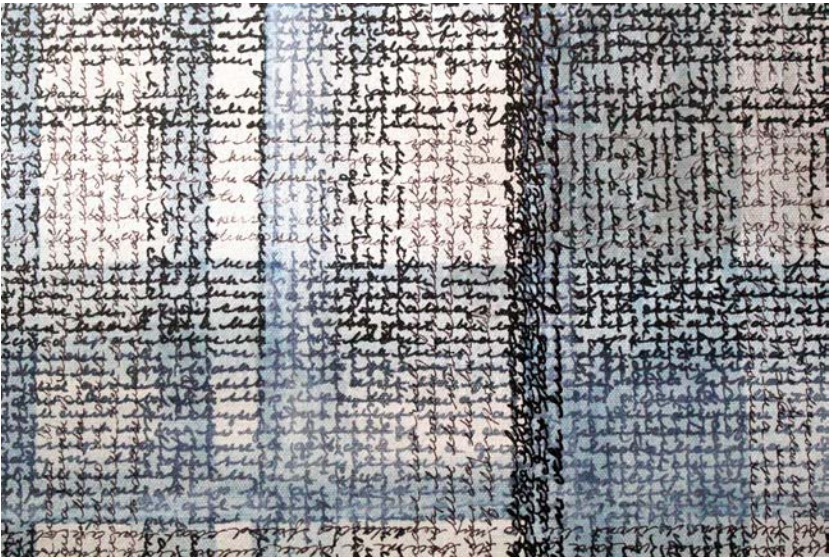


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Barbara Bergstrom, *Just a Thought*, 2012, acrylic on canvas. Please see article, "Tangling in Remix"

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Table of Contents

<i>Elizabeth Garber and León de la Rosa-Carrillo</i> Editorial	8
<i>Darden Bradshaw and Barbara Bergstrom</i> Tangling in Remix	17
<i>Courtne Wolfgang and Olga Ivashkevich</i> Re(mixed) Girlhood	51
<i>Tyler Denmead</i> Remixing the Released Imagination	72
<i>Manisha Sharma</i> Mythical Beings and Becoming: Emerging Identities of Art Educators in India	89
<i>Nurit Cohen Evron</i> Stories of Becoming an Art Educator: Opening a Closed Door	110
<i>Cala Coats</i> Transversalizing Ecologies of Control: An Ecosophical Analysis of the Dissensual Aestheticization of a Decommissioned Missile Base	127
<i>Cathlin Goulding</i> The Spaces in Which We Appear to Each Other: The Pedagogy of Resistance Stories in Zines by Asian Pacific Islander American Riot Grrls	161
<i>Ruth Smith</i> Dumarka Soomaaliyeed Voices Unveiled: Undoing the Hijab Narrative Through a Participatory Photography Exhibition	190
<i>Kay Kok Chung Oi</i> Art as Exhibition: Reconceptualizing Cultural History in Singapore through an Art Response to Ah Ku and Karayuki-san Prostitution	207
<i>Mary Stokrocki</i> A Special Mountain Place and Sunrise Ceremony for Apache Students	225

Editorial Introduction

Elizabeth Garber & León De la Rosa-Carrillo
Past Editor Guest Editor

The *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education*'s volume 32 features a group of three articles on the topic of remix and another seven on a range of critical cultural topics in contemporary art and visual culture and its education. The editorial for the remix mini-theme, penned by guest co-editor León de la Rosa-Carrillo, suggests remix as a way of thinking about the workings of cultures (past, present, diverse across ethnicities, races, nations, genders, abilities and interests, beliefs, and other factors that contribute to the weaving of cultures and their many derivations) that involves active and knowing re-creation. León dynamically brought to life for colleagues and faculty many of the concepts of remix during his time at the University of Arizona, and fills out the editorial background on remix for this issue.¹ Following this, readers will find an overview of the seven articles outside the theme, but still very much in the center of this journal's focus on cultural studies research. But first, remix.

The mini-themed issue from Volume 32 of the *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education* focuses on Remix, which reminds me of two passages from Mark Amerika's *Remixthebook* (2011, locs. 2062 & 2199) where the author forgoes any sense of detachment and announces what he is reminded of by his own writing. But regardless of what Amerika recalls it is his very act of recalling, and calling attention to it, what has since become an essential part of how I understand remix and, it occurs to me, an adequate point of departure to talk about

1 Readers interested in remix will enjoy (yes, enjoy) the experience of reading Dr. de la Rosa-Carrillo's very visual dissertation, *On the Language of Internet Memes*, an intelligent and playful look at internet memes such as image macros and animated GIFs made by students. He analyzes these productions through remix theory, actor-network theory, object oriented ontology, and glitch studies, arguing that internet memes can be understood as an actor-network in which the elements of memes come to interact among themselves, aside from human interplay. The form the dissertation takes moves from scholarly written word to remixed images in providing readers with more than an understanding of these concepts, but with experiences of remixing digital memes.

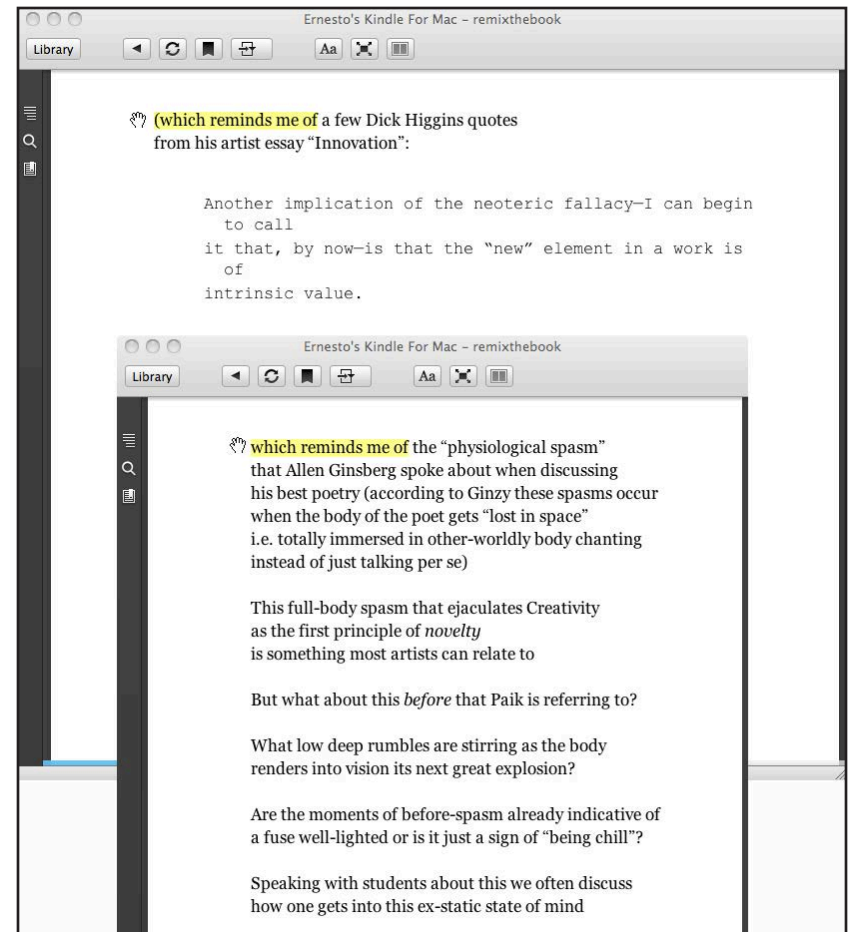


Fig. 1 Amerika, 2011, locs. 2062 & 2199.

remix in terms that might prove relevant to this journal. I think of remix as a practice of active remembrance, brought about not only by engaging and rearranging existing pieces of culture (songs, advertisements, lesson plans, civilizations) but by recognizing in them—being reminded of—the universe of references and potential relationships that each artifact holds within. When I remix, the resulting, new creative blends I make (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008) respond to embedded influences, actualize implicit relationships and attest to this very process both in form and content. These are of course the type of remixological endeavors that the socially networked Web 2.0 has turned into an everyday practice (Caplan, 2014) by virtually collapsing each

Remix means to take cultural artifacts and combine and manipulate them into new kinds of creative blends. Until recently, it mainly referred to using audio-editing techniques to produce “an alternative mix of a recorded song that differed from the original...taking apart the various instruments and components that make up a recording and remixing them into something

Like no other technology before it...

even the laptop and tablet - the phone is a mobile remixological machine. Every user is an everyday remix-artist, a VJ, DJ, slam poet. Every moment is a network performance. Every time the phone boots up the performance starts. Every App a cue to remix. Even without a human object connecting and conducting the performance, streams of data and imag(in)ings flow. Words collide in dialectic images. Algorithms on far-away servers generate samples for the remix performance. Ads flash across the screen, Likes alert and Shares notify. Software preferences arrange the samples and

Fig. 2 Knobel & Lankshear, 2008, p.1

reference, every point of departure and all content into an endless stream of posts, hashtags and trending topics. Remix then, it seems, is but a click or a keyword

Fig. 3 Caplan, 2014, Remix section

search away. But remix is by no means wholly dependent on digital technology, social media nor the algorithms that fuel them, rather when Rome remixed Greece (Manovich, 2005) the resulting empire was a blend of manipulated customs, mythologies and ideals that embodied an active and dynamic remembrance of Greek culture.

We can find precedents for this “remixability” – for instance in modern electronic music where remix has become the key method since the 1980s. More generally, most human cultures developed by borrowing and reworking forms and styles from other cultures; the resulting “remixes” were to be incorporated into other cultures. Ancient Rome remixed Ancient Greece; Renaissance remixed antiquity; nineteenth century European architecture remixed many historical periods including the Renaissance; and today graphic and fashion designers remix

Fig. 4 Manovich, 2005, p.1

Similarly Ferguson, in his Everything is a Remix (2012) video series, equates Remix to a type of folk art that

anybody can engage through a Copy-Transform-Combine process. His quick look into Led Zeppelin’s well-documented penchant for lifting riffs and lyrics from old blues songs speaks to the nature of remix as a process that shows through even when uncredited and, arguably, unintended. In this case, even if Zeppelin meant for these compositions to pass off as wholly original, the songs themselves reveal their source material and can’t help but shine a light on every blues tune that the band ripped off, or channeled, or actively recalled during their writing / remixing sessions.

2:26 - 2:27	Back to Zeppelin.
2:27 - 2:31	By the mid-1970s Led Zeppelin are the biggest touring rock band in America,
2:31 - 2:35	yet many critics and peers label them as
2:35 - 2:36	rip-offs.
2:36 - 2:38	The case goes like this.
2:38 - 2:41	The opening and closing sections of “Bring it on Home” are lifted from a tune by Willie Dixon
2:41 - 2:44	entitled — not coincidentally — “Bring it on Home.”
2:48 - 2:52	Performed by Sonny Boy Williamson
2:52 - 2:56	“The Lemon Song” lifts numerous lyrics from Howlin’ Wolf’s “Killing Floor.”
3:08 - 3:13	“Black Mountain Side” lifts its melody from “Blackwaterside,” a traditional arranged by Bert Jansch.
3:17 - 3:20	(Traditional, Arranged Jansch)
3:20 - 3:27	“Dazed and Confused” features different lyrics but is clearly an uncredited cover of the same-titled song by Jake Holmes.
3:27 - 3:31	Oddly enough, Holmes files suit over forty years later in 2010.
3:40 - 3:44	And the big one, “Stairway to Heaven” pulls its opening from Spirit’s “Taurus.”
3:44 - 3:46	Zeppelin toured with Spirit in 1968,
3:46 - 3:49	three years before “Stairway” was released.
4:04 - 4:08	Zeppelin clearly copied a lot of other people’s material,
4:08 - 4:10	but that alone, isn’t unusual.

