Wilson & Halle, 1993). *Mining the Museum* was a new presentation of history that required a collaborative effort with other artists, community historians, volunteers, and museum staff. It set a precedent for subverting a White elitist narrative about nonwhite people and challenged the ideological boundaries of the museum as a space of shared societal values.

The Columbus Museum of Art (CMA) in Columbus, Ohio, is continuing Wilson's legacy as they shape their identity as a

"Museum in Progress." For CMA, to be a "Museum in Progress" is to embark on an iterative, research-centered, and inquisitive journey that intertwines personal convictions, biases, and the professional duty to operationalize self-reflection for themselves and visitors. It systematizes institutional policies that use exhibitions and community partnerships to critique and discuss issues such as the misrepresentation of race and ethnicity in powerful cultural institutions that impact contemporary society. I found CMA's journey to be intriguing and notable. As a diversity practitioner, researcher, and artist, I have a long-standing partnership with CMA and have been involved in many of their community-building initiatives. This relationship created an opportunity to talk with staff members as they made the shift to reframe their museum practices.

In what follows are the challenges, successes, and strategies pulled from the initiatives of three CMA staff members: Cindy Foley, Executive Deputy Director of Learning and Experience; Hannah Mason-Macklin, Manager of Interpretation and Engagement; and Daniel Marcus, Roy Lichtenstein Curatorial Fellow. They were the temporary exhibition team for CMA's donated African cultural objects. As two individuals who identify as White and one as biracial with Black lived experiences, they tasked themselves with challenging how White supremacy manifests in exhibition practices. Their efforts occurred in the midst of an international conversation on colonial theft of African objects housed in European and American collections (150th anniversary, 2018; Haughin, 2018; Maclean, 2018). The goals of this article is to support museum education professors who shape forward-thinking students, offer recommendations for practicing museum educators to question their practices of cultural erasure, and encourage museum administrators to support their employees in embracing more inclusive practices while interrogating how White supremacy manifests.

Accomplice vs. Ally

In order for White people to interrogate White supremacy, it is important that they determine if their actions align with being an ally or accomplice. I argue that an ally is a person who responds with empathy to injustices inflicted on the marginalized. They don't simply lament over those affected. Rather, allies identify with marginalized people's inherent human value, respect their perspectives, and see non-dominant people's lives as congruent to theirs. Allies listen to learn, connect, and build relationships. They educate themselves on social, economic, and political issues that affect non-dominant

communities, and are open to being uncomfortable when faced with the possibility that they (knowingly or unknowingly) are implicated in systems and institutions of oppression. Allies don't seek to save the marginalized, judge, become defensive when their motives are questioned, or believe that their amicable disposition will make racism, sexism, classism, or any other form of oppression dissipate. Allies understand that to operate out of ignorance is to collude with systemic oppressive structures that negatively impact the lives of marginalized communities. However, there are other uses of the term ally.

For example, Wendy Ng , Syrus Marcus Ware and Alyssa Greenberg (2017) make the distinction between museums being allies and engaging in diversity work. For them, diversity work takes the form of community engagement activities towards certain cultural groups or hiring initiatives, but maintain practices that do not critique "hidden problematic power dynamics" that perpetuate "privilege by excluding or disempowering visitors with marginalized identities" (Ng, Ware & Greenberg, 2017, p.143). As museum educators, they are interested in collaboratively implementing anti-oppressive work environments, programming, and inclusive exhibition content from a social justice perspective (Ng, Ware & Greenberg, 2017, p. 143-144).

I am in agreement with their position, however, I am interested in language and behavior that implies a higher level of accountability to, cooperation with, and sacrifice for marginalized groups. Colleen Clemens (2017) discusses the differences between ally and accomplice with a focus on how and with whom that individual is advocating:

> An ally will mostly engage in activism by standing with an individual or group in a marginalized community. An accomplice will focus more on dismantling the structures that oppress that individual or group— and such work will be directed by the stakeholders in the marginalized group. Simply, ally work focuses on individuals, and accomplice work focuses on the structure of decision-making agency (para. 4).

To be an accomplice is to move beyond identifying with a non-dominant group. I argue there is an important, yet limited form of allyship that includes a physical display of allegiance to a marginalized group such as wearing safety-pins (Qamar, 2017) and *Black Lives Matter* shirts (Jaschik, 2016). This type of allegiance can exist in silence, resulting in spectator solidarity. Accompliceship

cannot. Though listening to and learning from marginalized people are important, it can leave one stagnate, seeking to satiate feelings of social justice ineptness, instead of understanding allyship as one option in creating lasting impact. For the accomplice the silence is deafening. The connections to marginalized people are so strong that accomplices find themselves unable to unsee the oppressive structures that impact the lives of non-dominant communities.

Although, accomplice is often linked to breaking the law, my intent is not to make a direct link to extralegal behavior. Rather, I seek to use a term that encompasses the idea of an assiduous partnership battling the status quo. Being an accomplice means to work towards undoing oppressive systems while standing *with* and not *in place of* marginalized people. Accompliceship requires the sacrifice of one's time, talent, and/or treasure with the focused goal of deconstructing systemic oppressive barriers, actions and policies within one's sphere of influence. These spheres are often spaces in which marginalized people don't have the same access (historically or contemporarily). To be an accomplice is to identify oppressive policies, and procedures and use one's sphere of influence to undo (incrementally to massively) those systems. Ideally, an accomplice is able to gain enough individual or collective power to hold those in power accountable for their transgressions. An accomplice requires equitable adjustments and considerations for marginalized groups who may not be physically present. They also seek to ensure a holistic representation and interpretation of marginalized cultures' ideas, and that values are not compromised. It can be difficult for allies or accomplices to operate alone. Therefore in order to create sustained systems that deconstruct oppressive barriers, it's best to integrate opportunities for people to reflect, question, and learn.

Museums, *Black Panther* and Colonization

CMA is a visitor-centered museum dedicated to creating inclusive experiences that connect people to art by facilitating art-making projects, encouraging conversations, and supporting proactive engagement with individuals and organizations outside of the museum. With financial support from a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, CMA launched two engagement initiatives. First, the Center for Creativity is a designated space where visitors can immerse themselves in themes, experiments, and hands-on activities in connection to their gallery experiences. Second, the Center for Art and Social Engagement is a shift from tangible exploration of artistic materials to investigating the

complexity of social and emotional issues embedded in objects' historical contexts (Lehe, 2018). CMA seeks to be a space where visitors, artists and community partners reflect on their lives, respond to their environments, challenge how the museum determines cultural validity, make connections between colonialism and how current injustices manifest in museum practices, and explore how the museum can practice accompliceship by using art as a tool for constructive critical dialogue. One impetus that pushed museums into a public critical conversation regarding acquisitions of works was Marvel Comics' international cinematic sensation, *Black Panther* (2018).

Black Panther is a science-fiction re-imagining of an African existence unencumbered by European-imposed slavery or colonialism. Through the high-tech, fictitious African country of Wakanda, movie-goers were able to experience a chimeric restoration of culture, history, and identity. Nonetheless, the film presents the museum as a global institution that serves "as an illegal mechanism of colonialism" (Haughin, 2018). For example, a scene in the film presents Killmonger, the *Black Panther's* antagonist, in a British museum confronting a White female museum representative regarding how colonial theft was the means by which the museum acquired his Wakandan ancestral artifacts in their current exhibition. After the museum director approaches Killmonger to share information about the encased African artifacts, he shares with her that the piece was taken by British soldiers in Benin, but it's from Wakanda. Kilmonger reveals his plan to take the artifact created by is Wakandan ancestors. The woman states that the artifact isn't for sale. Then, Killmonger asks the questions that are the foundation for the colonial theft debate, "How do you think your ancestors got these? Do you think they paid a fair price? Or did they take it… like they took everything else?" (Cascone, 2018).

Black Panther ushered in a centuries-long international fight onto the popular culture stage. For example, Ethiopians have sought the return of hundreds of items including manuscripts, tabots, crosses, necklaces, drums, amulets, and Emperor Tewodros' clothes stolen by the British military during the Battle of Maqdala of 1868 (150th anniversary, 2018). Since 1872 requests have been made to the British and Italian governments to return items such as A Kebre Negest (Book of Kings), a silver crown, and the Axum obelisk that were all seized during the Ethiopia's invasion in 1935-1936 (150th anniversary, 2018). However, the British government has denied most of Ethiopia's requests for the restitution of these objects. "According

to the Association For the Return of the Maqdala Ethiopian Treasures, only 10 of the 468 items known to have been seized at Maqdala have been returned" (Codrea-Rado, 2018, para.8). In 2018, The Victoria and Albert Museum in the United Kingdom responded to Ethiopia's request by agreeing to a long-term loan of the stolen objects. However, such an agreement allows for the objects to maintain European ownership and does not guarantee that the treasures are returned permanently.

Restitution efforts have also been made in Australia and throughout West Africa. Rodney Kelly, a sixth-generation descendent of indigenous Australian warriors, requested the return of the Gweagal shield, as well as other Aboriginal artifacts from the British Museum in October of 2016 (Voon, 2017). On June 21, 2014, Britain returned two of the hundreds of Benin Empire bronze artworks stolen from Nigeria by the British Army in 1897 (Cascone, 2014; Plaucheur, 2019). In July 2016, lawmakers and civil society groups from Benin and France sent an open letter to French President François Hollande requesting the return of an estimated 6,000 objects stolen from the ancient kingdom of Dahomey, by colonizers and missionaries (Buffenstein, 2017). As a result, restoring items to their countries of origin may be forthcoming.

During a 2017 trip to Burkina Faso, newly elected French President Emmanuel Macron told University of Ouagadougou students that the return of African artifacts will become "a top priority" for France during the next five years" (Codrea-Rado, 2017, para. 1). "I cannot accept that a large part of the cultural heritage of several African countries is in France…(Maclean, 2018, para. 4) African heritage can't just be in European private collections and museums" (Codrea-Rado, 2017, para. 2) His statement and subsequent commission report (Maclean, 2018) may encourage an international increase in restitution efforts. As some politicians are considering their role in these efforts, some museums are reigniting conversations of cultural affiliation and repatriation of objects (Schillaci & Bustard, 2010) that critically question their duty to the objects, cultures represented, and history often ignored.

Museums are institutions that historically uphold upper-class Eurocentric belief systems and exclude non-White experiences and oppositions to this narrow codified perspective. As artist Deborah Roberts states, "Black Panther's museum scene describes a centuries-old truth — colonialists robbing Black culture to put on display for European consumption" (Ragbir, 2018, para 5). Thus, museums

seeking to redefine their purpose through a social justice lens have an opportunity to push a national discourse about how museums can be spaces of racist institutionalized socialization. By participating in limiting the narratives of Africans, museums are complicit in a form of cultural colonization that mimics the trauma inflicted on the countries where the artifacts were taken and replicates that trauma through erasure. *Black Panther* provided an opportunity for conversations about colonial theft, identity, and wealth to spread among museums, to move beyond its walls and reshape attitudes and strategies for creating equitable learning spaces.

CMA begins the work of accompliceship

Whiteness is not a portrayal indicative of all people who identify with European ancestry. Rather, Whiteness is a manufactured concept that influences our social, political, and emotional ways of being. Whiteness is the homogenization of European ethnicities whose definition is reliant upon the dilution of and deleterious characterization of Black identities (Crum, 2010). To be grounded in Whiteness is to be grounded in an identity that rests on a pedestal of oppression. To sustain the dominant monolithic conceptualization of Whiteness, one must discount the ways in which Black people think of and present themselves within Black communities, the ways Black people conceptualize themselves outside of the constraints of the White imagination, and how Blacks openly or discreetly oppose stereotypical caricatures (Crum, 2010). The concept of Whiteness cannot exist without inauthenticity and the inherent disposition of supremacy.

A White ally or accomplice can display pride in their ethnicity, without grounding their self-worth in believing that European ancestry means they are inherently better, should have greater access to systems and institutions, or should have their perspective valued over others who do not identify as White. Those invested in Whiteness ignore how the concept creates and sustains oppressive structures and practices because nothing has required them to acknowledge it. Or, they deliberately ignore the oppression Whiteness causes because to implicate themselves in a construct they benefit from, but didn't create, renders them feeling defensive or helpless. A White accomplice understands that to have the option to ignore oppression is a benefit of White supremacy because marginalized people are rarely able to opt out of oppression. Therefore, White accomplices use their privilege to challenge other White people who choose to invest in Whiteness and create spaces for people outside

of the non-dominant group to lead and be heard (DiAngelo, 2018; Lipstiz, 1998).

Thus, when we investigate the effects of Whiteness in museums showcasing African art, it is imperative to ask: How do we disinvest in the White-Black racial binary used to erroneously define each other? How do we challenge Whiteness by questioning language, and information used in exhibitions that feature non-White subjects? Is the institutional Eurocentric perspective voice the loudest? How accessible are other voices? How are our life experiences, however limited or vast, determining the language used in the exhibition?

 These questions create a reflective exhibition development process that centers non-dominant voices. This new centering practice allows for museum curators, visitors and museum educators to interrogate Whiteness and hold ourselves accountable for perpetuating it while making room for us to reframe silenced identities as powerful, valuable, and necessary. It requires us to build community relationships, engage in self-reflection, and critically think about how information allows for authentic interactions with the objects and the histories that envelope them. As a result, we are able to learn to question why what we've been socialized to believe counts as knowledge.

Figure 1. The gallery where the Floch exhibition was held

In 2018, CMA acquired several West African artifacts from the daughter of Austrian painter Josef Floch. The collection consists of carved figures and objects from various African cultures such as the

Bamana, Senufo, Baule, and Dan, produced in countries including Mali, Ivory Coast, and Liberia (Mason-Macklin, 2018). As a stipulation of CMA's acquisition, the donor required the works be displayed. In the midst of administrative shifts and lack of museum staff, the duty to create the exhibition was left to Hannah (Visitor Engagement Coordinator) and Daniel (Roy Lichtenstein Curatorial Fellow) with support from Cindy Foley (Executive Deputy Director of Learning and Experience).[1] Hannah's supervisor recently left the museum and Daniel was a new fellow whose formal obligations were still being determined. Both were interested in supporting the exhibition, yet neither was well-versed in African history, nor did CMA have an Africanist on staff to contextualize the art works.

The time constraints made it difficult for the CMA to prepare for the exhibition and the remaining staff was responsible for focusing on other areas within the museum. It wasn't until they saw the film *Black Panther* that they recognized an opportunity to integrate the Center for Art and Social Engagement's mission in the exhibition. The Killmonger scene in *Black Panther* and the international demands of stolen works created an opportunity for reflection. Hannah, Daniel, and Cindy were confronted with a White imperialist reframing of the museum, had the conviction to acknowledge historical wrongs, felt obligated to display the Josef Floch Memorial Collection of West African works, and experienced some serendipity which created the apex for Hannah, Daniel, and Cindy to explore how museums can use African artworks to critique the Eurocentric lens through which art is often interpreted.

Many art museums have elements of white supremacy power structures within its institutional practices that rely on a Western-centric art history canon to assign value to non-European art (D'Souza & Mackie, 2018; Topaz, Klingenberg, Turek, Heggeseth, Harris, Blackwood, Chavoya, Nelson & Murphy, 2019). Intimately aware of these systems, the exhibition team applied their critiques of the museum and themselves. For Cindy, the exhibition helped her forge stronger relationships with community members already affiliated with the museum and expanded her reach to developing new relationships with other community members. These relationships work to hold her more accountable in executing inclusive and equitable educational opportunities for staff and visitors (Foley & Mason-Macklin, 2018; Foley, Mason-Macklin, & Marcus, 2018). Cindy is a White woman who acknowledges her access to privilege and potential blind spots. Thus, she seeks partnerships with honest

1   I interviewed each of the staff members for this publication

and direct, yet caring community members of all ethnicities using critical conversations to deconstruct problematic museum practices.

Hannah sees herself as a "visitor lobbyist" (Foley & Mason-Macklin, 2018; Foley, Mason-Macklin, & Marcus, 2018) who creates the logistics to build relationships between the museum and its audiences. As a biracial woman, Hannah seeks to manage visitors' interpretation and engagement with the museum while asking herself if she might be unknowingly supporting racist museum practices in her role. Due to the shift in administration, which caused limited oversight, Hannah was able to take the lead on the exhibition. She could take more risks to determine how to rectify her internal chasm: How to create more socially just practices in a museum that never instituted such practices with African objects?

To push her thinking, Hannah attended the Museum as Site for Social Action (MASS Action) conference. MASS Action is a three-year initiative at the Minneapolis Institute of Art. It brings together museum practitioners to address equity inside the museum, create relevant programming, increase community engagement, and create inclusive museum practices (Minneapolis Institute of Art). MASS Action gave Hannah the tools to convene a team to re-imagine design, interpretation, and collaborations with outside partners. Those partnerships helped to develop a drop-in gallery engagement, question who were included in and who constructed narratives, determine how visitors could engage with the challenges the museum was grappling with, and investigate what CMA meant by being a "museum in progress." Hannah was able to put her professional development to work with the help of Daniel.

Daniel, a new art history doctoral graduate, joined CMA as the first Roy Lichtenstein Curatorial Fellow. His position as a new non-staff member allowed him to see a disjuncture between the progressive art history discipline he was familiar with and the current museum practices that maintain an elitist Eurocentric narrative. Specifically, he came to the CMA collection seeking to avoid a stereotypical categorization of African art objects. Jacqueline Chanda (1992) argues that when art museums categorize West African art as tribal and primitive, it labels the culture from which the objects derive as unevolved and uncivilized. Using such descriptors has historically and erroneously defined many African societies as homogenous, polytheist, and African artisans as unprofessional instead of classically trained using art-making technology still used today (Chanda, 1992). By being able to see the African objects beyond their

functionality, Daniel was capable of helping to curate an exhibition that sees the objects as functional treasures *and* works of art. He is interested in presenting African objects in a way that challenges us to redefine art. Such a re-presentation requires us to acknowledge the intentional aesthetic properties and social processes connected to their creation and political questions that are important to pose within the works' cultural and historical context. In Daniel's effort to respect the collection and own his positionality as a White man seeking to use his relative power of influence, he helped reframe the problematic reading of ancient African works as the precursor to Western Modernist art. Such purports juxtapose African works to Eurocentric culture in an effort to validate African objects' existence.