Fig. 5 Everything is a Remix with subtitles, 2011

Bradshaw and Bergstrom, whose article opens this mini-themed issue, make note of a similar instance when one of the authors recognizes a song from the '80s even through it's a new, remixed guise that her 15-year-old daughter believes to be new. This particular song's remix however claims much older source material as Bradshaw is then made to recall a similar experience with her own mother regarding the same song originally, it turns out, from the '60s. As Bradshaw and Bergstrom struggle and get tangled up searching for the significance of remix as a practice, a philosophy, and a concept their article splinters into two columns, each voicing one author and allowing readers to perform a remix of their own as they dart from one side to the other examining the arguments that each writer advances and the anecdotes they tell.

Wolfgang and Ivashkevich's article is a visually engaging piece that focuses on the sense of agency afforded to remixers by appropriating and rewriting consumer culture. Not only do the authors share a handful of collages and video mashups generated by teenage girls during a juvenile arbitration program, but they also offer their own feminist readings and reactions to these pieces of remixed content adding yet another layer of messy complexity to the remix process. The work by Wolfgang, Ivashkevich, and their teenage learners brings into focus a significant aspect of remix culture: the inherent fluidity of the line that separates a media producer from a consumer of mediated messages. Lessig (2008) has coined the notion of an RW culture where

ning of human civilization), ordinary citizens “read” their culture by listening to it or by reading representations of it (e.g., musical scores). This reading, however, is not enough. Instead, they (or at least the “young people of the day”) add to the culture they read by creating and re-creating the culture around them. They do this re-creating using the same tools the professional uses—the “pianos, violins, guitars, mandolins, and banjos”—as well as tools given to them by nature—“vocal cords.” Culture in this world is flat; it is shared person to person.⁸ As MIT professor Henry Jenkins puts

Fig. 6 Lessig, 2011, p.28

readers are just as likely to become *writers* by developing the necessary skills, engaging the available tools and immersing themselves in an environment that encourages remix.

Denmead's article, which closes out the remix-themed portion of this issue, explores yet another aspect of remix culture, as he revisits notions of community that once shaped his own practice as an art educator. In remixing Greene's seminal *Releasing the Imagination* (2005) with Pope L.'s *Skin Set* (2013) he creates a new text that is equal parts found poem and DJ-inspired literary mix that propels the source material into previously unrealized depths of interrelational complexities. Perhaps this is what Miller (2004), a DJ and an academic himself, means when he asks for two turntables and offers a universe in return.



Which reminds me of the universe of Fig. 7 Miller, 2004, pp. 126-127 cultural research in art education that exists beyond remix. A universe that this JCRAE issue samples in the form of seven other articles that explore non-remix themes but can equally be remixed if readers choose to. Happy remixing.

Outside the active and knowing employment of the remix theme, Manisha Sharma, in her article “Mythical Beings and Becoming,”

and Nurit Cohen Evron, in “Stories of Becoming an Art Educator,” both provide research on becoming art educators from, respectively, Indian- and Israeli-influenced perspectives. Sharma interviewed 17 art educators in India to understand the influence of social constructions of gender on the educators’ decisions to join the profession. These stories are analyzed through Barthes’ theoretical concepts of myths as originary stories—she describes the myth of *Laxmana-rekha* as an originary story of gender in India—and Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of becoming as an endless state. Cohen Evron revisits her own becoming as an art educator based on personal, professional, and institutional experiences amidst the continuing conflicts within and around the borders of Israel. She describes how these experiences come to bear on teaching art as critical pedagogy.

Cala Coats presents a case study of a community of makers who turned a decommissioned missile base into an art and community space and a residence. Far beyond the description of the work, she helps us understand the space and the social relations of the participants through Guattari’s three ecosophies, the psychic, the social, and the environmental. “Transversalizing Ecologies of Control” is accompanied by Coats’ images of the re-purposed base.

In “The Spaces in Which We Appear to Each Other,” Cathlin Goulding presents resistance stories of Asian American Riot Grrrls through their zines. The zine authors (including Goulding) examine identity and self, gender norms, stereotypes of Asians, mixed-identity and racial binaries, white privilege, invisibilities and hyper-visibility, language and family, and social in/justice. Goulding argues that zines are a type of pedagogy that foster active voice and self-learning in makers and teach fellow zinesters and readers in an informal yet penetrating manner, through text and visuals.

Ruth Smith worked with Somali women living in the Midwest to deepen understanding of the wearing of hijab. The five women made photographs and wrote narratives that show their process of decision in choosing if and when to wear hijab. Smith’s article on this participatory action research project, “Dumarka Soomaaliyeed Voices

Unveiled,” is accompanied by the women’s photographs and narratives. She argues that, when exhibited, they activated public space to interrupt misperceptions of Somali women and presented multiple stories through which to understand women and modesty in Somali culture.

Kay Kok Chung Oi created five paintings about prostitutes and prostitution in early Singapore that were shown in an exhibition in Singapore. The paintings were interpretations of a scholarly work on the subject by historian James Frances Warren. In her article “Art as Exhibition,” she provides a context for understanding what the paintings have to teach us about the cultural contributions made by these immigrant women from China and Japan to building Singapore and the personal sacrifices involved. Reproductions of the paintings accompany the text.

Rounding out this issue is Mary Stokrocki’s article on a case study of San Carlos Apache students’ visual responses to a prompt she gave them to share their “special mountain home.” Place, animals, and sacred ceremonies were found to be culturally derived themes, whereas inclusion of a pick-up truck, fishing and hunting scenes, and domestic and social life suggested slow social change.

Volume 32 is a strong sampling of cultural aspects of research in art and visual culture education today, with several articles enhanced by theoretical analysis that helps us not only deepen our understanding of issues important to our field but to re-think them. The issue is also strongly visual, indicating a very positive trend in our field to incorporate the visual elements of what we do.

I have enjoyed working closely with each author and her/his ideas and research process over my three years as Senior Editor and look forward with excitement to where our new Senior Co-Editors, Karen Hutzler and Ryan Shin, will take the journal. It has been a privilege to work with León de la Rosa-Carrillo as Guest Editor in developing this issue. *JCRAE* is supported by an active and insightful Review Board whose work contributes to making scholarship represented in this

issue critical. Layout for this issue is the work of León de la Rosa-Carrillo (also Guest Editor): profound thanks to him for this undertaking. Thanks to University of Arizona Interim Director Martina Shenal for support of Managing Editor Chun-Chieh Chen's position and to *jCRAE's* parent organization, USSEA, and especially President Alice Wexler, Past President Steve Willis, and the USSEA Board for their support of the journal. A continuing thanks to readers for their interest in and support of cultural research in art education. We invite your contributions, and hope you will join or renew your membership with USSEA at ussea.net.

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Tangling in Remix

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ABSTRACT

This project illustrates an alternative, or remixed, method of writing about a collaborative inquiry of two art educators. Their journey comprised searching, identifying, quarreling, and ultimately, proceeding forward on issues related to gaining relevant relationships with the culture of remix and the authors' practices as art educators. The layout used to illustrate the discourse between the authors presents a philosophically as well as emotionally labor-intensive de/reconstruction of personal and professional issues related to using concepts of remix with students in art education classrooms. The journey itself enlightened the authors and energized a challenge to come to grips with topics they didn't understand but *wanted* to understand in order to more fully connect with the media-rich lives of their students. This document shares lessons learned around a process of being transparent about differences, modeling rigorous discourse about the unknown, and sustaining a curiosity for meaningfully honoring the lives of our students.

The term remix has been flowing in and out of our awareness for years. A colleague in graduate school used the term to describe his research. Darden used the term with her mother when discussing a partially failed piecrust recipe. Her daughter, laughing with a friend in the backseat, used remix to describe a song that has been reinterpreted by a new contemporary artist. Despite such recollections, we, authors Darden and Barbara, discovered that our understanding of remix was vague and fleeting, and that we much preferred analog to digital remixes. Through research and discourse we investigated the relationship between remix and art education. At times, we struggled to communicate as we realized how we teach from places very different from one another, as well as from where our students come. Compounded with our discomfort and anxiety about remix, our real-

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ization called attention to the fact that we are both *digital immigrants*, dissimilar to our students who are *digital natives* (Prensky, 2001). The two of us were confronted with the knowledge that in order to reach our students and support them in becoming educators who can reach *their* students, we must change. We found ourselves resistant.

This article attempts to give tangible, visual form to our collaborative journey exploring remix as both practice and as culture. Within it we ask, how might our understanding of remix help our teaching? The two of us agreed that it was important to proceed knowing we would be transparent about our journey while modeling to our students the ways remix culture influenced us as pedagogues. In turn, we believed that our students might benefit from a similar expedition into the concepts of remix as a means of enriching their individual teaching practices and philosophies. Going forward, we honor each voice; we use the column format to indicate our various approaches to remix. These parallel threads are complementary but distinct. Darden's more conversational narrative stands in contrast to Barbara's matter-of-fact prose.

We begin this article by gathering contexts in which remix is used by artists, scholars, and musicians. We agreed that we would use the term remix as follows: *a mixture, a combining together of all experiences, beliefs, theories, backgrounds, and values associated with who we are*. In what follows we present our understanding in four sections.² In the section we call "Searching," we move forward from our understanding of *remix* by examining our relationships with remix and teaching as well as remix and artmaking. Next, in "Identifying," we investigate our individual relationships with technology and the networked culture in which we live. In the section we call "Quarreling," we come together to share our different understandings. Finally, in the section we call "Proceeding," we articulate the ways in which we imagine this journey could potentially inform the work undertaken by art

² The educators and experiences to which we refer in the text represent various relationships and occasions that made an impact on our journeys. Therefore, they are footnoted individually for the reader's benefit.

educators in higher education and, ultimately, their pre-service art education students.

Searching

In our attempt to find ways in which remix, as we understand it, could be used in valuable ways within contemporary social, cultural, and educational practices, several thought-provoking questions challenged our research process. The following exchange begins to reveal our unsettling individual differences and indicates the complexity that accompanied our journey. Here are excerpts from our collection of writings and thoughts that informed our conversations about remix. You will see that the column on the left indicates Darden's process while the column on the right indicates Barbara's.

I find myself recalling an incident three years ago. Driving down a Tucson highway with my then 15-year-old daughter and her best friend in the backseat, the radio is blaring and floating up toward me over the strains of the music are comments about "how awesome is this new song." As they discuss the artist's attractiveness and his ability to lay musical tracks over one another, I chuckle.

They do not realize the song is a remix. The version I knew in the '80s has been remixed into this 2011 version. I listen and laugh, not at them but with them, as I realize I said almost the exact same thing at the age of 15. And

Literature by Amerika (2011) and Lessing (2001) were referenced at the end of the *jCRAE* call for submissions from Garber and De la Rosa. That's where I started because I knew very little about contemporary concepts around

my mother politely told me the original song had been made in the '60s.

In the past, when I thought of the term remix, I interpreted it only from a technological perspective in which a musical work of art is altered and revised to include another. Yet as I consider Amerika's discussion of "hybridized, post-studio arts practices" (2011, p. xiii) I wonder...is what I do as a teacher also remix?

Remix culture creates derivative works. And to avoid copyright issues, the work has to be so transformed as to no longer

remix, let alone its potential relevance to art education. That said, the term was not foreign to me as I vaguely recalled that remix employed technology.

I understood remix to have started in the hands of artists, specifically musicians. I also understood the use of remix to be a creative act. But wait.

Remix can be made up of artifacts from our personal archives (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008).

Amerika (2011) has claimed remix to be a "cross between an improvised keynote address delivered at a conference on disrupting narratives, a stand-up comedy routine, and the kind of live, pedagogical performance found in experimental seminars and lectures . . . in a lab focused on inventing future forms of avant-garde art and writing" (p. vii).

I remembered a lecture that I had recently attended by Drs. Wong and Wong, authors of *The First Days of School: How to be an Effec-*

reflect the original (Lessig, 2008). Yes, teaching is an act of derivation. We take the experiences we have had, the moments of learning that were most pivotal to us, and use them as the springboard. Certainly, my teaching practice is a hybridization, derived from that I have experienced as a learner. Yet I question, am I altering those experiences enough that they no longer reflect the original or so that they are used in such a way that I make them uniquely my own? Is it possible in a remix culture for something to ever be uniquely one's own?

Today, a sophomore undergraduate said to me, "Last week when I presented my lesson to the class, I heard phrases coming out of my mouth I had heard Mr. W. say during my observations of him." I smiled encouragingly at him. Yes, I thought . . . we are

tive Teacher (1998). One of the first slides in their presentation read "STEAL" in massive letters. Dr. Wong asserted that *that* is how to be a good teacher, *steal* from your colleagues. To me, this seemed to be a kind of remix.

I am also curious about Amerika's "realm of autohallucination," or what sounded to me like a sort of forgiveness we give ourselves before taking risks with hopes of new discovery.

I searched phrases that included the terms "remix" and "education." What accrued was an eclectic collection. One page that caught my eye was captioned, "Teacher Binder Remix." Coincidentally at the time, I was working with my sophomore

all appropriating, or ripping off our teachers. When I took Dr. Beudert's³ assignment to create an autobiographical art education timeline and used it in my own classes, I was appropriating that from her. Perhaps she appropriated it from someone else. We are part of a culture in which we "consume and then critique, customize, create, and recreate" (Burwell, 2013) the pedagogical texts we use.

Everyone does this, right?

I have used Dr. Garber's⁴ aesthetic puzzle assignment to have students investigate the process of creating an open-ended question about aesthetics and art, Kyla Macario's⁵ cultural literacy exercise to confront the biases we carry into our teaching practice, Saphier and Gower's *Skillful Teacher* (1997) graphic organizers to help students gather and

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undergraduates as they began to assemble parts of their teaching portfolios. I thought, perhaps the concepts I could learn about building a "remixed" binder would enhance my students' professional portfolios. It did not take one critical minute for me to gather the overarching purpose of this blogspot. As I saw it, the site merely offered some advice to new teachers: get organized!

I thought, "duh!"

synthesize lecture information, and Dr. Short's⁶ studio/lecture format to organize a class. If I listed or noted everything I use that I've ripped off/borrowed/appropriated/remixed from my former teachers, books I've read, videos I've seen, I'd have a book. Yet, little of that is using technology but every bit of it is a type of networked remix (if I understand remix).

Thomas Moore, in *Care of the Soul* (1992), remixes Renaissance philosophy and theology as he situates a set of suggestions for how one might begin to think and act in a way that allows us to care for our soul—ultimately to push back against the ways in which we become divided selves.

Care comes from the Latin term *cura*. To curate is to "look after the items/objects in a collection"

6 Dr. Kathy Short, Professor of Language, Reading and Culture, the University of Arizona.

Later, I heard a report that focused on the popularity of smart tools and the unique ways in which they interacted with users. Feedback from smart tools was reported to be constructive, not punitive, and often happens through a series of progressing levels. A user's purpose is then advanced, as if in a game. "Classroom pedagogy stands to learn much from remix practices and smart tools and how they enable learning and achievement" (Lankshear et al., 2013, p. 30).

In the nearest margin I wrote, "This quote scares the crap out of educators like me." Smart tools have not been a part of my world—educationally or otherwise—until recently. When will I find the chance to fully immerse myself with technology in order to find comfort participating within it? I wish to model to students an authentic engagement with contemporary tools.

I continued to think . . .

or to “select, organize and present . . . typically using professional knowledge” (Retrieved from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/curate#curate-2>.)

In delineating our teaching practice, we are curating the classroom and learning experiences for our students. The artists, artwork, pedagogical structures and practices, teaching tools, and performative strategies I chose are, in fact, carefully selected to correspond with the knowledge gaps, purposes, and goals of the course, personalities of the learners, and my past experiences teaching the course content.

This is remix, is it not?

The ongoing 20-year old international art show *do it* continues to tour the works of artists including Adrian Piper, Félix Gonzales-Torres, and Ai Weiwei. The exhibition includes various sets of instructions written by approximately 250 artists and, according to Obrist, “every work is very much a collaboration between the artist who writes the instructions and the artist who actually executes it (as well as) the visitor who interacts with it” (Nathan, 2013).

Remix, right?

According to Deleuze and Guattari (Wolters, 2013, n.p.), “Rhizomes, taken from a kind of root system found in nature, are non-linear, and non-hierarchical” (n.p.).

Remix, right?

I recall one of my favorite part-time jobs, working as a librarian’s assistant at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. There, my

Do I have the cultural literacy to engage in remix? In our discussion, Barbara keeps addressing technology. I desperately want to ignore that piece. I am uncomfortable with that part of the discussion and keep trying to change the subject. I don’t really know what a meme is and every time the word is used, I feel my anxiety rising. How can I participate in remix culture when I am deeply resistant to being open to learning about it? Why am I resistant?

I feel silly being resistant.

And maybe a valuable question

passion for the Fluxus art movement exploded as I routinely experienced the works John Cage, Yoko Ono, Dick Higgins, and Charlotte Moorman. These artists and their work, like Yoko Ono’s Instruction paintings, are remix, right?

Cultural literacy required!

I learned that part of what makes Amerika’s (2011) *remixthebook* “more than a print book published by a prestigious university press,” is its “concept of writing to include multimedia forms composed for networked and mobile media environments” (p. vi). Aha! Here were familiar references to technology that encouraged my understanding of multimedia forms and mobile

to ask myself is, am I willing to dismiss *my* understanding of remix because it does not include technology to the greatest degree?

With each new reading, each time I sit down to investigate remix, my conception of it is modified. Just as I feel I have a handle on remix, there is a seismic swing and the paradigm has changed. Remix is a form of deconstruction (Amerika, 2011), a hybridization that combines parts from other wholes into a new work (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008). As I read and engage in this discourse, am I remixing the personal archives of Darden?

networks. I recognized a new desire to combine my visual art teaching practices with computers. No longer dragging my feet, I was encouraged.

Indeed, for me, my personae has included that of an interloper.

I learned from Knobel and Lankshear (2008) that remix could be taking cultural artifacts and combining and manipulating them into new kinds of creative blends. They claimed that remix “had expanded from remixing music and sound to [include] moving and static images, television, the Internet, personal archives” (p. 27). I like that. I saw the potential of finding personal value in concepts of remixing as it could include my “personal archives.”

Finally, I had to quit looking for definitions after I came across Lessig’s (2005) comment that there is “no end to remix.” Instead, there are fertile, “current remixes that reference previous remixes in a layer of significance indicat[ing] the fertility of an earlier remix” (p. 26).

Identifying

We came back together. In the process of sharing the results of our searching, there were several impassioned differences that separated our perspectives. We experienced frustration, “a-ha” moments, and (dis)connections as our individual artistic practices as well as teaching practices did not coalesce, yet seemed to naturally embrace concepts of remix. This phenomenon reminded Barbara of another research project she had done where similar circumstances emerged while participants were investigating sense of self and identity. In that study, participants did their best work in collaboration with one another. Barbara recalled, “it took a collaborative investigation to determine the intricacies of our individual selves” (Bergstrom, 2014, p. 212). Together, the two of us discovered a stronger sense of self while making room to acknowledge one another. In our “Searching” section, we began our individual investigations of remix, yet here in “Identifying,” using concepts of mash-up, our identities, and specific theorists, we move from the internal dialogue to a collaborative discourse. We kept remixing.

As an educator I am continually becoming . . . my identity, knowledge, and experiences as artist, researcher, teacher, advocate, mother, and colleague are pieced together into a particular construction. I am engaged in a collage process on a daily, momentary basis. By doing so, am I the producer of culture? Or am I still a consumer? (see figure 1)

I love to think of myself as a remix of several powerful experiences I have experienced in schools. My teaching philosophy stems from my unique combination of Mrs. Mitchell’s⁸ “cheer” to help us learn important dates in European literature; Robin Williams’ character in *Dead Poets’ Society*; Mom, who reminded me that as a student, sometimes you learn about what kind of teacher you don’t want to become; Dad, who told me while in elementary

⁸ Mrs. Ann Mitchell, Barbara’s twelfth grade English teacher at East Grand Rapids High School.



Fig. 1 D. Bradshaw, *Crazed identities*, 2014. Hand-sewn fabric scraps.

The Exquisite Corpse game started by Andre Breton is a type of mashup. Slamming a noun, adjective, verb, adverb, noun, and so on up against another to create a sentence is, in effect, pulling together disparate elements into

school that if I am going to do something . . . do it completely; and many others.

I believe that I model having empathy for students better after my fifth grade teacher brought me to tears having taught that no woman has ever been President of the United States.

a new whole with new meanings and derivations. Every class I teach, I use the Surrealist Exquisite Corpse drawing game⁷ as a way to encourage collaboration, play, and creative problem solving. As students engage in an analog form of mashup, they discover the relationship of semiotics, artmaking, and visual culture literacy.

Amerika addresses the opportunity that arises from mashing up academic writing and popular culture (2011, p. xii), yet I am conflicted. I am excited, on the one hand, by the idea that our work as scholars and educators can be shared in various forms (written narratives, digital narratives, or digital non-narratives) and through various outlets (journals, blogs,

⁷ Surrealist artists adapted the Exquisite Corpse poetry game to one that involved a drawing created by a group of people. Each person would create a drawn image on a piece of paper, fold down the paper, and pass the image on to the next participant, and so on. The resulting collaborative drawing had an element of chance and unpredictability. The original intention of the game was to engage the collective unconscious and see phenomena in new ways.

As artists, are we not “performing theory as a part of a creative process in which artists intuitively construct various conceptual personae to see exactly what it is they are becoming?” (Amerika, 2011, p. vi)?

books, videos, or other yet-to-be imagined means). That opens up a great space for me as an artist and teacher to find a hybrid research methodology. Yet on the other hand, as I am trying to figure out the protocol for achieving tenure at my institution, the reality that research can be more practice-based and performative while resisting categorization makes me feel vulnerable. If I, as an artist and art educator, struggle to remix definitions of scholarship, how will my colleagues from other disciplines who must evaluate my work respond? I would be much more comfortable sharing my research in various formats and modes if I knew with certainty the University Tenure and Promotion committee understood remix as I do.

“For myself, I find that my attitude towards, and understanding of my work is in a constant state of flux. I am continually learning more of what my work is about from other people and other sources” (Haring, 1984, p. 369).

Is the value-added approach to understanding the visual arts dependent on a viewer’s interpretation, or on remix? Isn’t this what I have read Barthes (1972) proposed, that a work of art is complete only after the viewer has drawn meaning from it?

Further, I learned, media and remix literacy fortifies users’ civic engagement by facilitating new forms of participation (Mihailikis 2012).

While we are modeling remix practices, are we consciously and overtly articulating that it is remix? I hear myself channeling Ms. TerVeen, my high school art teacher: “Pay attention to where the light hits the object. Do you see the range of values? What is the relationship of one form to another?” As I turn to another student, I realize that Gayle Wimmer, my graduate fibers professor, has just appeared over my shoulder as I challenge the student to consider what they are trying to say.

In my role as an art educator, I demonstrate my own remix of all the pedagogical influences I have experienced. Might I consider myself “en route to an identity,” as Amerika might propose?

Amerika (2011), claimed that in the “*remixthebook* project [he hoped to] indicate to emerging artists and scholars, particularly those engaged in advanced forms of digitally processed, practice-based research, an alternative model of multimedia writing . . . as part of a professional course of action” (p. vii).

Every semester, I give the same assignment to all my students, regardless of course topic. I ask that they go somewhere or do something they have never done before. Their written reflections about their experiences have included eating like a vegan for a weekend and taking a piano lesson. They write about new perspectives they have gained. A sort of remix emerges for them, such as when an exchange student from Korea did her best to cook Mexican food for her college roommates.

"Eleanor Antin once said that when she started making visual art she began constructing new personae to step into and out of as a way to develop new work" (Amerika, 2011, p. 102).

We do this as teachers, finding our way through meaningful pedagogical practices.

"I would focus on myself as the instrument that acted on whatever ground was . . . available" (Acconci in Amerika, 2011, p. 103).

Why not perform my handwritten artwork as "a spontaneous and continuous theory-to-be"?