Daniel and Hannah collaboratively moved from discussions to operationalizing accompliceship by reshaping practices that were within their spheres of influence. Hannah was responsible for visitor engagement and Daniel focused on curating. Together, they were able to revamp the Exhibition Planning Form[2] (Mason-Macklin, 2018) in order to reinforce CMA's goals of increased diversity, inclusive practices, and promoting creativity. The Exhibition Planning Form is a seven-page document with checklists and questions to ensure that objectives for the targeted exhibition are met. The exhibition teams' desire to unpack and decolonize the White supremacy and racism inherent in how artworks are acquired, discussed, and displayed coalesced in a list of objectives and probing questions: Art can present new stories and new perspectives; art education can deepen the curiosity within visitors; and the exhibition will not be one that can be condescended to. Questions included: What's the big idea we want the exhibition to focus on? How can we (museum staff) facilitate people's experiences with art? These questions drove an increased engagement with the city's African communities and created new questions regarding how various African communities conceptualize the art. They consulted with Columbus-based Togolese artist Talle Bamazi to give historical context and reimagine the exhibition design: "He selected the colors in the gallery to encourage visitors and the spirits of his ancestors to engage with these works of art anew" (Marcus, D. & Mason-Macklin, H. (2018e)

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2 Merilee Mostov (formerly the Director of Inclusive Interpretation at Columbus Museum of Art) originally created the Exhibition Planning Form template before she left CMA. Merliee began systemizing how staff could question the institution practices. Hannah was new to her role during Merilee's transition and continues to update the form.

Figure 2. Bamazi supports CMA in the design on the exhibition

The second partnership CMA formed was with The New African Immigrants Commission. This group advocates for the development and implementation of policies and programs that support Ohio's sub-Saharan African population (The New African Immigrants). After discussing the artworks, the younger members of the organization did not have the same reverential approach to the works as the artist, Bamazi. However, what appeared to be a lack of veneration for the artifacts did not preclude The New African Immigrants members from acknowledging that the museum would be doing their communities a disservice if their cultures are congealed and romanticized. Additionally, CMA encouraged professors, artists and other CMA staff to form "critical friends" to continue open dialogue. Creating "critical friendships" aligns the strengths of partners with the mission of the exhibition and creates cross department and community collaboration methods.

Planning for Visitor Learning Outcome

CMA's feedback from their community partners garnered more questions regarding how to think about the impact of race on museum practices. It was noted that there must be considerations about how we talk about African art, and how we think about ourselves in connection to the art. Although the exhibition is focused on African cultures, the covert yet dominant narratives that shape how we understand the works and those who made

them is embedded in Whiteness. The Exhibition Planning Form included the title of the exhibition, dates, gallery location, and brief exhibition overview. However, there was considerable focus on the interpretation planning and visitor learning outcomes. The interpretation planning begins with the Big Idea written in one complete active sentence. It identifies and limits the content of the exhibition and delineates strategies to execute the big idea. For example, "West African sculptural objects reveal values, beliefs, and practices of the cultures they represent." Supplemental questions include, what will visitors talk and think about, do, question, or make in this exhibition? There were seven suggested outcomes in response to the Big Idea (Marcus & Mason-Macklin, 2018c, p. 3):

> 1) critical thinking (observe, compare, question, reflect, or interpret);
> 2) conversation (talk or write);
> 3) collaboration (work together to make or do something;
> 4) experimentation (play and manipulate materials, their bodies or ideas);
> 5) awareness and curiosity (gain increased awareness and interest);
> 6) imagination (generate new ideas or combinations);
> 7) enjoyment (express joy, pride, or a sense of well being).

Figure 3. Colonial map of Africa in 1878

Three examples of strategies were used to execute the interpretation plan. Each offered an alternative view of African cultural groups, made connections between the objects and contemporary discussions, and highlighted local Africans. First, a color-coded ethnolinguistic map of Africa (a map that identified different African cultures by the languages they speak) is incorporated into the exhibition instead of a map focused on geography. In this way, visitors are encouraged to focus on where cultural groups occupied space prior to the creation of arbitrary colonial country lines. The second strategy is the "Join the Conversation Station."

Figure 4. The Conversation Station

The station is comprised of a vertical board between a set of comfortable chairs with backs on each side. The seating for this area was intentional as to ensure the seating is visitor-centered to encourage prolonged engagement with the works and conversations with other visitors. The goal was to encourage visitors to take their time in the galleries and connect to each other. The board contains an image from the scene with Killmonger in the museum looking at the Wakandan artifacts. There are post-it notes on either side of the image for visitors to respond to writing prompts about museums' current role in colonial theft and visitor reactions to the objects. Third, visitors can engage with local African communities by patronizing African businesses around the city. A Local African Business Directory is provided for all visitors. Next, the arguably more progressive execution of visitor learning outcomes was creating an alternative labeling system for the works.

Figure 5. Visitors engaging with each other at The Conversation Station

Figure 6. Visitors engaging with each other at The Conversation Station

More content, new labels

The exhibition team prioritized creating a variety of opportunities for visitors to be exposed to and contemplate multiple perspectives and voices in the exhibition (Mason-Macklin, 2018). There are two ways the team chose to highlight and challenge how power circulates in and around African works: They recontextualized the donor's relationship with the objects and revamped how works are labelled.

The exhibition text offers less information on the donor and more history on the ways the artworks were obtained.

Figure 7. Exhibition label with map of west African highlighting cultural groups. It also explains how the exhibition questions power, colonization, and gender norms.

An excerpt from the exhibition summary text states*:*

> *What can art do? The artworks that make up the Josef Floch Memorial Collection answer this question in strikingly different ways, channeling powers large and small— curing ailments, communicating authority, safeguarding crops and harvests, and even creating new life. They also share a common history: Each object on view in this exhibition was removed from West Africa during the early twentieth century, when much of the region was still subject to European colonial rule. Separated from the communities that made and used them, these artworks nevertheless keep alive their makers' creativity and retain the power to inspire* (Marcus & Mason-Macklin, 2018c, p. 2).

Centering the makers and colonial history over highlighting the life of the donor is a nontraditional answer to the question "who is celebrated in museums and in society" (Bond, 2018, para. 10)? In the same way, Professor Deborah Whaley argues that "it is vital that we see historical figures in their complete complexity, even if it encompasses a hidden history that is antithetical to their democratic facade." Like artists, we must see collectors in their complexity if we

are going to do African art and its makers any justice.
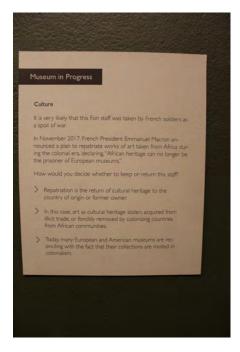
Figure 8. Museum in Progress label posing questions to visitors about repatriation of African objects.

The transparency efforts continued by installing "Museum in Progress" extended wall labels adjacent to each piece. The wall labels included four elements. The first component contained the historical context of the piece. For example, an oba mask from the ancient Kingdom of Benin is displayed in the exhibition. The label offered the following historical context: "The Kingdom of Benin (located in present-day Nigeria) included thousands of bronze sculptures, like the oba mask displayed here. When British soldiers defeated the King of Benin in 1897, they removed a large trove of Benin bronzes to England. Today, around 700 bronzes are owned by the British Museum in London, the largest collection of Benin royal art outside Nigeria. Since the end of British colonial rule in 1960, Nigerian authorities have argued for the return of the Benin bronzes, claiming rightful ownership over the cultural heritage of the Kingdom of Benin" (Marcus & Mason-Macklin, 2018a, p. 2).

The second component of the label was the way the team chose to highlight and challenge how power circulates in and around African

works. Therefore, the CMA used "Unrecorded Artist" instead of "Unknown Artist" when referring to the creator of the work.
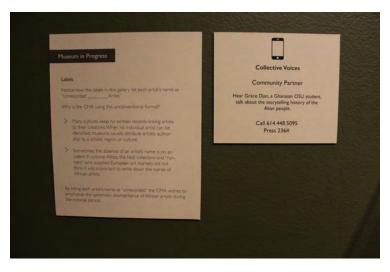
FIgure 9. Museum in Progress label explaining the reason for having the title "Unrecorded Artist."

Figure 10. CiWara Headdress label

The exhibition team offered an explanation to its visitors to promote awareness and curiosity. Many cultures keep no written records linking artists to their creations. When no individual artist can be identified, museums usually attribute artistic authorship to a school,

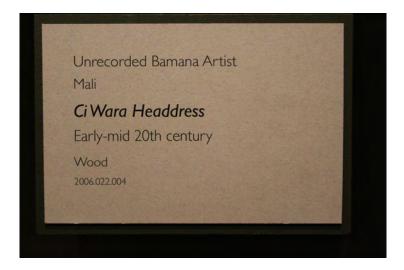region, or culture. Sometimes, the absence of an artist's name is no accident. According to Hannah, in colonial Africa, the field collectors and "runners" who supplied European art markets did not think it was important to write down the names of African artists. Thus, by listing each artist's name as "unrecorded," the CMA emphasized the systematic disinheritance of African artists during the colonial period (Marcus & Mason-Macklin, 2018a, p. 1). Elizabeth Morton, asserts that using the term "unrecorded artist" places responsibility of erasure "on the field collectors and the middlemen who employ them (who are usually local chains of 'runners' who bring objects to an African middleman who is connected to European or American middlemen)" (Morton, n.d.).

The third component of the "Museum in Progress" extended wall labels offered reflective questions for the visitor. For the Benin oba mask, as well as a Fon staff, the following questions were posed: How would you decide whether to keep or return the Benin bronzes? It is very likely that this Fon staff was taken by French soldiers as a spoil of war. How would you decide whether to keep or return this staff?

The fourth component of the labels made the visitors privy to the contemporary conversation surrounding the objects. Information included the British Museum proposing to loan its collection of Benin bronzes to Nigeria, but not offering full repatriation. Information also implied the current effects of colonizers seeking to erase African stories and potentially compromising various African communities' ability to reclaim their identity.

"Museum in Progress" labels beg the question, who gets to tell whose story and how does it feel when someone else tells your story (Ragbir, 2018)? By displaying the complexity of history, challenging ownership, and pushing against institutional oppression, we debunk the myth that museums are neutral. Museums are not simply a "repository of knowledge" with its only purpose to display instead of analyze (Bond, 2018). Being intentional about connecting the past to the present opened the door to incorporate contemporary African and African diasporic artists who explore ways of telling their stories.

Exploring Black identities with contemporary objects

To continue the connections between the past and present and honor diverse African stories, four contemporary African artists are included in the exhibition. Talle Bamazi (1964), Columbus-based Togolese artist who also provided historical context to the donated objects and

helped with the exhibition design, and contributed drawings to the exhibition including *Awaken Soul* (2018), *Winning Hearts* (2017), and *Intent of the Heart* (2018). His series on the human heart is made with ballpoint pens and integrates masks and other symbols. In Bamazi's words, "the core of human identity is found in the heart, which reveals the most essential element of human existence, [...Yet] the heart is often disguised because people mask their truths" (Marcus & Mason-Macklin, 2018b, p. 1).

Zak Ové (1966), is a Trinidadian-British sculptor. His piece *The Invisible Man* (2016) is modeled after an ebony statue given to him by his father who purchased it in Kenya during the 1970s. Ové's rendition of the statue transforms the small original into a seven-foot tall, 300-pound statue cast in graphite. The title of his work references African-American writer Ralph Ellison's novel, *Invisible Man* (1952). Although Ellison sought to personify the oppressive system of Jim Crow through the novel's protagonist, Ové' makes Black humanity and the subsequent social challenges visible through the figure's "hands-up" gesture. At the base of the statue is a futuristic coat of arms to symbolize African diasporic identity.

Eddy Kamuanga Ilunga (1991) is a Congolese painter who investigates Black identities within his work *False Memories* (2016). His acrylic and oil painting on canvas explores the past and future of the Mangbetu people, an ethnic group residing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). DRC produces over half of the world's supply of cobalt and coltan, key components in portable electronic devices (Conca, 2018). This lucrative and dangerous industry has resulted in the death of many miners and caused war in DRC and surrounding countries (Amnesty International Ltd, 2016). Ilunga draws our attention to these societal challenges. The female subjects in his work wear traditional West African garb, with software embedded in their skin. As they appear to be in conflict with each other, Ilunga's work alludes to how the long-standing Mangbetu culture and the global industrial pressures impact the lives and physical bodies of Congolese people.

Malian born painter, Amadou Sanogo (1977), also concentrates on ways external forces impact the lives of African people. His work, *L'Accord* (2017), is an acrylic painting of two stylized human figures in conversation with one another. In French, the official language of Mali, the word "accord" means "agreement," referring to formal and informal state-sanctioned decisions, such as a peace agreement (Marcus & Mason-Macklin, 2018d, p. 2). The conversing subjects in

Sanogo's work appear to reference the Bamako Agreement of 2015, which ended a violent conflict between the Malian government and a coalition of armed rebels (Marcus & Mason-Macklin, 2018d).

These artists' contemporary works initiate and maintain conversations that seek to explore the complexity of identity. Each work situates the personal into the global so that viewers see a different articulation of African humanity outside of a Eurocentric lens. Including these works in the show continued the exhibition team's mission to challenge the museum as a space of colonial stewardship that is beyond reproach. It was a curation choice that worked in tandem with accompliceship because it was artists from non-white communities pushing against a monolithic identity historically constructed within the historically White space of the American art museum. The process was not easy. Not having a precedent privileging African expansive history and diverse perspectives within CMA curatorial decisions allowed for several lessons that could be implemented in future exhibitions and strategies for staff engagement.

Taking risks and building support: Six Requirements to be a "Museum in Progress"

What are the practical steps to decolonize an institution grounded in colonization? Amy Lonetree, author of *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*, stresses that the "process of decolonizing museums takes time, and does not happen overnight" (Kini, 2018, para. 7). Creating a shift in the culture can be seen as risky. More specifically, there may be fear of a financial risk. Therefore, some institutions allow the potential discomfort of donors to take priority over their attempts to engage and keep new audiences. As the exhibition team sought ways to change the Eurocentric approaches to presenting African objects, CMA was in the midst of campaigning for a new funding structure through a city entertainment tax (Bacome, 2018). However, for the CMA, increasing community engagement, incorporating accountability in museum practices, and garnering support from within the museum took precedence. Ultimately, CMA was successful in receiving increased funding from the city. Below are six lessons the exhibition team learned throughout the process. In addition, included are ways they plan to continue their work as a "Museum in Progress" (Foley & Mason-Macklin, 2018; Foley, Mason-Macklin, & Marcus, 2018):

1. **Ask the right questions.** Cindy believed that the team members were not asking the more productive

questions as they were preparing the shift in their practices. Upon reflection, the team created new questions to start exhibition planning that focused on the show's greater purpose: What are we saying when we put up this exhibition? Who is this individual? What story do I want to tell about the artwork? What story do I want to tell about the museum? What is our stance about the message contained in the objects, the historical context, and how it connects to people today?

2. **Get honest about the power dynamics**. When thinking about change in your museum, it's important to think about the people who impact the effects of your decisions and fulfillment of your requests. Oftentimes, decisions are made to protect upper level staff from potential repercussions from majority White donors or board members. Yet, many times the low-level staff, who are mostly those from minoritized groups, are tasked with creating innovative programs and practices. Seek to create logistics that bridge the chasm to strategically build support within your museum if it exists. For example, have all-staff meetings where every department has time to address everyone with updates and challenges.

3. **Plan how you will build internal support**. Being subversive, diplomatic, and having established relationships were important when the exhibition team had to manage pushback from peer colleagues. Danny and Hannah identified this work as "radical incrementalism." Radical incrementalism is a way to support those who are uncomfortable by creating buy-in through asking for and honoring others' insight. It is a diplomatic approach to subvert power and build consensus. For example, the exhibition team asked curators: what do you want visitors to be doing in the space, what kind of language are you using, and how do you want to communicate with visitors? Then openly discuss said goals. When doing so, use language around excitement and curiosity instead of burden and anxiety, be clear about any lack of knowledge you have about the subject of focus, and be direct about your intention with the exhibition (ie. new audience engagement, build new community partnerships, challenge the status quo to expand

visitors' knowledge, etc). The goal is to build an internal team to develop strategy, as well as support each other while venting and maintaining self-care.

4. **Recognize your individual power.** Sometimes we can feel powerless to make change, but in reality, we all have a sphere of influence. Hannah wanted to push back the exhibition date but did not have the power to do so. The team wanted to change the name of the exhibition but could not. The chief curator suggested continuing the show without the new labels, but Hannah had the influence to move forward without using the curator's suggestion. She was able to communicate the importance of the labels as a form of "restorative justice" (Bond, 2018). By keeping their stance about the objects and their tenuous relationships to museums as well as the stories that drove the exhibition, the team was able to ensure that through their spheres of influence, they could avoid centering the story of the collector and homogenizing African communities as another means to keep colonialism and oppression hidden.

5. **Determine other organizations with which you will openly identify**. Building alliances with other museums and organizations can help you become more informed about what impacts the communities your museum seek to serve. These relationships require your institution to become invested in obligations for a larger liberation struggle outside of the museum. Ask, what other organizations do you currently identify or could identify with to reach your objectives? Additionally, building alliances with other museums offers opportunities to learn what other like-minded museum professionals are doing. We must recognize that the journey of change cannot happen alone.

6. **Manage the difficulty of disassociating with Whiteness**. When challenging Whiteness, we have to acknowledge that many people, likely including ourselves, have invested in this concept directly by determining their self-worth by it or supporting systems built to sustain it. Decolonizing museums and decentering Whiteness can feel like a loss of identity and the ruining of a beloved cultural institution. Although you cannot control how people

feel or if they will internalize a new understanding of Whiteness versus White people as a whole, you can provide tools to help them through the process by doing the following:

    a. Clarify the difference between the problems of Whiteness as a concept that is embedded in the museum and generalizing White people. Whiteness requires the homogenization of various European cultures. It also requires the creation of a manufactured form of Blackness or otherness that is antithetical to Whiteness. Yet, this oppositional juxtaposition is required to define Whiteness by saying what it is not. Whiteness has been normalized and established as the measure by which to determine the validity of all other cultures represented in the museum. Since it is a social construct, White people can choose to not engage in systems that support Whiteness while celebrating their specific cultural, ethnic, or national heritages.

    b. Create docent training that addresses biases and provides new language for docents to use.

    c. Remove the expectation of perfectionism. Support staff when they make mistakes throughout the process by using supportive and non-judgmental corrections. These correction conversations with you, the person being addressed, and one other staff preferably, should redirect efforts to the larger goals of the exhibitions.

    d. Include self-care methods like creating space to vent to each other about challenges, such as unmet expectations, emotional difficulties, and administrative hurdles. To confront Whiteness is to simultaneously investigate our socialization and engage in an act of self-determination that allows us to reconstruct who we want to be in the world.

The questions that underpin becoming a "Museum in Progress" is who does the "public" consist of that museums seek to satiate? Who does our definition of "public" acknowledge and ignore? What does it mean to tell someone else's story? To share multiple perspectives

of history is to posthumously liberate the experiences that oppressive structures require we bury. It requires us to acknowledge our beloved institutions' complicity in colonialism and ways we maintain and justify the practices that stemmed from it. It also reconstitutes those who are silenced and their descendants within the definition of "the public interest" that museums often say are guiding their decisions. From European enslavement of Africans to Saartjie Baartman (Parkinson, 2016), African labor, artworks, and human remains have fueled much of Europe's economy. We may not have the power to offer restitution of objects or human rights, but we can create a network of critical friends to hold us accountable, choose to not be motivated by fear, and make it our business to find history and make it visible to the public, even if it is uncomfortable.

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Disrupting White Vision: Pedagogical Strategies Against White Supremacy

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ABSTRACT

This paper contributes to a pedagogy of antiracist art education by offering strategies to disrupt white supremacy and the "white savior complex" in the classroom. I begin by discussing students' commonly held internalizations of white supremacy. I next outline my experience teaching Marlon Riggs' documentary *Ethnic Notions* (1986) to introduce a history of racist image production including minstrelsy and racist archetypes like Uncle Tom, Sambo, Mammy, Coon, and the Savage in antebellum, postbellum, and colonial contexts. Next, I use a close reading of two recent examples to illustrate how these anti-black tropes continue to inform contemporary visual culture. The first example is a philanthropic commercial for the "Christian Children's Fund" that utilizes the most problematic aspects of the white savior in colonialist aesthetics. In the second example, I analyze a comedic skit from *Saturday Night Live* (SNL) that acts as a critical response to the commercial. A satirical take on the white savior trope, the skit is both an alternative to and subversion of the history of racist and imperialist imagery. With a historically informed knowledge of how imagery is used to uphold white supremacy, we can make direct connections between histories of racialized imagery and the art world and build lessons for an antiracist pedagogy.

Keywords: antiracist pedagogy, Ethnic Notions, white supremacy, white savior complex

White Supremacy in the Classroom

During a critique in a first-year university studio art course, the class was discussing an artwork created by a young woman. She used inexpensive common objects one would find in a grocery store to create her piece, including dried beans and pasta, hot-glued onto cardboard. Unsure of how to describe the work, one student stated: "I like how it, like, is sort of *ethnic* looking." This student conflated aesthetic production outside the confines of normalized Western materials and construction with the generic "ethnic," in effect, centering and normalizing Western culture and aesthetic values

while flattening and sidelining all others (Said, 1978). The student did not have any racist intent and meant no deliberate offense, but this expression of racial insensitivity is an example of white supremacist socialization. White supremacist socialization does not mean everyone is explicitly racist, but rather that we learn subtle coding of a normalized racial hierarchy and in turn support the reproduction of institutions that uphold white supremacy. In the classroom, moments like these have encouraged me in my teaching practice to not only introduce underrepresented artists and narratives, but to also understand the production of racialized imagery in a deeper historical context. In bringing these lessons into the university art classroom, I can encourage students to recognize relationships and formations of race and power from a nuanced intersecting vantage point that incorporates individual, historical, and structural perspectives (Desai, 2010).

To teach a history of racialized images in the United States is to simultaneously teach a history of white supremacist imagery— they are dialectically co-created. I share Dylan Rodríguez's (2006) definition of white supremacy as a "*logic of social organization* that produces regimented, institutionalized, and militarized conceptions of hierarchized 'human' difference" (p. 11; emphasis in original). This logic of social organization is determined alongside racializing processes. Upholding white supremacist social organization requires constant perpetuation through "institutions, sciences, economies, dreams, and cultural artifacts" (Weheliye, 2014, p. 3). In the classroom, white supremacy takes its place somewhere in the constellation of iterative cultural expressions that preserve and remake hierarchical racializing processes. In plain language, white supremacy was reproduced at the local level with the statement "it's sort of ethnic looking." An antiracist pedagogy might intervene at this point of reproduction, disallowing the perpetuation of white supremacist ideology. At its best, an antiracist pedagogy also creates platforms to understand the profundity of white supremacy as a historical construction and structural problem that individuals support in these small moments.

I often begin the semester by asking first-year university art students to read a critical history of the city where the university is located. I found particular success in asking students to read an essay entitled "Capitol: An Austin History" by Scott Hoft (2015) while I was teaching in Austin, Texas. This succinct and accessible text discusses the violent removal of Native Americans, the establishment of Austin through the labor of enslaved persons and white settlers, the redlining

of nonwhite people, and current gentrification processes within the city. I then ask the students to go out into the city, anywhere beyond campus, and return to the next class with photographs. The assignment is low-stakes and the photographs will eventually serve as material for a simple video project. More important than the photographs, the real goal of this excursion into the city are twofold: first, it aims to situate the university within a specific historical context; second, it helps students consider the university as a space that is raced, gendered, and classed through guided discussions that reflect on their experiences. Additionally, it is important that students recognize they are actors in the world and not just students in an art classroom.

After a few semesters doing this exercise, I began to notice an emerging theme among students' project ideas later in the semester— they often wanted to photograph, interview, and/or collaborate with disadvantaged populations outside their immediate community. Students often take interest in populations that are poor, nonwhite, and not affiliated with the university. Allow me to share a specific example: a group of first-year university students (each 18 years old, white, and female) made plans to do a project in which they would ask people living without homes to read tweets tagged with #firstworldproblems into the video camera. An unironic detail is their potential collaborator, to be located randomly on the street, would read these tweets off of their $2,000 MacBook laptops—a university requirement to purchase upon entrance into the art program. The students were sincere in their interest in humanizing people living without homes while simultaneously intending to critique the callous cultural meme of "first world problems"—a meme meant to note when someone, usually white people, complain about a problem for someone with a lot of material privilege. For example: "My iPhone broke! #firstworldproblems."

I offered some feedback and tried to help refine the project idea with the students but I struggled to communicate the historically painful and problematic terrain in which they were engaged, in particular a white savior mentality inherited from a colonial mindset—one that reestablishes whiteness as the cultural norm and ideal of civilization. This contemporary iteration of the colonial mindset is here refashioned as a liberal humanist form of benevolence. This individualized notion of altruism does not interrogate the historically formed hierarchical relations between 'civilized' and 'uncivilized', and instead upholds the same structural relation in viewing oneself as having the capacity to save the Other. The students became frustrated

and changed their idea completely. The experience was upsetting. Like many instructors, I long for students to engage socially and politically with their artwork, yet these students felt I had taken away their agency through endless criticism and promise of pitfalls. For me, this experience and other similar encounters demonstrated a need to take greater responsibility in meaningfully situating visual culture's role in white supremacy. The following provides greater detail on why this is an essential task for arts educators.

Understanding White Savior Complex

The project idea discussed above is paradigmatic of what activists refer to as a "white savior complex." White saviors believe they can and/or must save disadvantaged people, often brown and black but not always, from whatever ailment they are in.[1] Many are familiar with this through cinematic tropes like the singular white male hero who, inevitably, is the protagonist (Hughley, 2014). These white supremacist cinematic visions help construct for viewers an emotional investment in whiteness and presents white people as predominant even in nonwhite worlds. In effect, these cinematic tropes act to erase sociopolitical struggles of people of color, center narratives on whiteness, and re-write racialized structural and imperialist oppression as a series of individual failings. Within the activist sphere, "benevolent, humanist, and humanitarian liberal-progressive foundations" position in communities of color and poor communities primarily white-led and white-staffed organizations from elsewhere (Rodríguez, 2007, p. 35). Rodríguez (2007) rightly condemns the mentality that leads white organizations to parachute into communities of color that they deem need saving as an internalization of the white liberal humanist vision. The figure of the white savior, while well intentioned, maintains a racialized hierarchical relationship by insisting it is white folks who can help those in need. The white savior is a racialized subject of whiteness, one that maintains supremacist order in their efforts to purportedly overturn it.

Antiracist pedagogy must develop strategies that introduce students

1 I say *disadvantaged* as opposed to *oppressed* to denote that an analytical failure of the white savior is at play. Recognizing oppressed people as such would require a historical and political analysis that sees oppression at a structural level, e.g. to name the oppressor/s. To speak of "advantage" (or lack thereof) tilts the view toward liberalism—these down and out people merely did not have the advantages *we* have had as white saviors. In liberalism, there are no systems of oppression inherent in capitalism; reforms just need to be made.

to the ways white supremacy is embodied and practiced by well-intentioned white people. This requires an introduction to materials and methodologies that allow analytical and critical thinking while providing historical context of a structurally violent relationship that continues to reproduce itself through cultural and political frameworks. Specific to working with students against the white savior complex, antiracist pedagogy seeks to undermine imperialist relations that reinforce dehumanization and systemic oppression by marking the Other as either mute and invisible, or as opportunities to advance one's own project (Ballengee-Morris, 2002; Fanon, 2005; Flaherty, 2016; Said, 1978). Below, I will share and analyze my attempts to practice this antiracist pedagogy.

Terror and White Travelers

To understand the embodied white supremacy inherent in the liberal humanist vision, and how it manifests in art school, it is useful to consider the ways students encounter "the Other" as they cross the color line (or the racialized economic line). In bell hooks' (1992) essay "Representations of Whiteness in the Black Imagination," she describes her white students' surprise, and subsequent rage, that black folks commonly practice a "critical 'ethnographic' gaze" (p. 167) with regard to whiteness. Anger arises for many white students when their liberal universalism is complicated and their "colorblind" perception of the world is disrupted. "…Racist thinking perpetuates the fantasy that the Other who is subjugated, who is subhuman, lacks the ability to comprehend, to understand, to see the working of the powerful" (hooks, 1992, p. 167-168).

This moment of multi-racial interaction in the classroom can be instructive in teaching against white supremacy (Desai, 2010). hooks builds on this anecdote by describing the crossing of the color line by white people as *travel*, which for many black folks is not an encounter of cultural exchange but an "encounter with terror" (p. 173-174). Recalling childhood experiences in apartheid Jim Crow South, hooks (1992) writes:

> As a child, I did not know any white people. They were strangers, rarely seen in our neighborhoods. The "official" white men who came across the tracks were there to sell products, Bibles, and insurance. They terrorized by economic exploitation. What did I see in the gazes of those white men who crossed our thresholds that made me afraid, that made black

children unable to speak? Did they understand at all how strange their whiteness appeared in our living rooms, how threatening? Did they journey across the tracks with the same "adventurous" spirit that other white men carried to Africa, Asia, to those mysterious places they would one day call the "third world"? Did they come to our houses to meet the Other face-to-face and enact the colonizer role, dominating us on our own turf? (p. 170-171)

For both hooks and her nonwhite students, the interracial encounter is not outside the violence of history. Conversely, the white students' and hooks' *white traveler* move with a sense of obliviousness to their individual actions as part of a continued stream of asymmetrical and violent racial interactions.

hooks' anecdote from the classroom acts in reverse to my white students' #firstworldproblems idea for their project. The students enact the white person on a *mission* (hooks' traveler). Ironically, the joke of #firstworldproblems is that it condemns, yet simultaneously remains indifferent to, the violence of history in relation to colonialism and the emergence of the "first world." Indeed, this is the basis of the humor in complaining about one's iPhone breaking, for example. The students sought to upend this joke by calling attention to the cruelty of this indifference, but they were unable to subvert the cruelty of the joke without reenacting it. Benevolent as the students' intentions may have been, they intended to cross the color/economic line with the expectation of receiving something in return. In this instance, the impoverished remain the object of pity that require middle class white peoples' care, while the students leave with a completed art project. In the art world, this unequal "collaboration" will often replicate itself with more successful socially engaged and social practice artists that use people in more vulnerable positions to elevate personal cultural capital and liberal cachet.[2] This hierarchical relationship is also a *way of seeing* that I will refer to as *white vision*. White vision is a gaze of dominance. Born of white supremacist socialization, it activates the latent assumption that white people are required to save the Other. This vision also consistently fails to see structural violence maintained throughout the history of the U.S.

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2 See, for example, the case of John Ahearn, thoughtfully discussed in Kwon, 2002, pp. 56-99.

Disrupting White Vision

In the second part of this paper, I describe concrete strategies to historicize white supremacy in images through a discussion of Marlon Riggs' (1986) documentary *Ethnic Notions*. Then, I describe how this white supremacy reproduces a "white savior complex" by looking at a commercial (n.d.) for the Christian Children's Fund. Finally, I discuss a subversion of this format through a close reading of a skit from *Saturday Night Live* entitled "39 cents" (King, 2014).

Ethnic Notions and The History of Racist Imagery in the U.S.

I introduce students to a history of racist imagery in a U.S. context with the 1986 documentary *Ethnic Notions* directed by Marlon Riggs. The film is valuable as a teaching tool because it insists on historicizing minstrelsy performance and its corresponding commercial imagery into a political climate that creates and maintains a hierarchical racial formation. This hierarchical racial formation, in part inherited from practices of colonialism, is dialectically co-constituted alongside white supremacy during both antebellum and postbellum U.S. contexts. Finally, the documentary situates a history of white supremacist imagery in the U.S. as part of a colonial legacy by showing the recycling of tropes that emerged out of the numerous European colonies in Africa.

Heavily illustrated with film clips, advertisements, postcards, and recreations of minstrel songs, *Ethnic Notions* "takes viewers on a disturbing voyage through American history, tracing the deep-rooted stereotypes which have fueled anti-black prejudice" ("Ethnic notions," n.d., para. 1). The film begins with a brief history of minstrelsy—white performers in blackface imitating both free and enslaved black persons. As the film demonstrates, minstrelsy is responsible for many of the U.S.'s most persistent racist archetypes like Uncle Tom, Sambo, Mammy, Coon, and the Savage.

Before discussing how this film functions in the classroom, I'll describe some of these manufactured archetypes the film unpacks in order to illustrate how images are used socio-politically, making them inseparable from the larger ideological apparatuses from which they were developed. The film opens with the story of T.D. Rice, a white entertainer who performed a caricature of a singing, dancing, happy, and buffoonish slave. This trope would come to be known as Sambo. It is thought that Rice developed this character in 1828 after seeing a physically disabled black man "jumping Jim

Crow."[3] Rice then exaggerated the man's speech, dancing, and tattered clothes while applying burnt cork on his face, making him the first blackface performer. In subsequent years, this would be mimicked and popularized by dozens of white performers donning blackface, creating what we now know as the minstrel show. These performances, which typically included song, dance, and skits, became one of the most popular forms of popular entertainment in the 19th and 20th centuries (Lott, 1993). Direct quotations of these archetypes can be seen in early film, and recycled well into the 20th century, and adaptations in contemporary culture continue to remain prominent (Bogle, 2016). The emergence of minstrelsy and the Sambo character corresponded with the rise in the abolitionist movement as the U.S. neared the Civil War, functioning then as an implied if not explicit defense of slavery (Nederveen Pieterse, 1994). As scholar George Fredrickson quips in *Ethnic Notions,* mocking early minstrelsy: "Slavery must be a good institution if slaves were happy and the masters were kindly" (Riggs, 1986).

The second archetype explored by the documentary is Zip Coon—a depiction of free blacks of the North. The Zip Coon was a buffoon who attempted to assimilate into white society by imitating whites but, of course, failed embarrassingly. "Together, Zip Coon with Sambo provided a double edge defense of slavery. Zip Coon failed to adapt to freedom, and Sambo presented the image of the happy darky in their proper place" (Riggs, 1986).

Today, the Mammy archetype is perhaps the most well-known due to the persistence of products like Aunt Jemima and lasting images in films, such as Hattie McDaniel's (1936) portrayal of Mammy in *Gone with the Wind.* Scholar Barbara Christian describes the archetype as strong, asexual, and ugly, juxtaposed with the ideal image of white femininity as beautiful, fragile, and dependent. Further, the de-eroticization of Mammy intends to remove the threat to the white domestic sphere by preemptively denying sexual contact between white men and black women, an image of the main house that we know from numerous historical accounts is untrue. It is well documented that both enslaved women, and later domestic workers,

3 In *Ethnic Notions*, choreographer and performer Leni Sloan explains Jim Crow as a dance that developed on the plantations after the church outlawed dancing— defined as crossing one's feet—in 1690. Enslaved persons created a way of shuffling and sliding their feet so as to not break the law. From my research, accounts of this history seems unstable, however it appears there is a scholarly consensus that, after 1828, "Jim Crow" typically refers to T.D. Rice's show. This would hold true until post-Reconstruction when "Jim Crow" is used to describe segregation laws—here is where the phrase begins to take on its contemporary associations.

were raped or assaulted by their owners or employers (Pilgrim, 2015). Sambo, Zip Coon, and Mammy offered convenient counter-abolitionist and pro-slavery propaganda leading up to the Civil War. However, after emancipation it was important for the image of (now free) black people to shift in order to function as a successful ideological weapon. Unsurprisingly, propaganda moved toward an old colonialist trope imported from Europe that viewed the now free, undomesticated black people as savages, brutes, and sexual predators. The Savage trope is a holdover from colonial imaginings of Africa as the Dark Continent. Colonists' construction of the colonized as animal-like, undomesticated, and savage made for a convenient ideology that supported a colonial "civilizing" mission (Nederveen Pieteserse, 1994). During Reconstruction, the most famous depiction of the Savage is to be found in Thomas Dixon's (1905) *The Clansman*, later remade as a film by D.W. Griffith (1915) as *The Birth of a Nation*.

This film depicts the assembling of the Ku Klux Klan against a Reconstruction-era black man (played by a white actor in blackface) whose incessant and threatening pursuit of a white woman leads to her untimely death. Re-emerging here is the trope of the black-beast rapist, which was cause for hundreds—if not thousands—of extra-legal lynchings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Pilgrim, 2015). In Griffith's vision, retaliatory mob violence is required against the cinematically constructed black rapist, the Savage, to protect the white community. Erskine Peters notes, "We wouldn't have gotten images of the brute negro before emancipation because this image would not have helped the defense of slavery. To suggest there were rebellious black people would have suggested that enslaved persons wanted to be free" (Riggs, 1986).

Against/alongside the image of the Savage emerged the nostalgic archetypes of Uncle, who was domesticated by slavery. Uncle [Tom], ideological counterpart to Mammy, was always depicted in full servant's uniform complete with a smile, ensuring the white audience that he was happy to serve. Viewed alongside the Savage, the image of Uncle suggests that the younger generation of free black people are wild and threatening, in part, because they have never had the benefit of the domesticating paternalism of slavery. I have left out several important aspects of the excellent film *Ethnic Notions*.[4] However, it

4 While otherwise excellent, *Ethnic Notions* does not include a discussion of the archetype of "Jezebel"—a hyper-sexualized black woman. Jezebel continues to operate today in the commodification of sexualized black female bodies. It also acts as a defense against sexual violence perpetrated upon vulnerable and racial-ized women. I have not gone into detail with regard to this history only because of

should be evident from my selective culling of this work that the black image in the white imagination has historically remained essentialist, anti-black, and adaptable to shifting political contexts that continually reconstitute white supremacy.