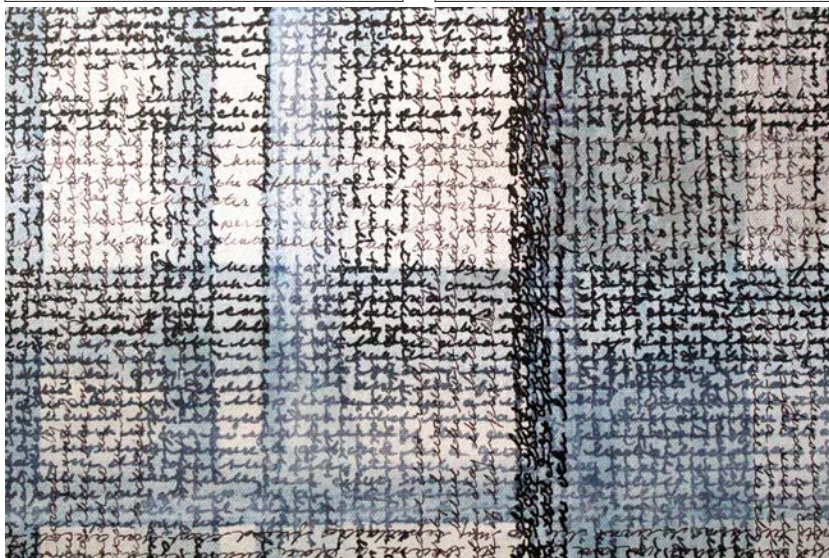


Fig. 2 B. Bergstrom, *Just a Thought*, 2012. Acrylic on canvas.

I said to Barbara today as we departed our meeting at the coffee shop in Lima, Ohio, that as we research remix I feel like we are vultures, circling over road kill. Just as we swoop down and grab a piece of remix that meshes our ideas and/or furthers our understanding, a semi-truck comes along so we quickly fly away leaving with just tiny little morsels.

I read what Amerika crossed out on page xvi in *remixthebook*, "Do I contradict myself? Very well, then I contradict myself. I am large, I contain multitudes."

Um . . . Yes, I believe that we all contradict ourselves at times. I began to wrestle with how this fact relates to being a classroom teacher and an inspiration to future artist-educators.

The phenomena of "becoming" intrigued me and was consistently part of my art-making practices. As addressed in my artist statement, in my art I consider *the human performance of everyday and how one's personal priorities coincide with time spent.*

Okay. At this point, we have read about disrupting narratives, the phenomena of becoming, theories-to-be, being en route, and always becoming. Are we any closer to knowing what remix means?

Quarreling

Coming together again after numerous sessions where we had spun our wheels, we were determined to find consensus and move forward. With hope and determination, we aimed to collate. However, as colleagues and friends, we were caught off guard by the messy nature of our collaborative process.

The following “Quarreling” section reveals evidence of the continued clash of our two divergent voices. Rather than being a transcribed dialogue, these thoughts and writings visually chronicle the impetus for conflict.

At least once a month I find myself handing my phone to my daughter and asking for her help solving another technological problem. I resent being dependent and not being able to quickly or easily convey my ideas because I do not have technological know-how.

Convinced that remix employs technology in some way, I investigated new ways to make art using a computer. Attending the Ohio Art Education Association conference, I was sure to visit sessions that would help me appreciate and adopt technology in my classroom. The sessions that I attended had titles such as “An introduction to internet-based art-making,” “Operation iPad,” and “Digital art lessons using free software.”

I realized I share this frustration of feeling dependent with my students. Recently one of my preservice students wondered aloud how it was I had the ability to walk into a classroom of Kindergarten students without fear, and step in or take over a lesson she had been teaching that had begun to fall apart. That ability and sense of confidence was gained through exposure, experience, and remixing the pedagogical practices of my own teachers. She will get there, if she keeps learning and if she stays open to finding her teacher voice, I assured her.

Will I get there with remix?

I heard students discussing SnapChat again. My daughter is tethered to her iPhone in much the same way I am tethered to my pencil. I love the feel of holding the pencil, the dark marks of graphite on the white paper, and seeing the words take shape. The disconnection and sterile process of sending a text message bothers me. I’d rather meet and talk in person with someone, yet I see my daughter in a room with four of her friends, all completely

A few weeks ago, I realized that I had lost track of time and “wasted” one and a half hours blundering around on a website where I could “paint” for free. A few minutes later, I thought about how unfortunate it was that, without hesitation, I believed trying to figure out how to paint using my computer had been a waste of time. Had I not just made a commitment to gain new understandings relevant to

silent as they communicate digitally via text and Snap messages.

my students' lives saturated by technology? Wasn't I doing what I said I would do... discovering new artistic tools and engaging with digital media? Perhaps I was even beginning my own "archive" of art and technology?

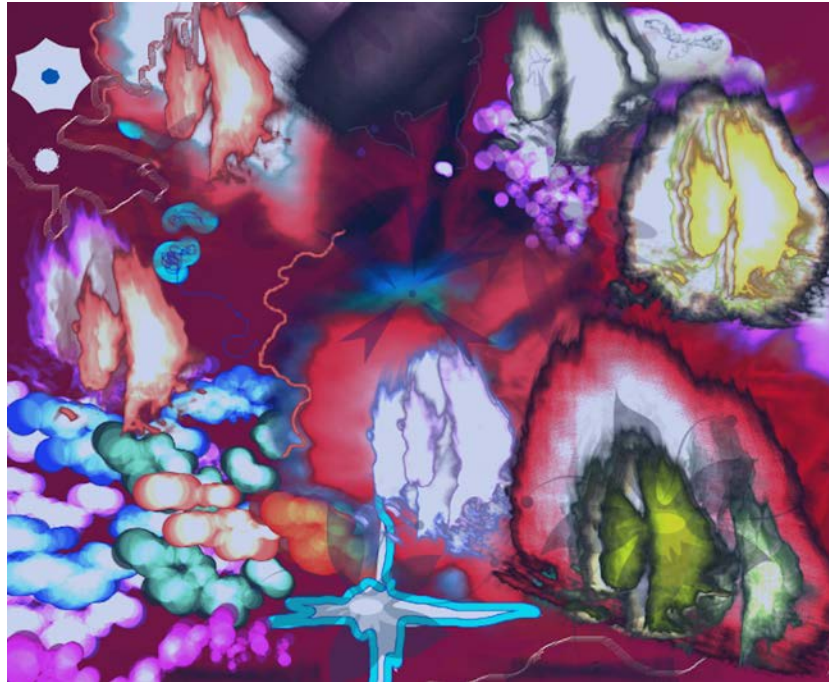


Fig. 3 B. Bergstrom, "Wasted" Time, 2014. Digital painting.

I questioned, what are the larger set of social practices in which learners are engaging now? How have these Apps and social media sites changed their relationships with learning? As I investigated SnapChat™ with my daughter one evening, I discovered that she and her friends place little value on the

content of the "snap." Rather, the value comes from the number of people following you. If one does not respond or snap back, people stop following you. I was stunned. What is being said is less important than the volume of people hearing you say nothing? If students are producing culture and the content of what is produced is irrelevant, what value is there in the production? My anger has ignited a fire. I must find a way to cross this technological and cultural divide. Is remix the answer?

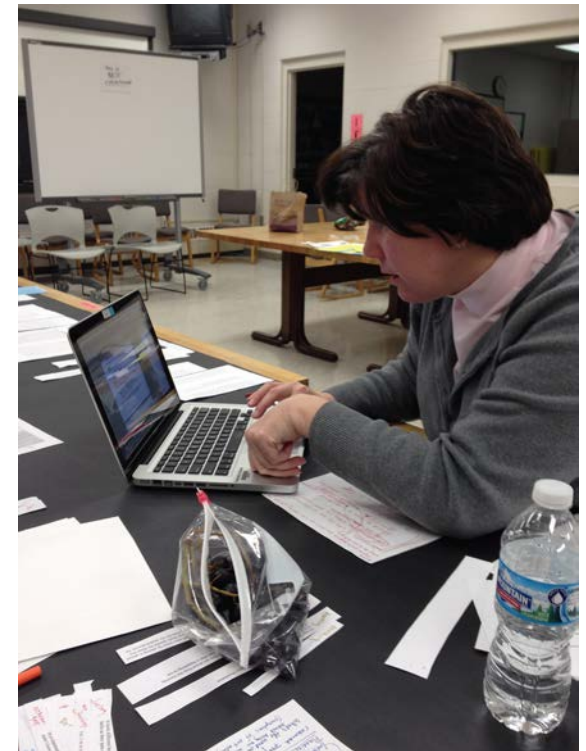


Fig. 4 Darden wrestling with technology.

I must confront my relationship with technology, or more accurately, my anxiety with it that precludes me from moving forward. I may never lose my “digital immigrant accent” (Prensky, 2001, n.p.) but I will at least be conversing in the same language with my students.

“Women have always collected things and saved and recycled them because leftovers yielded nourishment in new forms. The decorative functional objects women made often spoke in a secret language, bore a covert imagery. When we read these images in needlework, in paintings, in quilts, rugs and scrapbooks, we sometimes find a cry for help, sometimes an allusion to a secret political alignment, sometimes a moving symbol about the relationships between men and women. We base our interpretations of layered meanings in these works on what we know of our own lives - a sort of archeological reconstruction and deciphering” (Shapiro & Meyer, 1996, p. 153)

Paik claimed new media artists can focus on “cyberated life,” that I translated as, lives that I considered to be technology-saturated.

How about the artist as medium?

I wondered, how about the teacher as medium?

Paik continued, “Cyberated art is very important, but art for cyberated life is more important, and the latter need not be cyberated” (Paik in Amerika, 2011, p. 104).

Recently, in order to achieve my vision for an arts-based research project in which I was involved, I reluctantly had to learn how to create a website. The investment of time and energy was tremendous; my learning curve was steep. I am proud of the work I achieved, yet exhausted at the thought of having to invest precious resources so I can learn numerous new technologies to continue moving forward and share in the language of my students.

I wonder, will I carry that experience over into my classroom? My students must be competent to create a website, right? There is this voice in my head that says I am the professor, I am supposed to teach them but more often than not, they are teaching me. (Bradshaw, 2014).

Paik ends his *Artist medium instrument* remix with, “The culture that’s going to survive in the future is the culture that you can carry around in your head” (Amerika, 2011, p. 105).

Our apparently different understandings of the ways in which technology has to be incorporated or used in remix seemed to be a tripping point in our discussion; we trespassed upon one another's identity. We argued, pushed, and got our hackles up.

"I'm so lost. I don't get what your frustration is." Darden

"I don't know what to do about [our discord]. I feel like this is getting icky." Darden

"I don't see how me saying that technology *has* to be part of remix is confusing." Barbara

"Me too." Barbara

We stepped on one another's toes and then insisted that we each provide clarification as we articulated and processed the complex thoughts, viewpoints, and ideas that comprised our interactions. On the verge of exasperation, we had to step back. Finally seizing an opportunity to draw connections between the use of technology in remix and art education, we shifted focus onto our students. Having reached the peak of our dispute, we realized that the process of searching, identifying, and quarreling greatly heightened our individual awareness for the subtexts from which the two of us approach teaching and artmaking.

Remix allows us to move away from the mass-produced product of education, the branding, if you will, of students into our theories, beliefs, and ideas . . . it creates a culture through which we are encouraged to foster students to cultivate, create, critique, and ultimately re-create the text of the teacher they are becoming. Am I creating an environment where my students can write and rewrite the

text of their lives (Barthes, 1972) as Dr. Beudert encouraged me to do years ago?

Remix is not new (Knobel & Lankshear, 2008) and has been a part of cultural development before digitization. Yet technology has become "increasingly integral to how [young people] make meaning and express ideas" (p. 23).

If, as Iser (1980) notes, the act of reading is a process of becoming conscious, am I creating a space where students are *reading* their culture and becoming critical remixers?

According to Wilson (1997), the goal of art educational research is to provide knowledge about the ways art-learners use special artistic insight to expand their conceptions of themselves, past and

It made sense to me that remix could be part of an aesthetic; however, it seemed that, by definition, it would not be part of a summative assessment of students' work. Right?