Viewing *Ethnic Notions* with students is a powerful experience. Typically, when students and I watch this in class, I will end our session after a brief and informal discussion or shift to another task that is less emotionally demanding. The next class, I return to the documentary with a series of prompts and ask students to summarize lessons from the film. When asking the group to recall some of the manufactured archetypes the film discusses (Sambo, Zip Coon, Mammy, etc.), I ask questions such as: "What political purpose did these archetypes serve?" or "How were these images of Sambo used and how did they change after the war?" It is important that images do not float freely away from their context. Insisting on an accurate historicizing not only helps students recognize how imagery is weaponized, it also helps to create a framework for accountability and historical context within their own politics and art practices. Insisting that images have consequences and interact with converging social, political, and world-making historical forces, offers students some sense of the importance of cultural production—even if they do not yet wholly understand the profundity of white supremacy and racialized violence. This helps establish in the classroom complex and historically informed narratives with regard to constructions of race (Acuff, 2018).

Christian Children's Fund and the White Savior Complex

After reviewing the basic arguments of the film, I prepare a handful of contemporary examples to illustrate how these images persist and adapt. I will limit my discussion to two videos I believe are particularly instructive for students. The first is a commercial for the Christian Children's Fund (n.d.). Likely filmed in the mid-nineties, the commercial opens with a pan of nonwhite children wading through a mountain of trash—plastic bottles, cans, old tires, etc.—while a masculine voice-over speaks to the American viewer:

> You've never seen a place like this, have you? But everyday children like Michelle come here to [...] pick up plastic. [...] When you look out here, you might

limitation of space, but the intersection of sexual violence and white supremacy is crucial to understanding how white supremacy, capitalism, patriarchy, and settler colonialism wields power (Pilgrim, 2015; Roberts, 1999; Smith, 2005).

think—what could *I possibly have in common with people like these?*

The last question is a rhetorical one. Next, in order to assure us *we are all the same*, he responds to his imagined white audience's answer: "You couldn't be more wrong..." A man hikes into the frame—white American actor Alan Sader. He looks like a trim Santa Claus or a loving television grandfather. At the climax of the commercial, he kneels down to one knee, puts his arm around young Michelle, and looks into the camera: "Wouldn't you like to give a child *like* Michelle a break? Go to the phone now..." The paternalism is palpable. The *us* versus *them* rhetoric assures the white viewer that, as much as Alan Sader tries to convince us, white Americans are not at all like these nonwhite children. The Savage trope is clear, even if these poor children deserve our help. This is a contribution to the myth-making of the Dark Continent, part of a long history of colonialist representation of the unspecified generic Africa, where Africans are primitive and need the civilizing ways of the colonizer (Ballengee-Morris, 2002; Nederveen Pieteserse, 1994).

Saturday Night Live against the White Savior

As a counter to this, I share with students a parody from *Saturday Night Live* (*SNL*) entitled "39 Cents" (King, 2014). The skit is a satirical commercial for the fictional charity "HelpFund" that has all of the cinematic tropes of liberal humanist charity appeals: white men in a dirty, diseased, presumed "nonwhite" environment; slow, sad piano; and decorative, nonwhite people from a low socioeconomic status in the background functioning as props of poverty. The spokesperson for HelpFund is Charles Daniels, a white male character obviously modeled after Alan Sader, who is played by comedian Bill Hader. Using the precise posturing as Sader with young Michelle, Daniels kneels next to a black man (Jay Pharoah) washing clothes in a small tub on the dirt ground: "Just 39 cents. That's less than a small cup of coffee, but it can make all the difference in the world to the people of this village." The black man washing clothes quietly interrupts the white man: "Ask for more money. Why you start so low?!" Surprised and momentarily knocked off of his game, Daniels gets back to his pitch."

As you can see, *these* villagers are desperate for your help, so pick up the phone." Later, two black men (Pharoah and Kenan Thompson) start chatting skeptically in the background, trying to figure out who this white guy is and what he is doing in their community (recall

hooks' white traveler). Eventually the two men discover he is filming a charity infomercial and start yelling toward Daniels: "Yo! Start higher!"

This address, both to Daniels and the camera, breaches the contract of white vision that forces silence. The insistence to demand more from Daniels acknowledges that the historical exploitation of colonialism has garnered far greater riches for Westerners than 39 cents a day. Daniels is shaken and finally annoyed, he quips sharply while side-eyeing his black antagonists: "39 cents/day is *all these people need*." With his response, Daniels both assures his white audience they will not be burdened more than 39 cents a day while also attempting to police the black community's demand for more. *You will be happy with what we give you* is the implication. The commercial is almost completely off the rails when the two black men (Thompson and Pharoah) are joined by two black women (Leslie Jones and Sasheer Zamata) who collectively surround Daniels with their bodies and verbally challenge his every word. Where previously he walked the unknown community as a King among the Savages, he is now held captive between their bodies. They antagonize: "He keeps saying 39 cents, why can't it be 99 cents?" Daniels assures it is because that is the price of coffee. "Why can't it be the price of Arizona Iced Tea? They're 99 cents!" says Jones' character. The clear, but unspoken reference is to Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old black teenager who was murdered by George Zimmerman, a middle-aged white man, after being mistaken for having a weapon that was, actually, Skittles and Arizona Iced Tea. Cast onto a neo-colonial context, this comparison simultaneously transforms Arizona Iced Tea into a symbol of mourning and resistance. With their reference to Martin, the "Savages" have linked liberal humanist philanthropy with anti-black state violence.

Additionally, the writers and actors of the skit have subverted white vision by providing an antagonistic voice to the historically silenced object of colonialist violence and capitalist charity. As the scene in the commercial escalates, one of the black women (Jones) impatiently challenges Daniels: "Hey—I bet you don't even know what country you in?" He stumbles before he finally meekly offers, "... Africa?" This is too much. Jones' character now replaces Daniels—centered in the frame and obfuscating his body. Her friends physically close in on Daniels. "If you want to see this cheap-ass white man again, you better send us $200 cash, right now!" This could be read as a farcical threat of violence, but in the spirit of latent insurgencies of black liberation, it could also be read as a call to anticolonial violence albeit

a comedic one. Further, if the fictional philanthropist Daniels acts as a stand-in for the continued structural violence of the colonialist paradigm transformed into a liberal humanist paternalism, it is a call to expropriate the expropriators (Fanon, 2005).

Pedagogically, the funny and accessible skit links the Jim Crow era Savage to the contemporary Noble Savage found in the Christian Children's Fund commercial. What is significant in the *SNL* skit is the reversal of subject positions after seeing and hearing the extraordinary paternalism that the nonwhite people must be spoken for and saved by the white audience. The transfer of gaze and subject position in the *SNL* skit is also a central component of critical feminist and anti-colonial art and film criticism, what hooks (1992) refers to as the oppositional gaze. Bringing this discussion into the classroom provides an excellent opportunity for young artists to consider theories of the oppositional gaze, subject/object position, and power dynamics as they are produced and presented formally in images. Had the students with the #firstworldproblems project idea had access to some of the media and history discussed above, they would have been much more equipped to approach the exceedingly difficult problems of homelessness or poverty with greater care and avoided the pattern of paternalism. In retrospect, the students' frustration resulting from my warnings of possible pitfalls with their project was my failure. As instructors, it is our job to support students in navigating these questions with care. The above strategies for contextualizing white supremacy and racialized imagery is my belated response to these students.

Conclusion

An antiracist pedagogical approach in art education must actively critique white supremacy in visual culture. This critique requires a historical understanding of racial formation as well as the role images played—and continue to play—in support of white supremacy as a logic of social organization and hierarchy (Rodríguez, 2006; Spillane, 2015). White supremacy reproduces itself across time and space, as the recycling of racist colonial articulations of oppressed peoples in the U.S. illustrates (Nederveen Pieteserse, 1994). As *Ethnic Notions* (1986) shows, colonial imagery informs the racialized tropes that still circulate in contemporary U.S. culture, and white supremacist imagery is adaptable in relationship to political power. We are all socialized in a white supremacist environment, therefore we must deconstruct the visual, social, and political languages that we interact with to allow for a meaningful engagement with antiracist voices. A

critique of white supremacist imagery destabilizes its ability to act as a tool of oppression, as hooks (1992) eloquently writes, in order to "name racism's impact [is to] help break its hold. We decolonize our minds and imaginations" (p. 178).

When young artists develop critical strategies for interrogating the context and meaning of the images and projects they envision producing, we strengthen our abilities to ask important questions rooted in justice and solidarity that engage complicated questions of race, representation, aesthetic value, and the relationship of cultural production to white supremacy. Antiracist pedagogy struggles to disrupt the circuitry of white supremacist reproduction. The classroom is one place to begin.

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Chaos, Conflict and Confusion: Cross-Cutting Issues of Whiteness in Visual Representations of the Brother on the Downlow

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ABSTRACT

Broadly this paper builds on the discourse surrounding destabilizing Whiteness in visual representation of the brother on the down low (DL). The term "DL", which is short for on the down-low, is a common way to refer to men of color who live their everyday lives as heterosexuals, are often married to women, yet also engage in discreet homosexual relationships (Scott, 2010). Guided by the question: In what ways are brothers on the down low viewed in Black visual culture? Specifically, this paper is a literature review on the intersection of the emasculation of Black men and Black masculinity and discusses the sustained interaction of these two concepts within contemporary politics of identity, masculinity, and sexuality; with a synopsis of analyses of the literature presented through a lens of my lived experiences and so it is framed as such. This paper also focuses on categorization and institutionalization of Black men in visual culture. Then there is review a brief history of some knowledge and power plays of White hegemonic United States (US) culture and how Black men are structured and regulated by means of these social dynamics. This leads me to provide insights into these things by investigating them and looking closely at their social constructs. Ultimately, I explore and discuss the ways in which Black male sexuality and masculinity, broadly, and Black DL identity, specifically, is visually represented in literature in relationship to Whiteness.

Keywords: DL Identity, Black Visual Culture, Black Masculinity and Sexuality, Whiteness

Cross-cutting Issues in DL and Black Masculinities

This paper builds on the literature and seeks to explore the ways in which Black male sexualities, broadly, and Black gay male identities, specifically, is and has been negotiated in visual culture in relationship to Whiteness. "DL", which is short for "down-low" or "on the down low" has been commonly used as a way to refer

to men of color who live their everyday lives as heterosexuals, are often married to women, yet also engage in discreet relationships with other men (Scott, 2010). I use—my subjective experiences and consciousness—to focus on the question, in what ways are Black men on the "DL" visually represented? I intentionally use the terms masculinities and sexualities throughout this paper to acknowledge how Black gay men and DLs narrate and situate their multiple identities. I agree with Neale (2013) and Nero's (1991) definition of the term masculinities which is masculinities indicate an opposition to fixed, stable, and unchanging masculinity. Therefore, this paper discusses DLs and Black gay men as a distinct group of people who embody numerous masculinities and sexualities despite the singular identity that predominant White heteronormative culture wants to ascribe to them.

The literature identifies and examines a number of important connections within the discussion of United States Black male culture in general and the brother on the down low (DL) culture specifically to emphasize epistemological considerations, difference, marginality, and agency. These considerations have been instrumental in critiquing literature and relationships of Black masculinity and sexuality. As such, a focus on historical contexts is important to view how facets of Black communities view Black sexualities and masculinities, bisexualities and gay identities in Black men as well as the DL phenomenon. These complex conversations provide a fertile space to explore the chaos, conflict, and confusion within the underexplored curricular and pedagogical implications of visual images of Black men on the DL in art education. A vast amount of visual culture produced, consumed, collected, and interpreted over the centuries with regard to the image of Black society includes specific images, performances, films, and other visual artifacts in which Black people are visually subjugated in a narrowly limited and negative fashion, designed to appeal to White hegemonic society (Grant, 2014). These examples of visual imagery are commonly known as Black visual culture.

In past research, I discussed how art educator, James Rolling (2010) explicitly grappled with the discourse surrounding heteronormative Black identity, the Black lived experience, and the human condition in the US without stereotypical dialogue. Rolling's (2010) work brought fresh connotation to [re]constructing narrative Black identity within arts-based [re]search (Grant, 2013). Furthermore, he created a framework for future art education scholars – such as myself – to use in order to place their own identities and lived experiences into

their interpretations of Black identities (Grant, 2013). He argued that out of chaos within, incompletion of, and uncertainty about his Black identity come order, achievement, and inevitability. Rolling (2010) encouraged his reader to become a curious viewer and not settle for instant responses to what is seen. He argued, through [re] interpretation and [re]casting ourselves, Black men learn about the art, the artist, and the spectator through self-reflection. Indeed, Rolling's theoretical concepts have assisted me in terms of my own awareness of my identities as my own consciousness of imagery is constantly evolving.

Rolling (2010) built this argument on Foucauldian premises, contending that visual culture archaeology is developed as a methodology for discursive un-naming and renaming, and emerges from the inherence and attenuation of in-scripted meanings in the reinterpretation of identity during a postmodern confluence of ideas and images. In a similar vein, art educators (Carpenter, 2005; Carpenter & Sourdot, 2010; Carpenter & Tavin, 2010; Darts, 2007; Duncum, 2003, 2004; Freedman, 2003; Grant, 2013; Grant & Kee, 2018) discussed issues surrounding stereotypes, Black identity, and multicultural visual culture. However, none of these art educators took on representations of DL in Black visual culture.

Chaos, Conflict, and Confusion in the Visuality of Black Visual Culture

The complexities within representations of DL in Black visual culture have been under-reported, under-interpreted, and not sufficiently recognized in relationship to curriculum theory in the field of art education (Grant, 2014). There are scholars outside of the field of art education who have examined Black visual culture (Pieterse, 1992; Bearden & Henderson, 1993; hooks, 1995; Doy, 2002; Lewis, 2003; Powell, 2003; Bolden, 2004). However, none of these scholars has sufficiently examined DL identity within Black visual culture or tackled the negative impact of DL images. Additionally, the destabilization of Black visual culture in the US typically comes from negative connotations about Black people reified by the concept of Whiteness at the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality. B. Alexander (2012) defined Whiteness as a "self-reifying practice, a practice that sustains the ability to name, and conversely not to be named, and the power to speak without being chastised while in the process of chastising others" (p. 23). It is this essential concept of Whiteness that is woven throughout the question in this paper, in what ways are brothers on the DL visually represented?

There are other theoretical frameworks which supplement Crenshaws' (1995) theory of intersectionality, such as queer of color critique, which have emerged and shaped liminal places and spaces where discourses on Black masculinity and sexuality can be discussed. These discussions take place without homonormative racial identities and have a resistance to gazing into the world of DL and gay people of color through a master narrative. Therefore, celebrating heteronormative masculinity as progressive among gay men undermines gay efforts to resist dominant ideologies. I am not alone in characterizing DLs in a less restrictive way. Mutua (2006), for example, addressed the tension between the progressive masculinities project and Afrocentrism, which has a history of constructing a singular and exclusionary Black masculinity that is dependent on sexism and homophobia. Additionally, Collins (2004) focused on both men's and women's experiences as deeply racialized in a colonized, gender-specific narrative. According to Collins (2000), "talking about gender does not mean focusing solely on women's issues, as gender ideology must encompass ideas about both Black masculinity and femininity" (p. 6). The ways in which the visual negotiates the existence of multiple masculinities, the lives of DLs, and Black gay men are not only acknowledged, but also legitimized (Fleetwood, 2011; Mutua, 2006; Neal, 2013; Scott, 2010). For example, the normalization of sexual violence in prisons that comes back to the reproduction of prison rape culture. This happens by using visual culture antecedents such as, television and cable series such as *OZ*, *The Boondocks*, and *The Wire* which treat deeply rooted racial stereotypes within Black visual culture and television with fixed notions of identity constructed in Whiteness.

As a consequence of identity constructs that result from Whiteness, Black men who classify themselves as DL or gay are seen as a *crosscutting* issue, which is a cultural line that creates further ostracism within an already marginalized Black community. For example, some Black communities view Black gay sexual identity as mitigating one's racial identity and deflating one's community standing. In short, Black men who identify as bisexual, queer, or gay are belittled because they are seen as being like women under the stereotypical White cultural positioning of White gay men as being sissies, faggots, or effeminate (Grant, 2013, 2014; Neal, 2013). Despite the similar points of view (from the racial front), Black DL men have a fear of being identified as effeminate, which may be even stronger shaming of Black gay men from some Black communities than of White gay men in facets of White communities, and that is part of the

reason they are on the DL.

According to hooks (2004), ethnic and racial differences within masculinity are important to diversifying men's studies. Framing these issues within the context of intersectionality provides ways to understand how masculinity is experienced, accepted, negotiated, and visually interpreted. She further suggested that masculinity, as practiced by Black Americans, plays upon and, at times, calls into question culturally dominant projections of Black masculinity, which are restrictive. In this way, in highly commodified cultural domains such as sports, entertainment, music, and sexual fantasy (Mandingo), previously marginalized groups face difficulty in attempting to reconstruct racialized manhood. As a cultural penalty for the attempt, the marginalized are shunned or taken away (emasculated) publicly. Similarly, social stigma and penalties, as suggested by Potoczniak (2007), include community isolation, violence, and prejudice when Black men do not conform to the expected masculine performance narrative. Such attempts are undermined rather than celebrated.

To ensure that the reader can follow where I am coming from, let me introduce W.E.B. Du Bois' concept up double consciousness. Du Bois (1903/1981) explains the intrinsic mental state of such an understanding: "[T]his double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (p. 3). It is this conceptual mindset that causes the mood and mindset of some African descendants to fluctuate from confusion and disbelief to understanding and compliance, and finally, from anger and rage to revolution. The burden of constantly viewing one's self through the perspective of the oppressor has been meant to create self-hate, and to some extent it did. However, it also created fortitude in some Black American men. Du Bois (1903/1981) goes on to say, "One ever feels his twoness,–an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (p. 3). The *twoness* of personality Du Bois (1903/1981) mentions is where I am delving into the depths of the sunken place, which is the mindset of Black male masculinities and sexualities in the souls of Black American men, where recognition breeds anger, where compliance leads to rage, and where revolutions are born. I continue to argue that the hegemonic American construction of identity and visual images of Black men in the US are fixed and unchanging, filled with stereotypes of hyper-sexuality, savagery, primitivism, and docility, and that these historical images have become infused into

facets of Black communities.

A Historical Black Context: Black Sexualities and Masculinities

The historical evidence of same-sex practice and desire in facets of Black American communities can be traced to pre-colonial Africa (Johnson, 2003; Thomas & Sillen, 1972). Nero (1991) presented a slave narrative that exposed the existence of same-sex practice during the slavery era. Similar to Hemphill (1991) I maintain, colorism and the residues of Whiteness have had a long-lasting impact on the psyche of Black Americans who are the descendants of African slaves. As such, double minded consciousness, self-Black hatred, and ignorance are the three-legged stool of homosexuality. Further, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgendered, and queer (LGBTQ) Black American representations in the arts and entertainment have existed within the Black communities in 1920s and 1930s (Nugent, Gates, & Wirth, 2002) such as Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes. However, discussion of LGBTQ+ people within Black American communities were often not publicly discussed on a wider scale (hooks, 2004).

Interconnected to discussions of sexuality are discussions of Black masculinities and emasculation. hooks (2004) argued, by the end of slavery "patriarchal masculinity had become an accepted ideal for most [B]lack men, an ideal that would be reinforced by twentieth-century norms" (p. 4). Collins (2004) similarly suggested, Black masculinity is negotiated through a binary understanding of the economic and political climate during the Jim Crow era. This is when Black men were seemingly emasculated, yet they were also depicted as being naturally hyper-heterosexual. However, my work takes *crosscutting* issues in DL and Black sexualities further by discussing the intersectional contours of masculinity, and how such discussions manifest through race, class, gender, and sexuality—where hyper-heterosexuality is an expectation of Black masculinity. This leads me to how heteronormativity represents sites of reinforcement of Black masculinities in the face of emasculation and their representation in Black visual culture.

At the height of the civil rights era some facets of Black communities began to frame White masculinity as homosexuality, purporting that White men were trained to be gay or fags, and depicting them as weak and effeminate (hooks, 2004). Additionally, hooks (2004), like others before her, linked this attack not on patriarchy, but on men who failed to fulfill the primal idea of patriarchal manhood. For

example, authors such as Johnson (2003), Collins (2004) and hooks (2004) suggested a connection between Black masculinity and silence, stating, such vulnerability in Black masculinity was associated with femininity. These notions inform historical and social structures of power and further made their way into problematic tropes of sexual stereotypes in Black communities. Collins (2004) suggested counter narratives towards same-sex desires between Black men are Whitened due to the historically racist depictions of Black sexuality as hyper-heterosexual. These counter narratives to hegemonic culture become part of the Black power rhetoric. hooks (2004), on the other hand, argued that Black men have become victimized by stereotypes produced by White elites. In an effort to engage in non-hostile spaces that counter the narrative of Black emasculated men, patriarchal rhetoric by Black militants that Whitened and feminized homosexuality acting to reinforce Black masculinity emerged (Johnson 2003). The new rhetoric sought to make White and feminine clear markers of opposition, thus identifying what Black manhood was not (Collins, 2004). Thus, contemporary Black masculinities shape a defensive stance which clearly names homosexuality as White and a disease.

Furthermore, Collins (2004) suggested that the concepts of Black masculinity and the hyper-heterosexuality of Black men continued to be shaped by the media, morphing into images of pimps, hustlers, and players. Collins (2004) further suggested that the media representations of Black masculinity position Black men as aggressive thugs who contest being weak from being dominated by "strong Black women" (p. 188-190). Collins (2004) continued that these stereotypes preserve ideological oppression and stigmatize Black sexuality, and as a result, Black gay men are not deemed to be truly Black because Black sexuality, through the eyes of the predominant culture in America, the White, heterosexual, racist one, has heretofore defined what Black men are—especially when it comes to sexuality. Such stereotypes, stigmas, and subjugations continue to be connected to weakness, Whiteness, and diseases. In other words, Black gay men or DL men are seen as being unacceptable in heteronormative societal norms. Black gay men are double- or triple- ostracized because the idea of gay men has been White-washed. So not only are Black gay men not Black men because they are not hyper-heterosexual, they are also not just gay but gay deviant. In an ultimate blow, they are also White and diseased—for spreading HIV/AIDS to heterosexual Black women.

Connected to the struggle of Black identity is the devaluation of the

feminine. Black men who exhibit effeminate traits are demeaned, disparaged, and excluded from true authentic Black spaces or Blackness, thus linking homosexuality with effeminacy. Such links to femininity suggests inferiority rather than empowerment (hooks, 2004; Johnson, 2003). From my lived experiences, my reading of Collins (2004) is that she argued, Black gay men become surrogate women. She continued to suggest that femininity as a performance of queer identity reinforces Black masculinity as an unfeminine narrative. In an effort to protect Black masculinity, the feminine performance becomes widely accepted as the identifier of homosexuality, and being effeminate excludes Black gay men from Black manhood. In turn, this is an identifier of why DL men in general do not divulge their sexual identity. Additionally, hooks (2004) argued that hegemonic ideologies about gender and sexuality continue to construct an environment that condones and connects hyper-masculinity with heterosexuality, while stigmatizing queerness and bisexuality by connecting it to emasculation and maligned femininity.

Bisexualities and Gay identities In Black Men

Written specifically about bisexual and Black gay men, Essex Hemphill (1991) focuses on the social issues regarding their identity, masculinity, and sexuality with relationship to queerness in a White heteronormative society. He discusses the hurdles bisexual and gay Black men come up against which make it difficult for them to have what heteronormative society deems as a normal life. He argues, these voices are muted and some of these men do not have the self-confidence it takes to share their sexual identity with the heteronormative world because the homonormative lifestyle they engage in is considered to be a sin. He focuses on the ways in which Black masculinity and sexuality are intertwined and discusses the shattered identities of bisexual and gay Black men due to the constructed fixed notion of Black masculinity that are rooted in Whiteness (Reid-Pharr, 2001).

McBride (2005) discusses some of the ways in which race and sexuality are vital components connected to the identities of bisexual and gay Black men. He discussed three different concepts related to the ways in which conversations about bisexuality and homosexuality take place (a) race and sexuality on occasion, (b) queer Black thought, and (c) straight Black talk. In his book, McBride (2005) explored intersections of gender, class, sexuality, and race issues: (a) race and sexuality on occasion, focuses on how gay Black men and lesbians have become part of comedy and fun rather than taken seriously for

their political realities and civil rights. (b) queer Black thought, reveals the truths of race and sexuality in the US. The essays in this section point out specific flaws in Whiteness. These papers also inform how openly bisexual men and Black gay men are disregarded at their workplaces due to racial social stigmas. In (c) straight Black talk, McBride (2005) places the subject of sexuality and race into the lens of theory and intellectualism. The collection of these essays provides the tools for the awareness of inequality in the Black community and represents how bisexual and Black gay men are ostracized in Black culture due to their sexual identity (McBride, 2005). His literature offered contemporary cultural criticism of the Black community for not accepting homosexuality as a Black cultural norm.

Woodard (2014) discussed homoeroticism within enslavement culture in the US. His literature reveals how systemic racism and Whiteness have reinforced stereotypes of masculinity and sexuality in Black men. During slavery and continuing into present day, Black Americans deal with the emasculation of Black men, sexual assault against Black men and women, and being brutally murdered. In short, Black men were and continued to be victims of institutionalized racism and psychological torture. Neal (2013) argued that Black male bodies were often thought to be in need of policing or seen as a criminal body. He emphasized Black male bodies were not actually how they were portrayed in Whiteness. Rather stereotypes of Black male bodies have been playing out in every institutional arena from art education to Black visual culture (Neal, 2013). Similar to Collins (2004), Neal (2013) also wrote about Black masculinity in which he discussed how true Black masculinity and sexuality were mainly seen in relationship to hip-hop thugs, petty criminals, and pimps. He questioned the ways in which television and media interpret DL as queer Black bodies and compared queerness to Black masculinity.

A Historical Synopsis of The DL Phenomenon

While many more White men are on the DL, the term DL is largely synonymous with Black men and conjure up a whole set of culturally distinct behavioral images. Interestingly, the term DL and ascribed attributes actually come from White culture and was one way for the White community to pejoratively label a subset of the Black community in a way that would stain Black culture as a whole (Cohen 1997, Scott, 2010). To retrace its background, DL is a term with a complex history (Boykin, 2005; and Scott, 2010). The first known person to use the term *down low* was George Hanna, who used the phrase in the 1930 song, "Boy in the Boat", about lesbian

women. The term became popular in the late 1990s in the Black community, and was used to describe any kind of slick, secretive behavior, including infidelity in relationships (Boykin, 2005). The type of Black masculinity usually associated with the image of being DL is ultimately hyper-masculine and mirrors hip-hop culture (hooks, 2004). For example, Collins (2004) suggested in her book, *Issues of Black Masculinity*, that the hyper-masculine image of Black men continues to be shaped by the media, morphing into images of pimps, hustlers, and players, which is a reflection of hip-hop culture.

For a very long time some people have been arguing that homosexuality is natural and that there are large percentages of all mammals that have homosexual relationships which could just be part of evolution. I believe that nature has a reason for homosexuality. However, Collins (2004) also suggests Black DL men avoid being labeled DL and/or being characterized as being dominated by Black men, by acting and becoming hyper-masculine and hyper-aggressive. She further suggested that White dominated media's representations of Black masculinity positions Black men as aggressive thugs who refute being weak by being dominated by strong Black women. Collins (2004) went on to claim that DL stereotypes serve to preserve ideological oppression and stigmatize Black men's sexuality. For instance, Black DL men are not deemed to be truly Black because Black male sexuality, through the eyes of White dominated media, is defined through the lens of promiscuity and heterosexuality. Similar to Collins, I think the truth is, this is just further reenforcing support for the sexual promiscuity label associated with DL.

The conflict and confusion surrounding DL Black men continues to be connected to promiscuity, untrustworthiness, weakness, Whiteness, and diseases. "Conversation about DL started in 2000, when the CDCP, published findings speculating that surges in HIV/AIDS infection among heterosexual Black women could hypothetically be attributed to, as the CDCP termed it, a "bisexual bridge" (Boykin, 2005, p. 85). As a result of this speculative rhetoric, the notion of DL Black men as the main carriers and spreaders of HIV/AIDS started to appear in White dominated media around February 2001 (Boykin, 2005).

New York Times Magazine columnist, Benoit Denizet-Lewis (2003), asserted DL men were more than a configuration of selected sexual conduct by some; DL was a methodical subculture with its own secretive "vocabulary and customs" (p. 30). Denizet-Lewis (2003) used a tone that conveyed White dominated medias' portrayal of the

pervasive behavior of Black DL men as being covert and engaging in risky sexual practices common to DL sex, such as cruising, sex parties, and sexual promiscuity in parks, and public bathrooms. Denizet-Lewis (2003) concluded his text with myriad strategically selected quotations from numerous public health organizations, which were focused on the myth that Black DL men almost always cause heterosexual Black women considerable health risk because of their risky and secretive sexual behavior. Denizet-Lewis (2003) also falsely asserted that DL is solely a Black phenomenon that is distinctly connected to fixed notions of Black cultural, societal, and gender norms. In other words, DL is inextricably associated with historically racist claims of Black sexual aberration and anxieties about Black gay men's responsibility for the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Therefore, Denizet-Lewis' (2003) work backed a hegemonic racial framing of overall Black identity as marred by the figure of the DL man. For example, Feagin (2009) claimed in US culture there is a predominant White racial framing of Black men that includes an "overarching worldview that encompasses important racial ideas, terms, images, emotions, and interpretations that are animated by narratives, characters and plotlines of White superiority and Black inferiority" (p. 3). Within four years of Denizet-Lewis' (2003) article, DL became predominantly and pervasively publicly associated only with Black men. In the summer 2003 queer issue of *The Village Voice,* contributing writer and NYU professor Jason King published *Remixing the Closet: The Down Low A Way of Knowledge.* Boykin (2005) claimed, King's controversial op-ed article questioned the relationship between HIV/AIDS and DL. Indeed, the article was the first mainstream piece to openly criticize negative mainstream media depictions of DL and put a different spin on the DL phenomenon. Which creates an opportunity to discuss some curricular and pedagogical implications within the fields of visual culture and art education.

Towards Curricular Implications for Art Education

For a further look into the question, my paper considers pertinent societal issues of Whiteness and its effects on the representations of DL and Black identity in Black visual culture that should be of concern to the field of art education. Art educator, Olivia Gude (2009) stated,

> through artworks, students absorb the perceptions of
> others—situated in other times and places, embodied

in other races, genders, ages, classes, and abilities. Through art, the self becomes vitally interested in other selves, sensing the possibilities and problems of those selves within oneself (p. 13).

Here, Gude (2009) indirectly posits, art education is the landscape where the interpretation and exploration of Black visual culture can be addressed. Additionally, she wrote, "Through quality art education, youth develop the capacity to attend to the nuances of meaning. Most significantly, engagement with the arts teaches youth to perceive complexity as pleasure and possibility, not as irritating uncertainty" (p. 13). In short, through art education, students cultivate heightened skills for understanding the meaning making in the underserved students in classrooms.

Some scholars in the field of art education base their work heavily on critical pedagogy and visual culture (see Carpenter, 2005; Carpenter & Tavin, 2010; Garoian, 1999; Freedman, 2004; Grant, 2013; Rolling, 2010). Critical pedagogy, is a form of education in which students are encouraged to question dominant or common notions of meaning and form their own understanding of what they learn. For example, art educator, Charles Garoian (1999) argued for challenging and disrupting formal Western epistemic education. He argued for the creation of liminal spaces in the classroom where critical thinking can be injected into the education process. As such, he wrote: "Critical thinking…enables students to cross historically and institutionally determined disciplinary and cultural boundaries in order to gain multiple perspectives and to participate in the discourse on educational content" (p. 49). In the context of creating liminal spaces, I assert within art education classroom environments, my personal experiences as a Black male interpreting and researching visual representations of DL grounded in critical pedagogy and critical race theory serves as examples to illustrate concepts of Black visual culture, visual culture, and theoretical examples within course lessons, assignments, and readings.

With this approach, I can create a classroom environment that is inter-contextual. Garoian (1999) writes: "classrooms are transformed into liminal spaces, sites of contestation where the struggle to learn takes place as the politics of learning is challenged with the interpersonal, interdisciplinary, and intercultural perspectives that students bring to the school" (p. 49). Additionally, Curriculum theorist Bill Pinar (2004) stated, "Curriculum theory is the interdisciplinary study of the educational experience" (p. 25). Taken one step further, by considering

study as a form of interpretation, in a previous publication, I posited "theorizing curriculum in art education is the interdisciplinary interpretation of the art educational experience" (Grant, 2014, p. 168). Lastly, to be able to see visual culture in complex, complicated, contradictory, and multifaceted ways, my students and I can cultivate and explore the underserved students which are heretofore veiled. We should examine visual culture to reveal racialized conflicts, socio-economic status, caste system, and other by-products of Whiteness and historical antecedents such as found in the Jim Crow era, the Black Power Movement, and the Civil Rights Movement. Educators and scholars have already explored visual culture in the past (Carpenter & Sourdot, 2010; Jhally & Lewis, 1992). However, more work is needed on a broader scale in order to add to and augment the prospects, challenges, probable uses, and effects of Whiteness in art education curriculum and pedagogical praxis.

While DL in Black visual culture is developing a following with gay men and lesbians, it is still considered by many to be a low point in the history of different facets in Black communities' representations of gay men. So, I asked myself, can one productively generalize about DL and Black gay men's lived experiences or about Black identity in light of the many *crosscutting* considerations which complicate appeals to unitary racial identities? If so, how can one accommodate these complications? If not, what alternative approach might do the useful work that one might want these appeals to do? To this point, these considerations are not just for understanding this question about multifaceted notions of Black identities or Black lived experiences or to argue about the distinctive identities of the self from a particular perspective. They are to aid in assisting understanding the ways in which I as a Black gay man learn Black self-consciousness, masculinities, sexualities, and the unfathomable interactions that I have with White hegemonic society which compel me to certain actions. One approach of viewing what my experiences' can offer today's world is, there are no absolute or fixed determinants to identity. This process requires a certain awareness in order to create a space where individuals are not forced to develop a double consciousness, but to be able to develop, as Du Bois (1903/ 1989) would put it, "to merge his double self into a better and truer self" (p. 3). Instead through using counter narratives to view DL and Black gay men's lived experiences allows for a multitude of multiple individual identities and shared complexities of encumbrances.

Using my lived experiences as interpretation of my Black identities as a lens to cross-examine enables me to be legitimized in and of society.

Through the visual, we can utilize information to better inform how we view identity in educational spaces. We must be aware of how environments and individuals or environments and the organisms are interconnected and also affect the development of self-consciousness and identities (Dewey, 1897/1971). This requires that we begin, as James Baldwin (1991) argues, with our individual wounded selves. But we still have to end in a place where, together, we are working to our last breath to make a better world. For example, to understand how we learn about ourselves and how we develop self-consciousness requires an orientation to inquiry that is open, critical, and conjunctive, rather than narrow, critical and exclusive. This same orientation is beneficial in the creation of schools and the development of educational curriculum in disciplines such as art education.

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Whiteness, Artist Identities, and Artworld Spaces

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers a research study into the artist identity formation in young people engaged in a teen arts internship program at a contemporary arts center in post-Katrina New Orleans using the construct of whiteness to examine access to artist identities and artworld spaces. Art has always been embedded into the cultural and spiritual practices of people's everyday lives. Yet, modern and contemporary artworld identities and spaces have been shaped by exclusionary and oppressive practices. In the city of New Orleans, there is a persistent presence of African American art and cultural practices that thrive outside of artworld institutions. And yet, as this study demonstrates, artworld identities and spaces within the city of New Orleans and beyond, even when they espouse social justice orientations, often remain within the milieu of whiteness and related power structures.

Keywords: art education; arts education; artist; racism; whiteness

Whiteness, Artist Identities, and Artworld Spaces

At the 2018 Art Education Research Institute (AERI) panel, "Race and Racism in 21st Century Art Education," with Joni Acuff, B. Stephen Carpenter, Amelia Kraehe, Michelle Bae Dimitriadis, and Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández, the panelists circulated a series of prompting questions around race in art education research. One of these questions was: "How do we study race when it is masked in art education?" This question is key because it points to the insidious nature of the perpetuation of racialized oppression in art education. In this paper, I consider this question in conjunction with the following prompt from the call for papers for this special issue of the *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education*: "What are the visible and invisible structures that reproduce white supremacy and privilege in art education?" Both questions speak to that which is visible and invisible in terms of racialized injustices in relation to art education and point to the ways in which whiteness, as a structure of racialized oppression, functions in often hidden ways within conceptualizations of artist identities and artworld spaces.

Race, Racism, and Art Education

There is a growing body of scholarship related to the ways in which

racialized structures of oppression such as whiteness function within art and art education. The 2018 AERI panel on "Race and Racism in 21st Century Art Education" coincided with the release of *The Palgrave Handbook of Race and the Arts in Education* (Kraehe, Gaztambide-Fernandez, Carpenter, 2018), an edited volume that explores the ways in which race and racism are embedded within the arts in education. In addition, recent scholarship has addressed the intersections of racialized identities and art education (e.g., Kraehe, 2015; Acuff, 2018; Rolling and Bey, 2016; Wilson, 2017) and confronted the reluctance to address race and racism in art education (e.g., Desai, 2010; Lee, 2013; Knight, 2006). Through the work of these and other scholars, it is evident that racialized structures of oppression such as white supremacy are embedded within structures of art education, often in hidden ways.