How might we remix degrees in higher education to emphasize sharing and participation as a valuable didactic practice?

present worlds, imagined and future worlds, and the norms by which individuals govern their lives through writing the texts of art into the texts of their lives within and beyond school. (p.3).

As I ask my incoming art education majors why they want to teach, am I inviting them to research into their views of themselves, to investigate what education has been for them and ultimately to remix their own teaching philosophies?

In my resistance to technology, am I precluding my students from writing and remixing the text that allows them to find their own meaning as a teacher? I have become part of what Prensky (2001) notes is the single biggest issue in education—teachers who speak an outdated language teaching students who speak an entirely different one.

Have I been unfair to my students? How could I make participation with personal electronic devices a valuable practice in art education?

I'm working on it.

Recently I found myself in an unfamiliar situation as an educator. I took a moment and, Barbara's and my remixed version of the popular phrase, "What Would Jesus Do," asked, "What would Elizabeth do?" What pedagogical practices are there in my past experience, my toolbox, my awareness that I can draw from, combine, and recreate to address this particular situation?

How might an art educator be considered a "creative blend?"

How does a teacher (and pedagogy) become a remix of images (moving or still), television, the Internet, and personal archives?

And then, what about making them meaningful to a group of art students?

What about technology?

I wanted to escape into what Knobel and Lankshear (2008) call "game world physics" (p. 25). The idea of leaping up to the rooftop of the university's library, screaming out to release every last complicated thought, then turning invisible to change my pursuit seemed refreshing. I wanted to escape my internal battle and understand how to be a relevant, contemporary art educator as well as escape my external battle with Darden over what remix is, does, permits, or prohibits.

Proceeding

Using these insights as the springboard to welcome our new understandings of remix into our classrooms, studios, teaching, and artmaking practices, we finally began articulating our paths going forward—the ways we intend to bring remix into our pedagogies.

How might fan fiction be useful in creating a space in which my students become the actors in their own teaching? Fan fiction is a rewriting of a movie or television show in such a way that there is a new version, storyline, or character development (Berkowitz, 2012). Literacy scholars advocate bringing this practice into the K-12 classroom (Gee, 2004; Knobel & Lankshear, 2008; Manifold, 2009), but what if we focus in art education on *fan non-fiction*. I define fan non-fiction as remixing and rewriting based on real events lived with real art educators that occurred in the course of one's art education and *through* which the learner becomes a fan of the

Teachers . . .

How might we collaborate to use remixing as a route to meaningful pedagogical practices in visual arts education?

How might we remix the plethora of pedagogical ideas, experiences, and standards to make them meaningful for our future students?

educator or their practices. As a result of that fan experience, the participant rewrites and remixes their art education philosophy, pedagogy, or practice as a byproduct of the original lived experience mashed up against the situation and educational experiences in which they find themselves and through which they remix themselves.

I often say to my daughter, “don’t knock it till you try it.” I am usually referring to a food item but those words can apply to me. I found myself encouraged through this process to 1) not dismiss what I don’t know and am afraid of, and 2) not throw out my beliefs in the adoption of a new thing. Rather, I can find a way to remix my teaching practice to include and build on; to celebrate the technological, digital, and cultural references of my students while still celebrating the way I learned and am comfortable teaching.

Near the end of the time we delegated to writing this piece, I tried something new with my students in a Foundations in Art Education course. Wanting to explore as many technological opportunities in the art classroom as possible, I made a list of media-based tools that could *potentially* be used in teaching and asked several groups of four students to pick a tool at random. Then they were asked to use the tool to teach a studio art project to those in our class.

Several of the students’ immediate responses claimed they had never heard of Popplet, Web 2.0, or Weebly. I thought to myself... this is perfect! “That’s why we’re doing this assignment,” I explained.

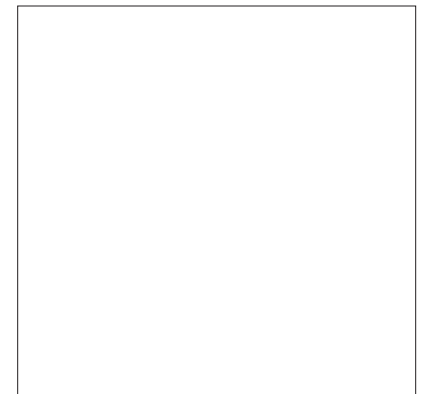
This past semester I invited students to bring their ideas and experiences to remixing our collective understanding of visual culture. Students were asked to consider the ways in which visual culture signs are mixed and remixed to layer meaning, to interpret the ways in which those signs have impacted their particular disciplinary focus, and then to find a way to share or disseminate their findings to us. The students created videos, blogs, twitter accounts, instagram accounts, and websites to articulate their developing and remixed understandings of visual culture. Opening up my practice to invite their technological expertise enriched everyone's learning.

Remix is another tool for social justice and democracy. It can be a method for breaking down barriers between those who have access to information and those who do not. Rather than we, as teachers, holding all the cards and knowledge, our students

After each group had done their lesson's presentation, the most engaging discourse of our semester emerged. The 20-25 minute presentations were thought-provoking and triggered the students' imaginations. They elaborated on ideas for how to use these technologies as ways to create new platforms for critiques, build ongoing art history timelines, assign collaborative mind-maps as homework, and construct interactive portfolios for submissions to various creative competitions.

Perhaps students enjoyed the fact that I was putting myself at risk when doing this assignment with our class. Walking into the unknown proved to be inspiring.

come to us with access to and experience with finding and producing that knowledge. Perhaps the more pertinent of our tasks is to help them critique and analyze what they are producing? Isn't that what education should do—help students discern how to remix everything together as they find *their* voice?



In Closing

Here we have articulated the difficult process we experienced in our attempts to come to terms with something we did not understand. We knew from the start that intense efforts would be required from the two of us. We had anticipated that this project would demand an openness that made vulnerable our personal values and beliefs. At the beginning of our journey, neither of us necessarily *wanted* to understand remix. Yet we also knew that being able to empathize with our students of the 21st century would make us better art educators and, perhaps, better artists. With our heightened awareness of various concepts of remix, we agree with this claim made by Keith Haring,

I think the contemporary artist has a responsibility to humanity to continue celebrating humanity and opposing the dehumanization of our culture. This doesn't mean that technology shouldn't be utilized by the artist, only that it should be at the service of humanity and not vice versa. (1984, n.p.)

Reflecting back on the ways we managed our challenges, the two of us can see that we needed to have dialogue through which to debate, process, and grasp theories about remix and hybridization. Confrontations among our philosophical, emotional, and organizational positionalities helped us realize that remix and hybridization are not about figuring out an answer; rather, they are about participation and process. Additionally, the environment of community we regularly

created with our students was a fundamental factor in our willingness to deeply and persistently engage with what was at first risky, foreign, and alienating. This commitment to one another as colleagues brings to light one of our initial intentions for this project: that of modeling the value found in doing collaborative research—or remixing—while remaining transparent and honest with one another as friends, tracking our progress as professionals in the field, and keeping our pre-service art education students at the heart of our pursuits.

The comfort we developed with one another and our individual differences demonstrated for us the value of intentionally creating environments that foster collaborative explorations. As an outcome of this experience, we better understand ways we may support our students to authentically participate in their own remix—searching, identifying, quarrelling and proceeding. We possess a renewed investment in opening fresh spaces for discourse throughout the milieu of visual arts education.

Maybe we have advanced the complex process that is remix. Or maybe we have merely cultivated the enigma. In the end, we are able to share the importance of seeking understanding even if—especially if—it means reaching well beyond our comfort levels to build meaningful, educative relationships. Remix, right?

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(re)Mixing Girlhood

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ABSTRACT

This article positions remix as an agentive site for girls and women in their consumption and production of popular media, one that disrupts dominant gender norms and representations and the pervasiveness of male gaze. Noting girlhood as connected to but also unique from womanhood (Kearney, 2009), the authors offer feminist interpretations of collage and video mash ups created by adolescent girls in a program of juvenile arbitration as a series of messy, non-linear readings of visual and textural fragments of girls' work, interlaced with authors' reactions to girls' productions as female facilitators/audience. The authors pose that this double-folded, dialogic, intergenerational remix generates a flow of female gaze—as a continuous repetition and collaborative disruption of dominant gender codes—which is produced, reproduced, and passed on to other girls and women to elicit reactions of difference.

Introduction

In this article, we employ a feminist framework to theorize girls' acts of popular media remixing as spaces for productive disruption of the dominant images and discourses about girls and girlhood, and examine our *(re)Mixed Media* project conducted with a group of adolescent girls in a juvenile arbitration program as a critical, collaborative, and agentive site of *female gaze*. Popular media such as advertisings, TV shows, films, and Internet are a pervasive cultural outlet through which girls derive pleasure, feel belonging, make meanings, and experiment with identities. As social languages and media converge unpredictably, they regulate and encourage questioning; they are at once controlling and permissive; they reproduce conformity yet also disrupt normative codes (Driver, 2007). Therefore, we posit that girls'

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acts of appropriating and remixing existing images and narratives about girlhood and womanhood is an important space of negotiation, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization of their gender identities. Moreover, they also hold a potential for collaborative and dialogic feminist interventions that disrupt patriarchal gender norms and representations of girls and women.

Theoretical Background

Remix as a Genre

The concept of remix is employed by a number of new media scholars and educators (Buckingham, 2004; Buckingham & Willett, 2009; Jenkins, 2006; Sonvilla-Weiss, 2010) and is often defined as an act of appropriating and reusing images, videos, narratives, and other visual and audio discourses of online digital culture. Although appropriation of images and text was an integral part of modern art forms like collage and mixed media before the digital age (Gude, 2004), the process of “taking existing culture apart and putting it back together” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 32) became a widely used creative tool due to proliferation of new technologies in the 21st century. According to a 2005 study by the Pew Internet and American Life project, 19 percent of contemporary American youth who have access to digital technologies remix online content (Jenkins, 2009). While some new media scholars view the act of remixing as inherently innovative and productive and call for a new pedagogy based on “the principle of learning through remixing” (Jenkins, 2010), others emphasize the need to distinguish between activity and agency in youth mashup productions (Buckingham, 2009). As Buckingham notes, exercising agency requires more than simply playful appropriation of existing digital texts, but also demands critical awareness of ideologies and messages behind them, skillful and thoughtful use of creative techniques, and access to technology tools. Some populations of youth, particularly young people from low socio-economic backgrounds, are still lacking access to and skills in basic new technologies including Internet, editing software, and digital cameras. Another aspect

of Buckingham’s argument is that young people who participate in remixing online culture do not critically engage with existing cultural biases, messages, and stereotypes. While we agree with Buckingham’s definition of remix as agency, we also believe that the act of remixing digital media is profoundly gendered. Not only do girls’ new media productions have less presence on such mainstream sites as Youtube when compared to work by their male counterparts (Molyneaux, O’Donnell, Gibson, & Singer, 2008), but female producers who engage in remixing online content are confronted with a patriarchal matrix of overly sexualized and voyeuristic representations of girls and young women.

Towards a Feminist Remix

After John Berger (1972) and Laura Mulvey (1975) crafted the notion of the “male gaze,” which implies that female images on screen are objects of a heterosexual male fantasy and desire, inquiries into the nature and potentiality of the female gaze were set into motion. However, this subject remains largely uncertain and contested in today’s feminism. Although recognizing the progressive changes in girls’ and women’s screen images and their increased participation as producers/makers of popular media, many contemporary feminist scholars argue for an impossibility of the female gaze to exist outside of the patriarchal matrix, and that despite being depicted as strong, independent, and self-reliant, girls and women in contemporary films are also pictured as lacking, incomplete, and longing for men (Jacobsen, 1999; McRobbie, 2004; 2009). The female gaze is also argued to work similarly to the male gaze where women and girls objectify and scrutinize each other to compete for men’s attention (McRobbie, 2004). Seeing women and girls as either objects of desire or as passive viewers and onlookers is largely grounded in the reality of a male-dominated media enterprise. Women filmmakers are still grossly outnumbered by men and those who work in the commercial film industry usually have to conform to its masculine culture (Kearney, 2006), one that reifies women as objects, and beings who are subservient, weak, secondary, or valued less in terms of their contributions to the media

establishment. As the Bechdel Test² reveals, a vast majority of commercial films are still lacking presence of at least two lead female characters communicating with one another on any other topic but men (D'Amore, 2014). As a result, more girls and young women today turn to grass roots, independent media making in order to tell their own stories that are largely invisible in mainstream popular culture.

Girls' Media Making

Girlhood Studies scholar Mary Kearney (2006), who studied teenage girls' independent media production, invites us to look as the girl's gaze as an innovative domain where girl producers generate intimate and varied images of girls and girlhood through their own subjective experiences that speak directly to female audiences, thereby avoiding the objectifying practices of the male-dominated media industry. Many girls' zines, blogs, and films build on, reference, and recycle commercial popular culture in order to illuminate and speak about girls' subjective struggles for identity and voice. Kearney (2009) also notes the significance in acknowledging girlhood as unique, rather than as the state of becoming future women. Much of the research in Girls' Studies is focused on contemporary media (film, television, and magazines) that "privilege girl protagonists, girls' reception practices, and, most recently, girls' involvement in media production" (p. 19).

As indicated above, contemporary girls live in a culture dominated by images of females as commodities to be desired and looked at, that is, to be consumed by the male gaze. This culture is an already remixed and constantly reinvented bricolage of fashion trends, hair styles, PhotoShopped models, low-cut lingerie, shaving creams, celebrity gossip, and other creations of "designer capitalism" (Duncum, 2007; jagodzinski, 2010) that breeds in women and girls lasting yet unattainable desires to look and feel a certain way. And yet popular culture is a space through which girls might also derive pleasure and feel belonging. As social languages and popular cultures converge

2 First appearing in Alison Bechdel's comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For* (Bechdel, 1985), the Bechdel Test is now widely used as a metric for gender bias in fictional filmmaking.

unpredictably, they regulate and encourage questioning; they are at once controlling and permissive; they reproduce conformity yet also disrupt normative codes (Driver, 2007). For these reasons, we posit the girls' cultural remixes as potent in their negotiation of the deterritorialization and reterritorialization of their gender identities. It is also important to acknowledge and look into *how* girls produce and consume media. Girls' participation in historically male-dominated media culture is too often trivialized, at best by the pinkwashing phenomenon, or the tendency to market otherwise un-gendered products toward girls and women by making them pink (Kearney, 2010). At worst, girls' attempts to enter into the proverbial man cave of media production are met with threats of violence or death, like in the case of Gamergate³.

Before embarking on the *(re)Mixed Media* project with a group of adolescent girls, we posed a number of questions to ourselves that served as a guide for our curriculum. These questions were: Is it possible for girl media makers, in their own creative productions, to break through the established range of familiar images and to further remix and reappropriate existing visual images and narratives that complicate and challenge existing gender codes? Is there a female gaze that is not necessarily dependent on, or framed by, the normative male desire? Are there particular approaches to remixing dominant cultural images and narratives that work to create slippages and interruptions that reclaim a girl's gaze as different and more independent of male-dominated prescription?

3 The hashtag #gamergate first appeared in the fall of 2014 in response to online attacks (including death threats) of female game developer Zoe Quinn. The Tweets included debates on the ethics of video game reviews and the inherent gendered biases of the video gaming industry.

(re)Mixed Media: WWBI Juvenile Arbitration Summer Workshops 2013⁴

The project unfolding in the following pages is one in a series of arts-based workshops held each summer as a part of a larger series of sanctions for middle and high school girls in a juvenile arbitration program in a small Southeastern town. During this workshop series, we had a total of eleven participant girls ranging in age from thirteen to seventeen. These girls are classified as “first time, non-violent” offenders, whose offenses range from possession of controlled substances, to shoplifting, to possession of weapons or minor assault (fighting). The successful completion of the sanctions results in the criminal offense being expunged from the girl’s juvenile record. Other sanctions often include a trip to the city jail, community service, and apology letters written to the person or persons affected by the offense. In our arts-based workshops, we elect to focus on issues, or “roadblocks,” in our participants’ lives as opposed to the offenses that result in the need for arbitration. Over the course of one month, we see the girls four times, three hours each week, at a local church that generously provides us with a meeting space.

The *(re)Mixed Media* project was designed to open up the spaces already territorialized by many adolescent girls—television, film, print, and digital media—and provide the teenage female participants with tactical ways to respond to, critique, agree, and disagree with the visual and performative cultures of girlhood. Although we acknowledge the participants’ use of popular techniques of remixing—such as

appropriation, juxtaposition, and recontextualization⁵—exist in mainstream media (Gude, 2004; Jenkins, 2006; 2009; Sonvilla-Weis, 2010), we did not formally teach those techniques. We introduced images of artists and media makers who employ those tactics themselves, including Jenny Holzer’s *Projections* (1996-2011), Barbara Kruger’s *Untitled (We Don’t Need Another Hero)* (1987), and three video compilations by the collaborative EveryNONE: *Words* (2010), *Symmetry* (2011), and *Losers* (2012). We selected artwork that we hoped would generate a discussion on tough subjects relevant to girlhood, and that would also stimulate questioning of institutionalized norms that are consumed and (re)produced by many girls. Examples of those norms that were unpacked during topic brainstorming with the participants included pressure to conform to traditional standards of beauty; double standards for men and women; physical and emotional violence against women; expectations to, as the girls claim, “talk a certain way” (not too smart, not too “stupid”); and the contested space of adolescence, or growing up too fast or not fast enough. In working with the girls, we maintained that discussion would be a starting point, and that the significant revelations would be made and communicated through their art making emerging out of that discussion.

In an effort to reflect on our participants’ artwork produced during the *(re)Mixed Media* workshops in a way that acknowledges our classroom pedagogy as a feminist collaboration with our participants, our approach to the interpretation of the girls’ work in the following sections is rather experimental. We hope to illustrate the inherent remixed cultural practices demonstrated by our adolescent girl participants’ work with magazine images and video, as well as our own

4 Our previous publications (Ivashkevich, 2013; Wolfgang & Ivashkevich, 2014) discuss video-based workshops with a similar population of girls. In these earlier studies, we provide a detailed description of our involvement with Women’s Well Being Initiative (WWBI) at the University of South Carolina and its mission. The initiative uses an arts-based approach to engage adjudicated girls and young women from local communities in creating poetry, multi-media art, digital photography, and video to address issues of gender and justice, and speak about roadblocks in their lives.

5 Techniques of using and remixing existing visual material have been extensively described in art education and new media scholarship. According to Gude (2004) and Jenkins (2006, 2009), appropriation is an intentional borrowing of existing cultural images and text to create new content. Juxtaposition is a technique of remixing existing cultural content that involves placing and overlaying different images and text to make new connections and reveal hidden meanings (Gude, 2004). Recontextualization is an intentional positioning of a familiar image in “relationship to pictures, symbols, or texts with which is it not usually associated” (p. 9).

cultural experiences and memories as grown women, by interweaving the fragments of girls' visual and textural mashups and our own immediate reactions and responses to their work. Our readings and reactions to the girls' work are non-linear, open-ended, and affective. They generate yet another layer of remix as a dialogic exchange about the traps, obstacles, and potentialities of girlhood and womanhood.

Methodologically, we employ a hermeneutic interpretive approach to our participants' work as a mutually "co-constructed knowledge" produced in collaboration with female peers and us as classroom facilitators (Schwandt, 2000, p. 195). However, while these co-constructed remixes of representations and voices showcased in the following section inevitably draw upon our classroom conversations with the girls during media production, they do not mimic these conversations or represent direct interventions happening in the classroom. Rather, they are our post-project reflections on girls' artwork presented in a messy and non-linear dialogic format where images and narratives produced by our participants trigger our own reactions as female teachers/audience creating a continuous fabric of feminist remix.

Feminist (re)Mixes

In this section, we showcase three different examples of our participants' media remixes and our own reactions to their work that exemplify three different strategies to remixing and mashing popular cultural representations of girls, women, and gender: appropriation, juxtaposition, and recontextualization (Gude, 2004; Jenkins, 2006, 2009; Sonvilla-Weis, 2010). We see these approaches as distinct yet also highly interdependent and interwoven, and use them as both conceptual tools and metaphors to interpret and respond to a diverse body of girls' work such as magazine collages and video compilations.

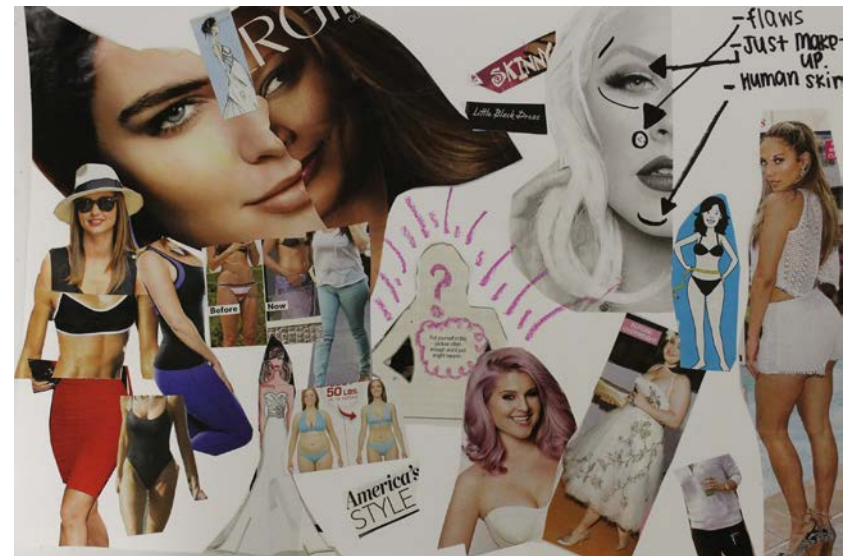
Appropriation: Magazine (re)Mix

Before introducing our participants to a concept of video remix, we conducted a hands-on collage exercise in which we asked them to appropriate images and text from popular magazines to explore issues related to girls/women and girlhood/womanhood. The girls seemed to be acutely aware of the multitude of images and messages in the popular magazines that reproduce a hypersexual body image and how these representations scrutinize and police female appearance. Each of them created a powerful and complex visual image. Below, we showcase two images accompanied by our immediate interpretive reactions to the images as adult women and classroom facilitators. Our reactions include both readings of visual and textural fragments of girls' work as well as our own subjective responses to these readings that are bracketed in our transcription. As noted above, these readings and reactions do not mimic our classroom interactions with the girls, but are the post-workshop interpretations of their art. We pose that this format of responding to girls' work creates a flow of feminist remix in which our participants' complex, multilayered work of disrupting dominant images and messages about girlhood and womanhood generates affective reactions and critiques by other women (in this case, the two of us as classroom facilitators). We see the feminist remix as a collaborative, dialogic, and intergenerational exchange operates as a site of *female gaze* that creates slippages and interruptions within the dominant patriarchal matrix.



love is endless
 Impulse
 You are entirely up to you.
 [carefree in designer clothing]⁶
 Make your body.
 [look like this]
 Make your life. Make yourself.
 [in this image]
 This is you. This is now.
 Where do you stand?
 [blind, talked at not talked to]
 Do you miss me?
 [detached, ignorant]
 154 shades of woman
 [of a white woman]
 love is limitless
 [everything bracketed by endless, limitless love]

Fig. 1 Collage.
 Image used with
 artist's permission.



America's style
 [split woman, black and white]
 Skinny
 [a woman is pieced together]
 Little Black Dress
 [little white wedding dress]
 Flaws.
 [drawn on]
 Just make-up.
 [painted on]
 Human skin.
 [looking back]
 [white dress, white dress, white dress]
 Put yourself in this picture often enough and it just might happen.
 [question mark?]

Fig. 2 Collage.
 Image used with
 artist's permission.

⁶ Our immediate reactions to fragments of girls's work are bracketed throughout the transcriptions.