Racism is not only rooted in attitudes, ideas, and bodies, it also permeates social structures, institutions, and is embedded within the visible and invisible modes of the ordering of social worlds, particularly in the United States (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). Ideologies about race in the United States have been pervasive, "making it nearly impossible to imagine nonracialized ways of thinking about identity, longing, and difference" (Haney López, 2006, p. 87). Haney López (2006) defines race as "the historically contingent social systems of meaning that attach to elements of morphology and ancestry… [a] definition can be pushed on three different levels, the physical, the social, and the material" (p. 10) as he describes the ways in which race and, especially whiteness have been constructed through the legal system in the United States. Race and racism have been instrumental in shaping oppressive structures in the United States (Hughes, 1933; Roediger, 1991; Williams, 1991). Hence, it is relevant to acknowledge the material and discursive realities of the inequities tied to racialized identity categories and to acknowledge that race is an ever-present social force that shapes positional identities in the United States and beyond. As such, structures that utilize whiteness as a tool of oppression and injustice are inextricably linked to many aspects of society, including art education.

Dyer (1997) describes whiteness as "everything and nothing" (p. 45) because it is insidiously pervasive—to the point where those who are White-raced are often oblivious to the oppressive ways in which whiteness functions. Even within discourses of anti-racism, multiculturalism, and social justice, there remains a reluctance on the part of White people to acknowledge their responsibility and complicity in the maintenance of systems of oppression (Sullivan, 2006, 2014; Yancy, 2008, 2012, 2015). Sullivan (2014) contends that practices and discourses such as "dumping on white trash" (p. 23), "demonizing white ancestors" (p. 59), "color blindness" (p. 85), and "white guilt, shame, and betrayal" (p. 117) are deployed by white

people as attempts to be absolved from responsibility for racism. In the field of art education, this stealthily oppressive quality of whiteness often functions through a "colorblind racism" (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Bonilla-Silva, Lewis, & Embrick, 2004 as cited in Desai, 2010) that avoids the acknowledgement of how racialized systems of oppression function to reproduce inequitable outcomes within structures of the arts and education (Desai, 2010; Lee, 2013; Knight, 2006).

Racialized inequity in the arts and arts education is prevalent and deeply entrenched within these structures of oppression around whiteness (Kraehe, 2017; Kraehe, Acuff, & Travis, 2016). Consequences of inequity in the arts and arts education include the fact that within artworld spaces, the conceptualization of artist identities is often restricted to those with rarified talents and skills, those with access to elite education, and those who are aligned with powerful social networks. Although artistic practices and artistic identities exist outside of the capitalist power structures of the artworld, because such structures in the United States are deeply intertwined with white supremacy, conceptualizations of the artist within the capitalist system are frequently conceived within an image of whiteness. As such, participation in the development of an artist identity and engagement in artworld spaces are often restricted around privileged racialized and class identities.

A Study of the Formation of Artist Identities in Artworld Spaces

In this paper, I describe a research study about the identity work of young people engaged in a teen arts internship program in summer 2016. The program was held at a contemporary arts center in post-Katrina New Orleans and it used the construct of whiteness to examine access to artist identities and artworld spaces. Art has always been embedded within the cultural and spiritual practices of people's everyday lives. Yet, Western modern and contemporary artworld identities and spaces have been shaped by the exclusionary practices informed by whiteness. In the city of New Orleans, there is a persistent presence of African American art and cultural practices that thrive outside of artworld institutions. And yet, as this study demonstrates, artworld identities and spaces within the city of New Orleans and beyond, even when they espouse social justice orientations, often remain within the milieu of whiteness and related power structures.

Using portraiture methodology (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) and social practice theory (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998), this study examined the identity work of young people engaged in a social justice-oriented teen arts internship program.

Portraiture methodology is a form of qualitative inquiry used in educational research that draws upon aspects of ethnographic, narrative, phenomenological, and arts-based methods (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Portraiture methodology is well-suited to research that examines educational experiences in terms of aspects of identity such as race and its intersections with class, gender, sexuality. The theoretical perspectives of critical race theory (e.g., Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Williams, 1991) and critical whiteness studies (e.g., Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Doane & Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Dyer, 1997; Roediger, 1991; Sullivan, 2006, 2014; Thandeka, 2000; Yancy, 2008, 2012, 2015) are useful lenses for understanding how white racism functions within all aspects of society, including the arts and education. Indeed, several educational researchers have advocated for combining portraiture methodology with critical race theory in educational research (e.g., Chapman, 2005; 2007; Dixson, 2005; Dixson, Chapman, & Hill, 2005; Ewing, 2016; Harding, 2005; Keene, 2014, 2016). Social practice theory considers how identities are developed and mobilized within practices both personal and social (Holland et al., 1998). Social practice theory has been widely applied to understand the complex processes of identity formation within educational contexts (e.g., Calabrese Barton et al., 2013; Hatt, 2012; Leander, 2002; Lei, 2003; Wortham, 2004). Through the lens of this teen arts internship, the objectives of this study were to utilize a critical arts-based portraiture methodology to investigate contextual influences on identity work, narrative-based and activity-based practices of artist identity work, and consequences of artist identity work in young people. Methods employed in this study included observational field notes, interviews, and photographic documentation of artifacts and artworks created throughout the internship.

In this study, I examined the experiences of young people who identify as artists as they engaged in an internship specifically designed to help them explore themselves in this role, as they considered how and why they create art, and experimented with the implications of being artists. As a former New Orleans public school art teacher, when I first set out to do research into artist identity formation in teens in New Orleans, I had intended to examine these processes by studying the experiences of young people from marginalized social identity positions, particularly Black teenagers attending New Orleans public or charter schools. However, I decided, as a White female researcher, to follow Nader's (1972) concept of "studying up"—to conduct research not only on those who are marginalized, but on those who are in positions of privilege. Gaztambide-Fernández (2009), who has done research with students in elite settings including boarding schools and specialized arts high schools, argues that "studying the experiences of students in the most privileged educational

settings sheds light on the social and cultural dynamics that shape inequality across the educational system" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2009, p. 1). Thus, I determined that as a researcher who was in a position of relative social power based upon race, class, educational status, and/or other factors, that I should examine systems of inequity, such as the whiteness inherent within contemporary institutions of art and conceptualizations of the artist, by studying privileged youth.

In relation to the population of New Orleans as a whole, the intern population included disproportionally more White teens than teens of other racial identifications. In 2015, the total racial demographics of the population of youth under 20 years of age in New Orleans was 68% Black, 21% White, 6% Hispanic, and 3% Asian (Perry, 2016). Of the 18 interns in the program, 61% (11 interns) identified as White, 28% identified as Black (5 interns) (including one intern who identified as biracial—Black and White) and 11% (2 interns) who identified as Hispanic or Latina. There were 5 interns who identified as male (including 1 intern who identified as transgender male) (28% of the interns) and 13 interns who identified as female (72% of the interns). There were 6 interns who openly identified as members of the LGBTQ+ community (33% of the interns). In the wake of school desegregation efforts of the 1950s-1990s, a majority of White and/or middle-class families with children either left the city of New Orleans for the surrounding suburbs or enrolled in private schools within the city (Bankston & Caldas, 2002) with 22% of all children in New Orleans and a majority of White students in New Orleans attending private schools in 2017 (Weixler, Barrett, & Harris, 2017). Most of the interns in the study attended private schools, highly selective public schools, or were homeschooled, in general alignment with White racial identification and upper middle-class status. Participation in this internship program itself is an indicator of how, as Lackey and Murphy (2011) note, middle class parents often enroll their children in "out-of-school art education to foster socialization and cultural capital" (p. 3). Such socialization and cultural capital-building coalesces around a climate of whiteness and efforts to claim upper middle-class status.

While the central research questions for my study did not specifically focus on race, racism, or whiteness, through my observations and interviews with the study participants, I began to see how whiteness played a major role in the internship, and how this internship was representative of broader concerns in the field of art education around (in)equity tied to racism. One view of the data I collected in my study revealed much about the patterns of artist identity formation in teenagers. Yet, upon further

reflection upon these data, I began to see that many of these narratives also functioned as master narratives, reinforcing status quo views of what it means to be an artist, who is invited into the artworld, and who feels comforted by the so-called safe spaces of the arts. And, although such critical race and critical whiteness analysis was largely invisible and absent from verbal narratives of the interns, I observed that their conceptualizations of the artist and the artworld were largely predicated on whiteness. In the following passages, using examples from this study, I explore two central themes in relation to whiteness in art education: 1) Whiteness, Identity and Discourses of The Artist and 2) Whiteness, Belonging, and Exclusion in Artworld Spaces.

Whiteness, Identity, and Discourses of The Artist

Many different discourses circulate about what it is to be an artist (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2008). In Western society, art is often conceptualized as the purview of the elite, with the artist conceived in the image of a White male genius (Soussloff, 1997, 2006; Wittkower, & Wittkower, 1963). These conceptualizations of the arts and artists solidify the idea that the arts are the purview of the elite and the so-called talented perpetuating exclusion of others. Thus, within arts discourses, whiteness functions as a visible and invisible structure of exclusion and oppression. As Gaztambide-Fernández (2008) points out, there is extensive instructional material in how to teach art and how to train artists in the techniques of their artistic media. However, "there is little theoretical or empirical work addressing the educational experiences of young students in the arts" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2008, p. 235) in relation to aspects of sociocultural identities such as race and class. Gaztambide-Fernández (2008) thus recommends that there be more research into the sociocultural experiences of artist identity formation in youth, stating:

> This research might consider, for instance, how young artists construct their own ideas about what it means to be an artist and of their own social roles and responsibilities. Different educational contexts and experiences likely shape the meaning students make of their identifications as artists and of their roles as cultural workers differently, and these processes are likely to be greatly influenced by dynamics of race, class, gender, and sexuality in complicated ways. (p. 252)

Conceptualizations of the artist are influential in shaping artist identity formation in youth. Gaztambide-Fernández (2008)

theorizes four ways in which the artist has been presented in society: artist as "civilizer" (p. 242), one who creates art for art's sake and contributes to the development of civilization; artist as "exalted creator" (p. 241), a creative genius set apart from the rest of society; artist as "border crosser" (p. 245), an activist who has the power to transform society through their work; and artist as "representator" (p. 247), one who represents everyday people through art. The development of artists in educational contexts is often preceded by institutional actors identifying particular students as artistic or talented in the arts. Through these identifications within institutions of arts education such as schools and museums, access to arts education is often aligned racial and class-based privilege (Gaztambide-Fernández, Saifer, & Desai, 2013; Kraehe, 2017). When artistic talent is viewed as an inherent identity characteristic rather than a socially constructed one, it limits access to the development of artist identities to the few. This rarefication of artist identities places limitations on who can access an artist identity, but also circumscribes who an artist is and even what art is. Narrow conceptualizations reinforce mythologies around "the arts as 'white property'" (Gaztambide-Fernández, Kraehe, & Carpenter, 2018, p. 1; see also Harris, 1995) belonging to the creative, individualist, genius artist who is historically framed as a White male (Travis & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2018). This imagined vision of who an artist is or should be is restrictive and may lead to artist "identity foreclosure" (Charland, 2010; Marcia, 1966; Rolling & Bey, 2016) or a dismissal or a giving up of an artist identity before fully exploring the possibility that one could adopt or adapt such an identity.

As the young artists in this study told their stories and participated in discussions with others throughout the internship, they utilized common conceptualizations about artists that placed them within the tradition of the life story narrative of the artist (Soussloff, 1997, 2006; Wittkower, & Wittkower, 1963). These discursive conceptualizations of what an artist is permeated discussions and were fully integrated into how the interns viewed themselves in relation to an artist identity. The interns' repeated conceptualizations about artists throughout the study included: the artist as talented, the artist as creative, the artist as passionate, the artist as emotional, and the artist as activist. In narrative depictions of artistic motivation, the interns often depicted the expression of oneself through artistic means as emanating from sources beyond the conscious control of the artist. For example, artistic inclinations were viewed as stemming from talent, passion, emotions, and/or inherited through familial ties, as when Alex,[1] a White transgender male intern, simply stated of art: "it's my passion."

1   Pseudonyms were utilized for youth research participants.

Discourses around "passion" and the arts are often represented

as an aspect of "talent," yet, as Gaztambide-Fernández, Saifer, & Desai (2013) assert, such passion and talent is often an indicator of the ways in which artistic identification is linked to socioeconomic status. This and other depictions of what artists do and what motivates what they do deployed mythologies that characterized artistic inclinations and activities as beyond the control of the artist and attributed to seemingly inherent characteristics like passion and talent.

As the young artists used these ways of talking about artists, they were not only trying to describe what an artist is, but also negotiating their own identities as artists. Most of the interns named themselves as artists directly. Others were more ambivalent about whether they felt that they could claim an artist identity, questioning whether they felt that they existed within the realm of "artist." This analysis is focused on the way the interns talked about themselves as artists and the influences on their development as artists. The interns represented various conceptualizations of what an artist is and does and considering how they connect with these ideas—how they consider whether or not they are artists using terms like "artsy" and "creative."

Often, the interns situated their artist self as a radical self. Part of the reasoning behind this lies in the discourses around artists as outside of the mainstream. This situating of oneself outside of norms seemed to facilitate an allegiance with activism or for using art to stand against oppression. Yet, these allegiances with the avant-garde serve to reinforce alliances with whiteness in the context of the capitalist artworld (Haiven, 2018). Here, they situate themselves as a "'certain kind of person'" (Gee, 2000-01, p. 25), an artist, through their experiences and affinities with the arts. The irony of the individualistic model of the artist is that you need to be like other artists in order to be considered an artist. Many expressed a confident audacity in calling themselves artists. Jasmine, a Black female intern, felt confident in calling herself an artist, saying:

> I consider myself an artist because I make art to teach people about different things and hopefully connect with them and understand how I feel and hopefully broaden other people's perspective on the world and help them realize it's not just them. There's other people.

For the most part, the interns in this program did not seem to feel particularly insecure in calling themselves artists, although there were some exceptions. Rose, a White female intern, said, "I don't

know if I consider myself an artist. I think I'm starting to." This intern pondered whether others would ask, "What gives you the right to be an artist?"

Some of the interns expressed a more expansive view of what an "artist" is and thus felt more confidence in claiming such an identity. When asked to elaborate on his definition of an artist, Tristan, a student who identified himself as biracial (Black and White) said that an artist is "someone who inspires people without actually trying to. You're just doing what you do and people like it just because it's you. It's just pure you." This wider understanding of the concept of the artist opens up the potential for anyone to participate in artistic practices and offers a view of art, creativity, and cultural production that is more fully integrated into everyday life. Tristan reiterated this view as follows: "Everyone is an artist in a way. If you're creating something and people are getting things out of it. If you're helping people out in a certain way, you're an artist. Plain and simple." However, while Tristan expressed these open-ended views of what an artist is, some of the others were less confident in their appraisals of their potential to claim an artist identity.

Along with negotiating and narrativizing one's artistic identity, the interns were simultaneously engaged in negotiating aspects of their sociocultural identities. The entanglement of sociocultural identities and artist identities through discourses of the artist framed through a racialized capitalist system influences access to the claiming of artist identities. Hence, in the modern and contemporary artworld, the formation of artist subjectivities is often situated within discourses of whiteness.

Whiteness, Belonging, and Exclusion in Artworld Spaces

At various points, the interns addressed the dual themes of belonging and exclusion in relation to their artist identities and artworld spaces. In describing the constructed nature of how things become viewed as art and how people become viewed as artists, Danto (1964) states that "to see something as art requires something the eye cannot decry-an atmosphere of artistic theory, a knowledge of the history of art: an artworld" (p. 580). Becker (1982) further defines the artworld as "the network of people whose cooperative activity, organized via their joint knowledge of conventional means of doing things, produces the kind of art works that art world is noted for" (x). While the practice of artmaking is not exclusive to any particular group of people and the artworld does not only consist of White artists, the artworld still functions as a system that upholds whiteness. In the case of the arts internship, as Lackey and Murphy (2011) state: "While non-school settings do hold vast potential for re-thinking and invigorating art education, they simultaneously provide fields of play that permit

those who already hold power and resources opportunities to activate privilege and maintain inequities in informal ways" (p. 4). Hence, while opportunities to participate in arts internships and other out-of-school arts education programming can offer the potential for critical engagement with artmaking and artistic identity development beyond that which is offered in school settings, such programming is often inequitably available in practice (Kraehe, 2017).

In this study, I conceptualize the artworld as a *figured world* (Holland et al., 1998). In the development of social practice theory of identity and agency, Holland et al. (1998) use the term *figured world* to describe culturally specific contexts in which identities are situated and given meaning. They define a figured world as "a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 52). Within figured worlds, identities act as "the imaginings of self in worlds of action" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 5). Through participation in figured worlds, identities are developed and enacted as people define themselves, are defined by others, and seek to reinforce these identities through lived practices. A practice orientation to understanding identity helps make evident how artist identities are formed and expressed within intersecting contextual figured worlds.

Like the artworld, the nature of a figured world is that it is a bounded system—albeit a flexible and ever-changing one. Whether one belongs or not is ever-changing, too. And, whether one wants to participate or not is also up for debate. Artistic environments such as specialized arts schools or other programming such as this internship were often described by the young artists as "safe spaces," "accepting," places where you can "be yourself," terminology often used to excuse such spaces from being considered non-inclusive, but this sense of "belonging" in the arts is really mostly applicable to people who already hold some sort of privileged positionality (Gaztambide-Fernández & Parekh, 2017). In conceptualizing social justice art education, Garber (2005) encourages art educators "to confront 'White' as a cultural space" (p. 15) within the context of art education. Dwyer and Jones (2000), in theorizing "White socio-spatial epistemology" (p. 209), describe some of the ways in which whiteness creates both conceptual and physical distance and boundaries as evidenced physically through entities such as segregated housing and schools, but also through psychological and social distance and boundaries. Relatedly, the artworld is a cultural space defined by whiteness and as such it functions as a space of racialized exclusion, boundaries, and hierarchies.