Juxtaposition: Video (re)Mix

After the exercise of appropriating popular images and text through collage, we invited our participants to work in small groups to create a video remix by using video footage and still images found online, as well as their own short video clips filmed on site. One of the groups chose to focus on the topic of body image and pressures of womanhood. In their video remix, they interlaced and juxtaposed multiple and seemingly unrelated images and video clips found on Youtube and Google Image depository (carefree female children, anorexic teenagers, the deteriorating face of a drug-addict, leg shaving, and weight lifting) with a few short scenes that they filmed by themselves (a young woman putting on make-up, eating popcorn, and flipping through a magazine). They also added a few phrases and advocacy quotes that created a crucial layer of juxtaposition (Gude, 2004), piecing these multiple images and clips together to flesh out many women's continuous, life-long struggle with appearance and body image. Below, we showcase a screen shot montage of selected video scenes from this video remix, along with our readings of various segments of girls' work and our (bracketed) immediate reactions to them as an example of feminist remix in which our participants' affective critique of girlhood/womanhood is further complicated, extended, and questioned.

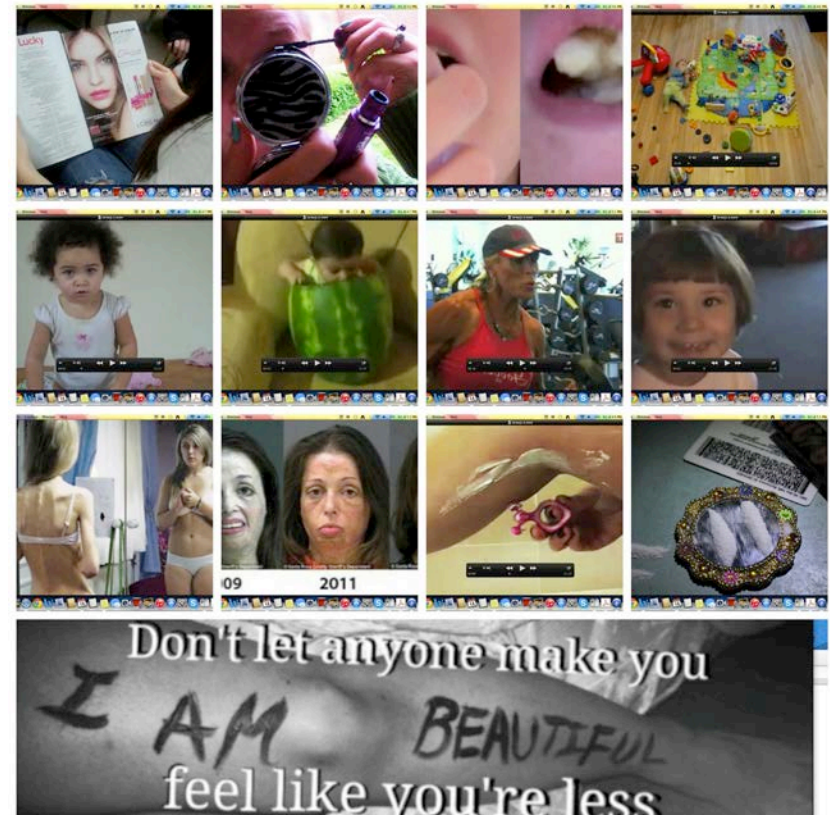


Fig. 3 Screen captures from video collage. Images used with artists' permission.

"All things truly wicked come from innocence."⁷

A hyperlapsed infant; a baby in a watermelon;

a toddler girl throwing clothes on the floor;

a young girl using profanity, parents laugh.

[lost innocence, joy]

"The business of womanhood is a heavy burden."

⁷ The phrases in quotations in this transcription appear in the frames of the video and were searched for and selected by the participants to include as part of their video collages. The phrases operate as transitions between different video segments.

Pink razor, bare legs, bathroom tile;
compact, zebra print, mascara, rings, blue nail polish;
magazine models, weightlifting enthusiast.
[I have to do this every day. And I hate it;
I don't do any of this every day. And I hate it.]
"Coming under peer pressure you might do
something you don't want to do."
Drugs, timeline of a physical deterioration (face).
[Sadness, disgust, fear]
"Once you become self-conscious there is no end to it;
Once you start to doubt there is no room for anything else."
Body in the mirror, split screen images of mouth eating popcorn,
emaciated body, timeline of physical deterioration (body).
[Obsession, fear, envy, disgust, disgusted by my envy]
"Don't let anyone make you feel like you're less
Then [sic] what you are."
Bare legs with the words, "I am beautiful no matter what."
[Exposed, uncertain]

Recontextualization: Remixing (re)Mixed

One of the groups working on a video remix project approached the process differently. They were interested in a theme of female aggression and bullying and the popular *Mean Girls* movie in particular. While they included only one scene from an actual film in their video remix, they reenacted and filmed a number of other scenes inspired

by the movie's plot. These include a girl verbally abused and knocked off her feet in a school hallway, girls scrutinizing their friend's appearance, and girls rumoring about a female peer. In doing their own filming, directing, and acting, the girls reinterpreted and recontextualized these film episodes by interjecting their own personal experiences and instances of being bullied and bullying others based on appearance. They interlaced these scenes with diverse images of females found online (e.g., overweight girl, punk girl, pierced girl) and further extended their video mashup by adding a clip from a popular natural beauty campaign, followed by what they called *So What is Beautiful?*—a remix of yet another range of still images depicting acts of human caring/helping, laughter, and love. Another critical layer of this complex digital fabric was the girls' use of Pink's popular song *Perfect* that runs throughout the film, the lyrics serving as a (missing) female gaze that restores girls'/women's trust, bond, and affection for each other and exposes the culture of aggression as a byproduct of the male gaze. Below is a montage of selected screen shots and a transcript of our readings and responses to this group of girls' work.⁸

⁸ We notably inserted less of our own reactions in brackets in the following transcript. We acknowledge a discursive richness and overflow of material already produced by the girls in these video compilations. As producers and consumers of media at this phase of the workshop series, the girls were already actively engaged in talking back to the appropriated videos and images they selected by creating their own versions of popular stories about girlhood or overlaying music that challenges female representations found online.

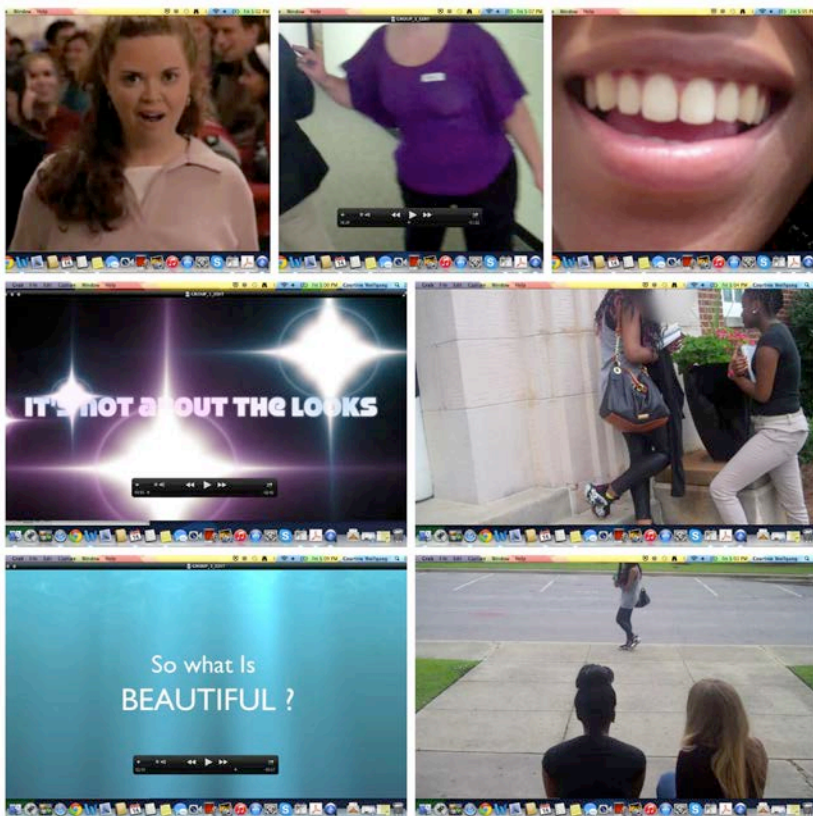


Fig. 4 Screen captures from video collage. Images used with artists' permission.

"Made a wrong turn, once or twice..."⁹

Face of a model. Is this what you see as pretty?

"Dug my way out."

Face of an overweight teenager. Is this what you see as ugly?

Mean Girls character speaking into the camera.

"I saw Kady Heron wearing army pants and flip flops so I bought army pants and flip flops..."¹⁰

"Welcome to my silly life..."

Two girls watching another girl walk by.

(speaking) Look at her. What is she wearing?

Why is she walking like that?

I don't know, but she really needs to stop walking like that.
(laughs)

Punk girl in black with piercings.

Girl's mouth speaking into the camera.

(speaking) She's so ugly.

What does she have on?

Like, who would wear that?

She shouldn't come to school like that.

Two girls chatting.

(speaking) Did you see that lame girl Sally's outfit today?

Yeah, she's so lame.

I hate her.

[I feel scrutinized every minute I'm in public. I am suffocated, I am jealous]

"Pretty, pretty, please don't you ever, ever feel that you're ever less than perfect."

(speaking) All the boy's like her, and I don't know why.

Yeah, because she's really ugly. Not even cute.

Blond woman with perfect skin.

She's so pretty.

I wish I could be just like her.

She has all the boys.

A girl gets pushed to the wall by another girl.

9 A number of quotations in this remix are lines from the song Perfect by Pink, which girls selected as a background music for this video.

10 This is an excerpt from the Mean Girls film.

(speaking) Get out of my way, ugly.

What are you wearing?

What do you have on?

You're so ugly.

[Distorted perceptions of myself, of intimacy]

Middle aged woman; two portrait sketches side by side.

"This is the sketch that you helped me create,
and that's the sketch that somebody described to be you.

See, that's... my natural beauty.

It impacts choices of friends that we make,
the jobs we apply for, how we treat our children.

It impacts everything.

It couldn't be more critical to your happiness."¹¹

Hugging couple; faces of models before and after make-up.

It's not about the looks, you're more beautiful than you think.

What is beautiful?

Smiling mouths of old and young, with teeth and without.
Laughter.

A man giving blanket to a homeless. Helping others.

Couples kissing, hugging. Love.

Aging. Life is beautiful.

[Joy, difference, caring, (heterosexual) love, happiness]

"Pretty, pretty, please if you ever, ever feel like you are nothing,
you are perfect to me."

Girl's Gaze (re)Mixed

Based on our participants' media remixes and our reactions and comments to their work, we posit that a possibility for a female gaze to exist independently from the patriarchal matrix is rooted in girls' subjective remixing of commercialized images to communicate their pain, insecurities, humor, and outrage. This female gaze further springs from the affective responses and reactions to this work by other girls and women that creates a continuous flow of feminist remix. The girls' acts of intentional borrowing of popular images and texts, normally controlled by a male gaze and societal expectations, in order to insert their own embodied juxtapositions, experiences, and commentary displaces the masculine logic of objectification and makes imaginable new interpretations of those images. In our participants' artwork, images of girls and women do not exist simply as objects but rather as subjects of what some feminist scholars have called a "joyful reappropriation" (Griggers, 1990, p. 82). These acts of reappropriation flesh out the differences within girlhood itself and allow for both female producers and spectators to "reinvent [them]selves" (McRobbie, 2009, p. 82) without being objectified. We pose that feminist remixing, or rather *(re)mixing*, of girlhood and the girl's gaze is enabled by the presence of *(re)*—as a continuous repetition and remaking and a collaborative act of female agency—which is produced, reproduced, and passed on to other girls and women to elicit reactions of difference

As grown women and classroom facilitators, we were compelled to engage and participate in these subversive acts by revisiting, reinterpreting, and responding to our participants' cultural mashups. While our girl participants used a number of effective techniques such as appropriation, juxtaposition, and recontextualization (Gude, 2004; Jenkins, 2006, 2009; Sonvilla-Weis, 2010) that contributed to production of new meanings, it is the potential, diverse responses, and readings evoked in female viewers that ultimately generate a female gaze and remake the commercialized landscape of girlhood. The responses are not necessarily logical and coherent but are often emotional, messy, and disjointed. They are grounded in the female subjectivity of affect

11 This is the line from a Dove Beauty Campaign commercial.

which is often dismissed as irrational and senseless within masculine logic, yet which acts as an agentive and productive force that undermines patriarchal order (Walkerdine, 2007). It is precisely the messiness and unpredictability of feminist remix that creates ruptures and slippages that escape the male gaze. By making “visible the unseen and audible the unheard” (Kearney, 2006, p. 327), the act of remixing girlhood and womanhood sets a female gaze in motion and claims its own territory within the male-dominated media culture.