I asked some of the interns about their impressions of the space of the contemporary arts center. As some interns had more

familiarity with the contemporary arts center, they more easily adapted to the location and felt a sense of "belonging" in the space. Lucy, a White female intern, said the following about being in the contemporary arts center: "It's definitely a very artsy place. I think it has a really good atmosphere and a very creative atmosphere that's really nurturing if you're trying to make art." Of being in the space of the contemporary arts center, James, a White male intern, said that when he first came to the contemporary arts center, he was "shy," but that with time, he said: "I really feel almost at home here." Both Lucy and James had spent a significant amount of time at the contemporary arts center because of their involvement in multiple teen arts programs. Thus, they were able to provide vivid descriptions that captured both the physical space as well as the experience of being in the space and how being in the space has influenced them in their goals of becoming artists. Yet, as Sullivan (2006) writes, "space, race, and place are constituted transactionally such that space is raced and that bodies become raced through their lived spatiality" (p. 143). Hence, depictions of space are inevitably filtered through a racialized perspective.

The figurative space of the contemporary arts center and the teen arts internship is as relevant as the physical space in contributing to the young artists' senses of themselves. Many of the interns expressed that they felt as if the teen arts internship was a "safe space." For example, when I asked Alex, a White intern about what he liked about this internship program, he said:

> It's a very safe space. I feel like everyone can talk to each other and not feel like they're going to be judged by anyone. I feel like that's a very cool thing about it because we all have very similar mindsets because we're all artists.

However, some interns did not feel the same way about the program and expressed difficulty in connecting with others in the program.

Although Tristan understood the importance of the social aspects of artmaking and artistic identity development, he did not feel as if the arts internship program was helping him share in the experiences of other artists and connect with other artists. Tristan thus described his discomfort in the space:

> In this internship, everyone is extra quiet and it's hard to talk to everyone. I find myself leaving this room to go downstairs to the camp and talk to the people that I already know camp counselors because it's so hard

for the other interns to open up and it's so hard for me to open up as well. It's so awkward in here. It's so awkward. I remember one time I was like, "Okay, I'll come upstairs and eat lunch with them for once."

I was sitting there trying to talk and every time, someone would speak over me and they would change the subject before I would get my words out. I was just like, "You know what, I'm just going to leave." That's how it was. Even though we're all open and we all share the same opinions, it's not the same because I don't know them as well as I know other people. Even though we share similar views, we don't share the same common interests. I need to be able to share common interests and talk about things that I always talk about.

Tristan's perspective was in contrast to the way many of the White interns felt about the program. It is significant that Tristan not only felt awkward in this space that was deemed safe for some, but not necessarily for others, but that he also felt compelled to leave the physical space of the internship classroom (and the figured world of the internship) in order feel more comfortable and to connect with others with whom he shared "common interests." When I asked Tristan if there was anyone in the group that he felt that he connected with, he said: "Lauren. That's the only person that I've really been able to talk to because she hasn't had anyone to talk to either." I replied that "I noticed when she read her poem today, she used the word 'isolated.' That made me curious." Tristan then said, "Even though we do connect, she does isolate herself a little bit." Although I suspected that the climate of whiteness within the internship space may have contributed to Tristan and Lauren's feelings, as the White female researcher, I did not want to assume that this was the reason that Tristan felt "awkward" in this space. Hence, I probed Tristan with open-ended follow up questions as to why he and Lauren might have felt awkward and isolated. However, he did not offer any explanation for this.

Although I felt that there was likely a racialized component to these feelings of awkwardness and isolation because Lauren and Tristan were among the very few Black participants in the internship, I did not press Tristan to state that to me, presuming that he might not feel comfortable saying that to me because of my positionality as a White female researcher. However, upon further reflection, I have questioned my own reluctance to bring up the possibility of a racialized interpretation of the situation with the intern within this interview setting. As Sullivan (2006, 2014) asserts, White people are socialized to avoid discussions of

race and even though I aim to address race within my scholarship, I still find it difficult at times to fully engage in discussions of race and racism with others. The insidious nature of whiteness is that it is invisibly embedded within such spaces to the point where it becomes unspeakable. In doing research about race, the complex interchange between researcher and participant racialized positionalities is always at work, influencing what is spoken and unspoken within the context of the research (Widdance Twine & Warren, 2000).

Upon further analysis of these perspectives from the data that contradicted the dominant narrative of the arts internship as a welcoming space for all, I saw these feelings of awkwardness and isolation as reminiscent of the phenomenological concept of disorientation in relationship to the existence of racialized bodies in space both within oneself and in relation to others (Ahmed, 2008; Fanon, 1952; Yancy, 2008, 2012, 2015). Indeed, "many spaces that seem free of the impact of race and racism often subtly and invisibly privilege white over non-white people" (Sullivan, 2006, p. 143). As Ahmed (2008) writes, "an effect of being 'out of place' is also to create disorientation in others: the body of color might disturb the picture—and do so simply as a result of being in spaces that are lived as white" (p. 160). Hence, it is necessary to "consider racism an ongoing and unfinished history, which orients bodies in specific directions, affecting how they 'take up' space" (Ahmed, 2008, p. 111)—particularly in spaces that have been historically designated as "white spaces" such as museums and similar arts institutions.

Conclusions

Institutional sites of art education—K-12 schools, universities, museums, community arts centers—even with their increased interest in social justice perspectives, must strive for a multidimensional equity (Kraehe, 2017). Several factors contribute to exclusionary practices within artworlds. As demonstrated in this research, many young people who come to be orientated towards the arts feel as if they have found "safe spaces" where they can "be themselves" even when they may have felt alienated or isolated within other spaces. Yet, as this study demonstrates, the development of an artist identity is a multi-layered socially constructed process, discourses about "artists," "the arts," and "talent" continue to reinforce notions of exclusivity and restrict access to the formation of an artist identity to a select group, often those who are already privileged, and, often those who are White and male, perpetuating the perspective of "the arts as 'white property'" (Gaztambide-Fernández, Kraehe, & Carpenter, 2018, p. 1).

Researching the experiences of artist-identified youth revealed much about identity formation in young artists. And yet, in doing this work, I continually returned to the thought of "Who's not here?" I knew that I also needed to look at the big picture of who has access to this opportunity to develop themselves as artists in this setting at all. This program was technically open to all, but was it really equitably available if there was not widespread participation by individuals of color and individuals who were not of privileged class status?

Jordan is a Black male who attended the internship sporadically and yet his narrative, in its absence, is one of the most important ones of the entire study. At one point, I heard Jordan talking to the education coordinator about having difficulty finding a place to park his bike so that he could attend the internship and this exchange revealed something about why it was so difficult for him to get to the program regularly. Jordan's portrait in the study was incomplete because he stopped attending the internship program after only a few sessions. And yet, these attempts at participation indicated that he wanted to be present but was unable to be due to various barriers and obstacles. In addition to the example of Jordan who only attended sporadically, this study was unable to attend to the excluded perspectives of the other young artists in New Orleans who were not included in this internship at all. Considering Kraehe's (2017) arts equity framework is relevant here—because of inequitable distribution of resources like transportation, or time, or money, it is even difficult to enter out-of-school art programming in museums and community arts centers.

And while, the mere participation of young people of color in such programming is not enough to address the issues of whiteness within the artworld, cultural arts organizations that offer such programming for teens could extend further resources to support artistic development for members of marginalized communities. Further, although the focus of this study was an internship within an art institution, much of the identity work of young artists happens outside of such artworld institutions—in schools and communities. Therefore, more research into how artist identity work happens in school and community settings is needed. While this study focused primarily on young people for whom an identification as artists was already in their purview, further research into artist identity formation in youth from cultural perspectives outside of western notions of art and artists is warranted.

It is not to say that one would need to participate in any particular arts education program in order to be an artist and lay claim to

act of "transformational resistance … a critique of oppression and a desire for social justice" (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001, p. 319) and "possible futures [in the arts can] emerge through the interplay of schooling, social class, and subjectivity formation" (Gaztambide-Fernández, VanderDussen, and Cairns, 2014, p. 110) through participation in arts education.

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Re | Centering Indigenous arts in art education: Decolonizing identity politics, censorship, and home

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ABSTRACT

This manuscript critically examines the deployment and pervasiveness of Whiteness defined by structural power/knowledge relationships related to Indigenous ways of knowing and the arts. Spaces of inquiry include: settler colonial structures that perpetuate Indigenous cultural censorship exemplified during a three-day, professional development "Institute" that focused upon Native American art, education, and scholarship across a western-American tri-state region; additionally, the print exchange, "Home: Contemporary Indigenous Artists Responding," is leveraged to re | center Indigenous arts in arts education, further informing critical multicultural art education and decolonizing research methodologies.

"Sometimes being white and writing sympathetically about artists of color, you feel you're damned if you do, and damned if you don't, and the only way to continue is to be willing to have your foot in your mouth half of the time."

Lippard, 2008, p. 128

"(I)ndian, misgiven here in italics insinuates the obvious simulation and ruse of colonial dominance. Manifestly, the indian is an occidental misnomer, an overseas enactment that has no referent to real native cultures or communities."

Vizenor, 1999, p. vii

As a cisgendered white, male, artist, educator and researcher, I continue to experience my position working with those whose racial-socio-cultural-educational experience is different than mine, as I have written from and continue to define an alliance position in context with Indigenous artists, scholars, and educators (Kraehe, Acuff, Slivka, & Pfieler-Wunder, 2015; Slivka, 2015a, 2015b, 2016). I advance critical understandings of the construction and deployment of Whiteness in art education contexts intended to decolonize White discourses of identity politics, cultural censorship as White privilege and power (Acuff, 2018; Knight, 2006; Kraehe, Hood, & Travis, 2015) in relation to Indigenous peoples, arts, and their cultures to generate alliance positions with Indigenous-self-determining outcomes (Grande, 2004; Smith, 2012). Joni Boyd Acuff (2015) states:

> It is critical that a fear of inadequacy does not cripple or overwhelm teachers' desires to be multicultural educators. In order to fail and to learn from those failures, there must first be an attempt, a risk taken, and an overwhelming desire to be an effective educator. Embracing failure is imperative in order to build and identify new goals. This type of refocusing may result in more fruitful attempts at multiculturalism. (p. 35)

Acuff's (2015) recommendations for becoming critical multicultural educators suggests that failure, disequilibrium and reflexive response as learning, can generate intercultural alliances (Slivka, 2015a). In doing so, intercultural learning with Indigenous peoples requires permissions that are self-determined by those who agree to collaborate and partiality is presupposed by the non-Native educator's | researcher's ignorance and compliance in dominant-hegemonic systems that generate inequities through the deployment of (White) language, education, economics, religion, politics, racism,

etc. (Orelus, 2013).

Furthermore, learning includes redefining one's role within power/knowledge systems, while re-envisioning potentials for socio-cultural-educational-economic reform (Alcoff, 2006; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Giroux, 2011; Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011). Acts of re | centering Indigenous knowledge across varied and divergent arts contexts define decolonizing frameworks as "long-term process(es) involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power" (Smith, 2012, p. 98; see also Cajete, 2000; Grande, 2004).[1]

Such long-term processes are defined by time and investment of numerous stakeholders, which are often undermined by the structures that have been established by colonial inequity. Colonial structures are founded upon "the primary motive for elimination [which] is not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilization, etc.) but access to territory. Territoriality is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element" (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). While invasion is leveraged as the sole continuous structural event that defines settler colonialism, many heterogeneous structures were and continue to be deployed to achieve Indigenous divestment of land such as assimilationist education (Adams, 1995; Fear-Segal; 2007; Lentis, 2017; Slivka, 2011), enslaved labor (Frankema, 2010; Wolfe, 2006), and treaties (Konkle, 2004). Settler colonialism is a contemporary lived experience of Indigenous peoples, which requires decolonizing frameworks across numerous fields of power/knowledge relationships that have been firmly pressed into colonial structures that remain intact (Barker, 2012; Rowe & Tuck, 2017; Smith, 2012).

For example, linguistic and bureaucratic power continues to be leveraged as a naming practice that extends sedimented ideologies from settler colonialism, as I experienced during a 2015 academic conference in south Australia, where several White Australian audience members questioned my interchangeable use of the terms: American Indian, Indigenous, Native American, and the specific tribal affiliations. While it is true that the former terms were deployed since colonization, I have found them used interchangeably in recent academic writing throughout North America (Ballengee Morris, 2010; Ballengee Morris & Staikidis, 2017; Bequette, 2007; Eldridge, 2017; Grande, 2004; Gross, 2018; Pauly, 2016; Smith, 2012). The White Australians considered the terms problematic and assumed, Aboriginal, to be their politically correct identity marker. Alternatively, Schertow (2008) reports Grand Council Chief John Beaucage's stance,

1 The vertical symbol "|" is deployed throughout this manuscript to signify my limitations and cultural position as an outsider to Indigenous communities and the "re" serves as a proxy for "responding to." The "|" also serves as an intentional delay, shifting emphasis to the actions that define: centering Indigenous arts in art education.

It's actually offensive to hear that term (Aboriginal) used in reference to First Nations citizens. Our Chiefs (Anishinabek) are giving us direction to inform government agencies, NGOs, educators and media organizations that they should discontinue using inappropriate terminology when they are referring to the Anishinabek. We respect the cultures and traditions of our Metis and Inuit brothers and sisters, but their issues are different from ours. (para. 2)

Similar to Beaucage's aforementioned stance, the term "Aboriginal" was presented (to me) as an "Othering" discourse and contains mid-17th century English origins (*Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*, n.d.). Foucault (1972) defines discourses as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (p. 49). *Indigenous* peoples have experienced socio-cultural-racial-economical discourses deployed by settler colonialism institutions that circulate naming practices via context-specific terrains so as to naturalize hierarchical inequities and narrow understandings intended to ossify, reify, and position *Indigenous* peoples as belonging to a perceived collective deficit model and in need of reform/control (Alcoff, 2006). This is just one tactic deployed to maintain settler colonialism. Furthermore, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) writes "The term, 'indigenous' is problematic in that it appears to collectivize many distinct populations whose experiences under imperialism have been vastly different" (p. 6).

Ultimately, naming beyond the specific names of the Peoples as they know it, can reinforce colonizing discourses, as Grand Council Chief John Beaucage explained, context impinges upon specificity. While I adhere to Eldridge's (2017) writing practice that uses "the terms '*Indigenous,*' '*Native,*' '*Native American,*' and '*Indian*' interchangeably [including specific autonyms]…by Native people in referencing themselves" (p. 36; see also Grande, 2004, p. 8), deploying multiple identifications throughout this writing can continue reification. Therefore, I engage with decolonizing methodologies by occupying the dominant naming structures noted above, with the following terminology Indigenous, Native, Native American, and Indian aligned with the epigraph, "misgiven here in italics insinuates the obvious simulation and ruse of colonial dominance" (Vizenor, 1999, p. vii, emphasis added) for destabilizing colonizing structures. Next, colonial cultural censorship is discussed as it impacted Duane (Dewey) Goodwin while he burned sage in a stone-carving workshop for the University of Northern Colorado during the summer of 2016.

I conclude with overarching beliefs and ontologies from twelve Indigenous artists in a printmaker's exchange entitled, "Home:

Contemporary Indigenous Artists Responding" organized by Melanie Yazzie (2016), Professor of Art and Head of Printmaking, University of Colorado at Boulder. As the invited essayist, artist, and ally I address settler colonialism, through the establishments of socio-cultural-racial-economic structures related to identity politics; "towards the development of global *indigenous* strategic alliances" (Smith, 2012, p. 108, emphasis added).

Healing and recovery: Cultural censorship and resistances to institutional hegemony

The University of Northern Colorado hosted *Indigenous* artists, scholars, and educators to address "Interchange: Arts in contemporary and traditional culture." A National Endowment for the Arts grant was sought and secured in support of a three-day, intensive, professional development institute for teachers, artists, students, and community members that centered upon *Indigenous* artists, scholars, and educators including: Melanie Yazzie (Diné), Gregg Deal (Pyramid Lake Paiute), Rose Simpson (Diné), Christine Ballengee Morris (Cherokee), Eryka Charley (Navajo) among many others. Four artists traveled from northern Minnesota; Duane (Dewey) and Teresa (Bambi) Goodwin (White Earth Anishinaabe), Pat Kruse and his son Gage Kruse (Red Cliff Anishinaabe). All Anishinaabeg artists hosted hands-on workshops over the three-day institute as keynote artists. A number of invited speakers including Eryka Charley, Director of *Native American* Student Services at the University of Northern Colorado and Dewey Goodwin agreed to participate in IRB approved research, and audio data was recorded during one of the sessions, since I was interested in studying the intersections of the arts and leadership during the three day event.

On the first day and prior to Goodwin's stone carving workshop, I offered him northern Minnesota sage, picked while we harvested wild blueberries together the previous summer. I was compelled to offer sage given my past experiences attending workshops led by Goodwin (Slivka, 2015a). He accepted my offer and placed the sage into a ceramic smudge bowl crafted by his wife, Bambi, who gifted it to me during the summer of 2012. Prior to the institute, a phone-conference was held with the planning committee and it was brought to our attention that if anything was burned such as sage, which may occur since Indigenous artists were attending, it would require orchestration of the following actions:

- The Police Department (PD) will be called to let them know we are smudging.
- The sage must be lit outside on the sidewalk low and towards the middle away from vegetation. Then the sage and smoke should be trapped inside

a glass or cooking type jar and tightly closed.

- Once in the room, the door must be shut then the smoke released (after double checking the detector is covered). Outside the door, a towel will be placed making sure no smoke leaks under the door.
- Open windows in the room to release the smoke outside.
- Do not open the door until smoke has gone outside.
- All sage and materials should be tightly closed in a glass jar and must be removed from the room and campus after the event.
- Thirty minutes later, the PD are called to say we are finished.

This information was sent to the Goodwins through email and nothing further was discussed prior to the event. On the day of his workshop, Dewey Goodwin lit the sage and he offered a prayer, inviting only those who wished to approach and smudge to do so. He explained:

> I came in here with an open heart and I thought it was okay to burn the sage and explain to the students that this is how I do things at home...When they (students) come into the classroom I thank the Creator who gave me this classroom. He gave me this life to do the best I can to help people. (Slivka, 2016, audio file)

After some time had passed, the burning sage wafted through the hallways and I felt obligated to inform the conference organizers that sage was lit. I was driven by my desire to negotiate my institutional affiliation and obligation to the university that employed me, while providing a platform for cultural practices to be expressed. While in the moment, I didn't expect the fervent chain of reactions that ultimately enforced the institutional directions of censorship: the burning sage was captured in a glass vase so that it desisted from producing smoke in a Euro-American space, while a wet towel was placed at the closed classroom door; windows were opened and fans were turned on in order to clear the air space. Goodwin reflected:

> I thought it was okay. It started out okay. Then all of a sudden, I didn't know what to think. Stop; and let it go; and forget about it. But you know I've experienced some things like that in the past. But, for us here, that work with education, work with children- our children- are the ones that are going to carry on, so we need to do the best we can and give them a solid beginning and education that's equal. In our culture, everything is holistic. Everything has equal parts,

and it's important. If prayer is important for you to do every day, then that's accepted. (Slivka, 2016, audio file)

These transcribed excerpts took place on the third and final day, during a workshop where I was slated to give a presentation on the topic of critical multiculturalism in art education. I had met with Charley after the cultural censorship of Goodwin's smudging and we agreed that the conference attendees should be addressed concerning the nature and impact of these events. I introduced the session and disclosed the shift in topics.

Eryka Charley introduced herself in Diné and then spoke in English about her family in order for the audience members to know where she calls home and to understand her own complex personhood, which Gordon (1997) states is "conferring the respect on others that comes from presuming that life and people's lives are simultaneously straightforward and full of enormously subtle meaning" (as cited in Tuck, 2009, p. 420). Charley also noted her role as a liaison for visiting Indigenous peoples to the institutional campus:

> (W)hen *Native* people enter into our spaces they should feel welcome and that they feel appreciated. Especially since the invitation comes from us…that is the same to me, on a traditional level of inviting them into my *house,* inviting them into my *home*. UNC is a part of my *home*…(b)eing interrupted in kind of a prayer...is also the realization that I am here present today 'cause because of life, land, and liberty was sacrificed here…but most importantly it was a prayer that was shared and said…centuries ago for me to be here. (Slivka, 2016, audio file, emphasis added)

Charley highlighted the importance to honor and respect *Indigenous* visitors to an institution founded upon Western ontologies by implicating the institution's occupation of land, as lands that had once been part of the *Indigenous* peoples way of living, by noting them as "*home.*" She further explained the centrality of reciprocity and spirituality that has manifested her own complex personhood, and related intergenerational respect by performing culturally specific processual practices when welcoming *Native* people. Pauketat and Meskell (2010) explain:

> The biographies, genealogies, and histories of people, places…are not simply the residuals of cultural processes; they are cultural processes (Pauketat 2001). That is, they are accumulations that inform the now as much as they record the then. (p. 196)

Intergenerational respect manifests in many different actions such as requesting guidance from an elder as Goodwin explained:

> I was told by some of our oldest elders, 'Give thanks for the things that you do. Smudge what you are working with and ask for direction, and strength, and guidance.' So I try to do that, 'cause this old lady told me...You know, when you are working with your rock, that rock has a spirit. It's alive and there's something in there trying to come out of it. It's trying to work its way out. I was selected, you might say, gifted to be abled [sic] to do that, you know, to bring that spirit out of that rock...So, the saging helps me to understand more about what I'm doing. (Slivka, 2016, audio file)

Goodwin illuminates an animic ontology that defines his spiritual practice that many Anishinaabeg similarly uphold and practice (Gross, 2016; Johnston, 1996; Peacock & Wisuri, 2002). While my intentions were altruistic, my assumptions and complicity within institutional structures of power/knowledge impinged on the goals I sought to achieve related to intercultural communication and reciprocity through the arts. Battiste posits, "Ethical research must begin by replacing Eurocentric prejudice with new premises that value diversity over universality" (2008, p. 503). Even though the institutional sage-burning protocol was shared through email, I missed opportunity to review the protocol relationally-with Goodwin prior to offering sage, which therefore manifested institutional racism in the form of cultural censorship that revealed a universalism when responding to cultural-specific practices. Furthermore, Shoshana Felman states, "Ignorance is nothing other than a desire to ignore: its nature is less cognitive than performative...it is not a simple lack of information but the incapacity - or the refusal - to acknowledge one's own implication in the information" (cited in Giroux, 2011, p. 82). My desire to welcome Goodwin and support his cultural practices manifested censorship due to hegemonic structures defined by performative ignorance that ultimately othered Goodwin and his cultural practices. Goodwin responded to being censored and charged the art educators in attendance of the Institute, which extends to all pedagogues:

> I just want to thank all you folks here for coming to this and get a little bit of our beliefs and traditions that you can take into your classrooms and share with your children. Our children are hungry to learn about *Native American* culture and your job is to give them the best truthful knowledge learning about *Native* culture. (Slivka, 2016, audio file)

While education in Euro-American schools is a complicated space in need of constant negotiation, "educators must also respect the fact that Indigenous knowledge can only be fully known from within the community contexts and only through prolonged discussions" (Battiste, 2008, p. 501). Further, "this process must also acknowledge and respect the limitations placed on Indigenous knowledge by the community or people of what knowledge can be shared and in what contexts can or should they be shared" (Battiste, 2008, p. 501, emphasis added). Battiste's point of partiality and protectionism resonates with Vizenor's neologism, "survivance," which encapsulates both surviving and resisting. It is also a pragmatic alignment that manifests *Indigenous* perspectives and "includes actions performed within contested cultural spaces where Natives are at political and cultural disadvantage" (Watanabe, 2014, p. 157, emphasis added); such positioning describes both Eryka Charley's and Dewey Goodwin's stances with respect to cultural censorship within a university setting where power/knowledge relationships were played out. Ultimately, their intervention intended to counter the institutional intervention and "(s)urvivance in this sense describes a combination of Indigenous strategies applied for the purpose of countering colonization" (Watanabe, 2014, p. 157, emphasis added).

In order to further decolonize frameworks within contested cultural spaces, I conclude with twelve *Indigenous* artists' (2016) print exchange entitled, "Home: Contemporary *Indigenous* Artists Responding." Melanie Yazzie, Professor of Art and Head of Printmaking, affiliated with the University of Colorado, Boulder, organized the exchange and invited me to partake as the essayist proceeding the 2016 Institute as well as contribute a print edition. While "home" can be experienced contemporaneously, the artists' stances are larger in scope and magnitude addressing historical continuity to homelands, family structures, and intimate place-based knowledges. I leverage this conclusion as an *Indigenous* curriculum for coming-to-partially-know *Indigenous* perspectives concerning home contexts and the constitutive and relational elements.

Self-determination & Indigenous ontologies: Decolonizing methodologies of home[2]

> *Hunters on the plains can survive a deadly storm by making a shelter of buffalo hide skinned straight off, but it is dangerous to go inside the animal. Everybody knows that. Yet…Nanapush crawled into the carcass…And while*

2 A version of this essay accompanied the 2016 opening of "Home: Contemporary *Indigenous* Artists Responding" at the BMoCA Present Box and sponsors included, Lovedy Barbatelli, Ann Bateson & Frank Everts, Joan & Steven Markowitz, Gabrielle & Brad Schuller, Michael & Carlyn Smith.

unconscious, he became a buffalo. This buffalo adopted Nanapush and told him all she knew…Your people were brought together by us buffalo once. You know how to hunt and use us. Your clans gave you laws. You had many rules by which you operated. Rules that respected us and forced you to work together. Now we are gone, but as you have once sheltered in my body, so now you understand. The round house will be my body, the poles my ribs, the fire, my heart. It will be the body of your mother and it must be respected the same way. As the mother is intent on her baby's life, so your people should think of their children.[3]

– Erdrich, *The Round House*

Twelve Indigenous artists unpacked the complex relationships that have informed their worldview of home in the print exchange entitled, "Home: Contemporary *Indigenous* Artists Responding."[4] Each artist pursued idiosyncratic and nuanced relational knowledge of their widely varied home communities and envisioned printmaking processes. Ancestral ties to birth places generated intimate and visceral connections to home (Ivy Häli'imaile Andrade, Figure 1) and are couched in community relations rather than by the common street address as Jaune Quick-to-See Smith states, "You hear a *Native* person speak of 'home' but it doesn't mean where they presently reside…rather it refers to that place of birth or that community of relations where their ancestors came from" (Figure 2, emphasis added). This notion of origin is deeply rooted in the significance of place defined by the communities of practice and the relationships among them.

Yet, the ramifications of Manifest Destiny and the settler colonial privileges associated with travel continue to undermine Indigenous sovereignty through both visible and invisible fabricated borders and territories that confront viewers to recognize how: naming, defining, and delineating practices are sedimented ideologies of colonization as Norman Akers leverages:

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3 Nanapush is an Anishinaabeg ancestor of Joe, a 13-year-old boy, whose family deals with the catastrophic events of his mother being beaten and raped near the sacred Round House of their tribe. Nanapush's story is of an old female buffalo that helps him create the Round House and protect his mother, which inspires Joe to shift his role in the family from the one in need of care to the protector. The passage with Nanapush shifts his relationship with his parents and compels him into maturity.
4 "Home" was exhibited at the Sojourner Truth Library, SUNY New Paltz, NY from 12/11/16 - 1/22/17; Sinclair Works on Paper Gallery at Sinclair Community College in Dayton, OH from 02/01/17 - 02/24/17; and The Pennsylvania State University Libraries, University Park from 1/2018 - 8/11/18. Further information regarding complete artist statements and biographies can be accessed: https://indigenousarted. home.blog/

Figure 1. Ivy Häli'imaile Andrade. *HOME: Heart Of My Existence.* 2016. relief with hand coloring. 19"x15"

Figure 2. Jaune Quick-to-See-Smith. *Home is where the Heart is.* 2016. waterless lithography. 19"x15"

The signage serves as a reminder of a history rooted in a nineteenth century attitude of Manifest Destiny and the series of government treaties that have reshaped and diminished
our original homelands. These signs are a testament to the complex history surrounding removal and a place we now call home. (Figure 3)
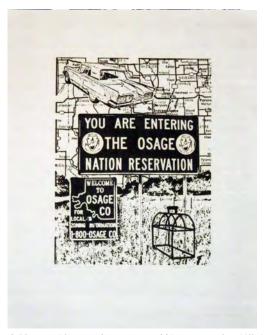

Figure 3. Norman Akers. *Welcome Home.* 2016. screenprint. 19"x15"

Power/knowledge relationships of dominant groups that sought to maintain the status quo rely upon socio-political amnesia and the contemporary political polemics bear a re-polished version of the past tied to mining and oil drilling that dramatically impact local ecologies in negative ways. Some examples, only naming a few, include contaminated well water in proximity to fracking sites in Wyoming, toxic mining waste spewed into the Animas River in Colorado, and the Superfund site on Leech Lake Reservation, Minnesota.

Similar to the near extinction of the beaver, during the late nineteenth century, resulting from two-hundred years of trapping and trade, bears, birds, lynx, and caribou are threatened as Canada's boreal forest in Alberta are destroyed in favor of the oilsands development. Corwin Claremont encapsulates these upheavals:

Home is affected by the natural world around us and by individuals and organization that may have influence and power. Raven: attracted to bright shiny things, is much like the bigger than life image of Donald Trump, as many are attracted to the flash and flare. The gummy bear is being questioned by the raven who thinks that the red flashy tie might not be in the bear's best interest. (Figure 4)

Figure 4. Corwin Clairmont. *Raven After Gummy Bear's Donald Trump* - Made in China - Signature Collection Silk Tie. 2016. monoprint, collograph, relief, BFK Rives paper, chine collé, xerox on acid free cotton paper, holographic film, bronzing powder, 15"x19"

These current developments are reminiscent of historical discourses that exploit and restrict communities of difference by settler colonialism definitions and desires.

Navigating these cascading and accumulating impacts on life-sustaining ecologies, we are reminded by Joe Feddersen that home is an ecology of interspecies relationships marked by sentient beings: "Drawing from my surroundings I choose Spotted Lake as an inhabited space articulated by a passing Elk, showcasing the pure beauty of the Okanagan, a place I think of as home." (Figure 5). Furthermore sustainable practices have long been embraced by *Indigenous* peoples passed down as intergenerational stories and kindness-songs during hunting events on the ocean described by Alexander Swiftwater McCarty: "In this design you can see that the caught whale is towing the canoe. During this critical time the hunters in the canoe would sing a song asking the whale to kindly tow them home to their village and not out to the ocean" (Figure 6).

Figure 5. Joe Feddersen. *Elk at Spotted Lake*. 2016. monoprint, spray paint, relief print, stamp, varied. 19"x15"

Figure 6. Alexander Swiftwater McCarty. *A Successful Whale Hunt.* 2016. serigraphy, BFK

Indigenous intergenerational knowledge also accumulates and informs not only how to interact with Others within one's environment, but why these interactions matter. Local ecologies are also constituted by temporary structures such as the jacal, that serve as pedagogical sites to meet, play, and work that intertwine connecting, learning, creating, and reflecting.[5] Tony Ortega reflects on his own experiences that constituted the jacal: "I spent many of my childhood summers in Pecos with my maternal grandmother. I got to meet, live, play, and work with extended family members during those summers" (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Tony Ortega. *Mi Casa es su Casa*. 2016. solarplate etching. 15"x19"

Jacals not only provide shelter so that life may continue, they have a life of their own; borne of the Earth, they return to roots and dust. Similarly, the hogan is a place where families gather, ceremonies take place, and memories are informed as means to remember the need for collaboration in order to survive (Glory Tacheenie-Campo, Figure 8).[6] Long-informed memories of dreaming with and in a place can transcend the particularity of these physical places as a means to

5 A jacal "is a hut in Mexico and southwestern United States with a thatched roof and walls made of upright poles or sticks covered and chinked with mud or clay." http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/jacal

6 "The hogan is a sacred home for the Diné (Navajo) people who practice traditional religion. Every family even if they live most of the time in a newer home -- must have the traditional hogan for ceremonies, and to keep themselves in balance." http://navajopeople.org/navajo-hogans.htm

return to a dream home defined by envisioned relationships that C. Maxx Stevens describes: "With all of life's difficulties, I found there was a sense of togetherness, a sense of common elements and laughter, which I get to remember from my visits home in my dreams" (Figure 9).

Figure 8. Glory Tacheenie-Campoy. *Hooghan*. 2016. solarplate etching. 19"x15"

Figure 9. C. Maxx Stevens. *Dream Home*. 2016. relief, stencils, Usuyo Gampi paper. 15"x19"

These envisioned relationships can be described as constellations of lived connections, ceremonies, and experiences that indelibly mark the body so deeply that the engrained somatic response to breathe easier occurs when one returns home as Sue Pearson describes:

> Home is a constellation of memories, of loved ones, of my heritage, of practices, of happenings in special places, of smells, sounds and tastes, of salt and earth and ocean, of light, of the past and plantings for the future. Its where I breathe most easily, where I hope to return to live there at some time and its where my bones will one day lie. (Figure 10)
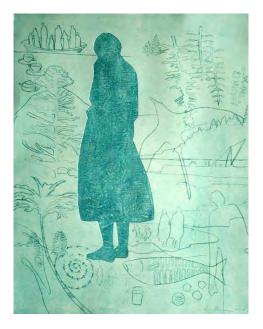

Figure 10. Sue Pearson. *Hoem*. 2016. drypoint / collograph on Somerset paper. 19"x15"

Melanie Yazzie states that home as a sacred space comprised of intergenerational respect and the unifying essential requirement for water that signifies wholeness:

> Home for me is everywhere on the Navajo Nation…I saw the horns as our sacred mountains on my mind with clouds around them as I always am thinking and praying for rain for home. That was always the request from my grandparents when I grew up. (Figure 11)

Figure 11. Melanie Yazzie. *Wishing for Water.* 2016. 6 color screenprint. 15"x19"

Figure 12. Neil Ambrose-Smith. *I'm a mobile home.* 2016. acrylic lithograph, embossment, Akua monotype. 19"x15"

Such sacred wholeness fulfills the qualities of a human being as a generous caretaker who is respectful of those who came before and

yet, provides a vision for a sustainable future. In conclusion, the arts can generate home despite one's origin or place of genesis through a healing process that serves regeneration; a rejuvenation to becoming whole, while discourses polarize and fragment our experiences and our identities (Neil Ambrose-Smith, Figure 12). Indigenous artists continue to generate the survival stories that resist aggressive acts that seek to undermine their "home."

Connecting Thoughts

Over 140 member-countries of the United Nations have adopted the 2007 Declaration on the Rights of *Indigenous* Peoples (UDRIP; see also Tuck, 2009, p. 410).[1] Forty-six Declaration Articles detail *Indigenous* peoples' rights, and self-determination to practice, protect, and reclaim beliefs, cultural and religious traditions, language and education systems, and develop economic, social, and political systems, in addition to land and resource management that is on both reservation or ceded lands. Prosper, McMillan, Davis, & Moffitt (2011) affirm that considerable challenges remain:

> First among these in many settings is the need to change existing resource use and socio-economic development policies and practices so that Indigenous peoples are empowered to exercise their rights within a context that enables respect for and expression of traditional knowledge (TK) and culture…the right to self-determine socio-economic development requires access to highly valued land and resources that are already possessed and used by others such as private citizens, public agencies and industrial corporations. (p. 2)

While governments are supposed to support socioeconomic development by enabling remuneration and repatriation, such processes are slow to improve as seen since the protests of the 2016 Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) and the decision made by The Army Corps of Engineers under the Obama administration to deny access (Wong, 2016). Years later, access to oil development have continued since the Trump administration reversed the decision (Brady, 2018) and discourses are written, focused upon issues that continue to inform the desires of and resistances to the DAPL (see Energy Transfer, 2019; National Museum of the American *Indian*, 2019, emphasis added).

Art education scholars have been advocating for inclusion with critical attention to hegemonic systems that undermine *Indigenous*

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7 The United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand all voted against UDRIP only to later adopt it, April 2010 (see Prosper et al., 2011, p. 2).

communities by demonstrating self-determination, development, resiliency, and resistance (Ballengee Morris, 2008, 2010, 2011; Bequette, 2007; Eldridge, 2018; Pauly, 2016; Stuhr, 1994). Indigenous communities and their engagements with cultural stewardship are occurring across global, national, and local contexts (McMillan & Prosper, 2016; Prosper et al., 2011). Arts educators can engage with *Indigenous* arts at the local level serving to foster intercultural alliances and re | center Indigenous Peoples and their cultures in art education practices, contexts, experiences, and critical research, which,

> must be connected to an attempt to confront the injustice of a particular society or public sphere within the society…unembarrassed by the label 'political' and unafraid to consummate a relationship with emancipatory consciousness. (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg,2011,p.164)

This pathway includes building relationships with cultural stakeholders, Indigenous artists, educators, and community members, to generate dialogue for shifting essentialist misunderstandings and to decenter Western hegemonic discourses and practices within the field of art education. Acuff (2015) writes

> Investing requires the devotion of time, the desire to nurture, and it implies that there is a commitment to build. Illustrations of investing in critical multiculturalism include engaging in conversations about institutional power and the relationship between race and varying inequities, specifically educational inequity…and opportunities for action. (p. 34)

This is a step that needs to be continuously examined since effective action is required for critical praxis; one that reveals and addresses the crippling complacency and inadequacy of White guilt through intercultural alliances and collaborations. Building new structures implies revising current systemic structures that deploy cultural deficit models used to frame *Indigenous* peoples and their cultures furthering acts of decolonization defined by anti-hegemony, anti-racism, and anti-nationalism.

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