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Remixing the Released Imagination

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I present a DJ-inspired approach to arts-based educational research that borrows from found poetry analysis (Wiggins, 2011) to remix passages from Maxine Greene's (1995) *Releasing the Imagination*. I describe revisiting Greene's classic text twenty years after its major influence on me as a community arts practitioner. In rereading the text, I struggled with how I failed to see the ways in which her conception of "community" suppresses and reproduces racial conflict. I then describe using an absurdist approach to remixing that borrows materials from Greene's text and from William Pope.L's *Skin Set* (2013) to create a new text, or found poem. After presenting the outcome, I invite other community arts practitioners to consider playful, absurdist arts-based methodologies that may offer protected pedagogic spaces, albeit momentary ones, to trouble concepts we revere. In particular, I suggest that this irreverent approach to remixing can be useful in addressing the racialized tensions that can be silenced in the name of "community" because of the found poem's lack of preciousness and its potential for humor.

Introduction

In this paper, I use a DJ-inspired approach to arts-based educational research that borrows from found poetry analysis (Wiggins, 2011) to remix passages from Maxine Greene's (1995) *Releasing the Imagination*. I developed this methodology in response to disillusionment I encountered as I re-engaged with Greene's ideas about community, diversity, and difference—ideas that were once central to my practice in community arts education. This use of remix, I argue, is a playful reflexive practice for use by artists, educators, researchers, and our students as we wrestle with the weight of racial injustice that, at times, may feel irresolvable.

Before I begin, I should state clearly that while I engage critically and creatively with *Releasing the Imagination*, this paper itself is not principally concerned with critiquing Greene's scholarship. In this often-

cited book, Greene outlines her vision for the ways in which the arts provide the foundation for people to engage with difference through imagining alternative worlds and possibilities, thus transforming individuals into discursive democrats who acknowledge the vast array of different identities while working together to create a better society. *Releasing the Imagination* is twenty years old, and since its publication, the book has been highly influential in art education. It has provided inspiration for many art educators as they attempt to "release" multiple voices through artistic creation, particularly those voices that have been silenced and subordinated. And given Greene's passing in May 2014, criticism of *Releasing the Imagination* is untimely.

Yet the timing of Greene's death is not inconsequential to this paper. Her passing in 2014 re-released her voice in my imagination at the same time that I began to brood over the tragedies, and subsequent social unrest, in Ferguson, Missouri. In August of 2014, months after Greene's death, an unarmed Black teenager, Michael Brown, was fatally shot by Officer Darren Wilson. Brown's death, as well as the failure of a grand jury to indict Wilson months later, led to widespread protest and increased awareness outside communities of color of the excessive use of force among police within those communities. These events led me to question my impact as an arts educator among low-income youth from communities of color. It also challenged me to question how I read Greene two decades ago and drew on her theorization in my community arts practice. Today, I continue to struggle with discerning what critical methodologies might be available to artists, researchers, and educators when events like Ferguson make commitments to arts-enriched, democratic communities seem inadequate and absurd.

The purpose of this article is thus to critique how I read Greene two decades ago and present a remix methodology that I have used to do so. In presenting this remix methodology, I describe how I attempted to negotiate the disillusion with myself as a community artist and researcher and what I learned in the process that may have implications for community arts practice and art education research.

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Background

Maxine Greene was highly influential in my intellectual life; my interest in art education emerged as an undergraduate when I read her *Releasing the Imagination* (1995). Her text invited me to consider myself as an artist who approached the social world as a material that might be re-imagined, and thus manipulated, for the common good. This social imagination with a moral purpose led to my interest in community-based arts; her work provided the theoretical footing that I needed to start a community arts and humanities program for marginalized youth.

In Providence, Rhode Island, I opened a storefront studio, New Urban Arts, to house an inclusive arts “community,” which at first was comprised of high school students, largely from low-income communities of color, and emerging artists, largely from racially privileged and economically affluent backgrounds. I was interested in how this multi-racial, cross-class inclusive community could serve as both a means and an end. My “capacity to invent visions of what should be and what might be in our deficient society” would be realized in the studio (Greene, 1995, p. 5). This community, I imagined, would be free to a large extent from racial and class conflict as youth and artists engaged in meaningful and collaborative inquiry.

Since then, scholars in art education have drawn on postmodern theory to critique the ways in which collective human agency, through what is often called “community,” may suppress the creative forces of individual desire and reduce the countless and specific arrays of identities across factors including race, gender, sexual orientation, citizenship status, and so on (Holland, 2015; Illeris, 2015). From this perspective, “community” exerts its own form of pastoral control, coercing people into White, middle-class subjectivities that value engaging in dialogue and acknowledging individual difference as long as those differences serve broader aims of the community, or society at large (Schutz, 2004). Amidst these potentially different values and approaches, some community arts practitioners may be at risk to accept uncritically the notion that artistic practice helps build relationships

across difference, when such “community building” may simply be coercing people into performing aspects of Whiteness.

The question of power underpins why and in what ways pastoral control occurs. As some community arts practitioners may value a kind of “discursive democracy,” which focuses on collective dialogue that avoids conflict; some of their constituents may prefer “democratic solidarity” that fosters mass action under the guidance of a relatively small number of leaders. This model depends upon constructing a working class subjectivity that hinges upon a constructed, and yet viscerally understood, rhetoric of “us” and “them.” In community arts practice, the question may not be which form of pastoral control exists, but rather who is privileged with the right to decide the subjectivities that are valued more than others. While scholars have examined how and why educators and students might transgress communal norms through, for example, inane expressions borrowed from popular visual culture (Duncum, 2009; Grace & Tobin, 2002), less attention in art education has been paid to the ways in which community artists and their constituents might permit one another to transgress visions of “community” and permit individual subjectivities born out of anger towards racial injustice.

To help address this gap, Ruth-Nicole Brown and I (2014) considered the pedagogic possibilities of an exhibition curated by Kara Walker, *Ruffneck Constructivists*, that was held at Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, in 2014. In this exhibition, the architectural forms and meanings that contain all the “angst and braggadocio and ego and rage that Black creatives have brought forth in other fields, particularly music, but also underground entrepreneurship, dance, ‘thug life,’ and spiritualism” (Walker, 2014, para. 1) are investigated. We examined youth’s artistic practices that, much like those artworks exhibited in Walker’s show, express pain and a sense of absurdity that the U.S. still requires a “New Civil Rights Agenda” nearly 60 years after *Brown vs. Board of Education* (Orfield, 2014), or that many White and other Americans still needs convincing that “Black Lives Matter.”

In this paper, I continue this project by considering the creative possibilities afforded by Walker's exhibition for my own scholarly practice. Walker's exhibition continues to be fruitful as I consider how to move forward as a community artist and researcher in light of the events in Ferguson, which are difficult to reconcile with the way that I drew on Greene's theorization in the past. In particular, I considered work by William Pope.L, one artist featured in *Ruffneck Constructivists*, because his artistic practice suggests releasing pleasure through an absurdist approach to remixing representations of race. I wanted to consider releasing this pleasure through remixing to counteract my disillusion with how my approach to community arts practice, informed by my reading of Greene, may have suppressed youth's voices born out of a sense of anger towards their marginalization due to a variety of social factors including race. The approach to remixing that I developed to do so, which I propose here, is not without its own problems and limitations, particularly given my subject position as a White author. Before I present this methodology and its limitations, I describe and theorize Pope.L's artistic practice in relation to race, representation, and remixing.

Pope.L's Play amidst the Irresolvable

As an artist, Pope.L makes objects, street performances, and installation/performances that have drawn controversy for his absurdist treatment of racial conflict in the U.S. (Bessire, 2002). His artwork in Walker's exhibition *Ruffneck Constructivists* is no exception. In this exhibition, Pope.L presents *Claim*, an installation in which he affixes candid street photographs of Philadelphians—portraits that he claims are portraits of Jewish people—to slices of *non-kosher* bologna. The lunchmeat is nailed to a gallery wall in a grid. The expansive grid spans the length of the gallery wall, floor to ceiling. Over time, sweat from the rotten meat streaked down the wall and stunk up the gallery. When I viewed *Claim* in person, I could not stop my gag reflex. It was hard to decipher whether I was gagging because of the stink or because of the norms of racial representation that Pope.L transgressed through his grid, a grid that was oddly beautiful in its geometry.

In exploring the way in which naming and measuring people as raced is a violent, rotten act, *Claim* is representative of Pope.L's tendency in his artwork to explore two irresolvable positions (Bessire, 2002). The first is that race is the defining factor in U.S. social life. The second is that race is untenable; we cannot define essential types of individuals based on perceived physical traits. Pope.L's creative vision emerges from this fissure, as Bessire points out, producing work that both conveys difficult reminders about the U.S.'s relationship to race and then undermining that messaging through humor, absurdity, and intended offense.

Pope.L's referential artistic practice is useful for me when considering how and why to remix. Amidst the irresolvability of race in the U.S., the artist reverts to humor and play through an artistic practice that draws on remixing. He writes:

Like Jorge Luis Borges, like Richard Pryor, when confronted with the irresolvable, I revert to play. I want to ignore the oncoming locomotive, and I also want to mount it and ride all the way into the tunnel and out the other side. Play is a dance, an approach, a technique to make disillusion knowable yet bearable. It is not the slip on the banana peel, nor the landing, nor the anticipation of slip or landing; it is the universe of unknowns that rush in from the hereafter on the other side. (Hoffman, 2002, para. 17)

I am drawn to how Pope.L invites us to consider artistic techniques for making disillusion knowable yet bearable, techniques that may be useful, for example, while contending with the disillusion that arises as a community artist post-Ferguson. For example, in his series of drawings *Skin Set* (2013), Pope.L remixes language in sometimes highly offensive and vulgar ways to draw attention to the absurdity of "being raced" through language when such claims have no scientific grounding. One drawing reads, "Green People are America Eat its Ass-Ness." Another declares, "Purple People Are Reason Bicarbonate." In creating a universe of unknowns by remixing language, Pope.L's work illustrates the absurdity of making any claims based on biological race, and yet, that the history of the United States can only

be explained through relying on this social construct.

Pope.L's play amidst the irresolvable can be theorized as a postmodern means of reaction (Lather, 1991). His reactionary approach to representation occurs when an ultimate aim or grand narrative such as "racial justice" or "community" collapses, a collapse necessitated by realization that collective human agency needed to achieve those aims suppresses individual desire, co-opts human agency, and smooths over individual differences. The only methodology left—for making art, for conducting empirical research, for living life—is an attempt, as Baudrillard put it, "to reach a point where one can live with what is left. It is more survival among the remnants than anything else" (1984, in Gane, 1993, p. 95).

In his survival among the remnants, Pope.L seeks out pleasure in combining artifacts, including the "colored" language in *Skin Set*, as a way to contend with his "oncoming locomotives" (Hoffman, 2002, para. 17). One locomotive we might imagine is the seemingly inevitable tragedy such as the events in Ferguson. Pope.L's play with texts, his mashing up of raced images and degrading lunchmeat, can be considered as a remix, whereby his aim is not to create "new artistic form" or lead us to the promised land of "racial justice" or "community" but rather to seek out ways to make disillusion bearable by combining readymade material in playful ways. As I wrestled with the tragedy of Ferguson, and perhaps even the sadness of Greene's death, I turned to experiment with how I might make my disillusion with myself as a community artist by remixing words from Greene's *Releasing the Imagination* and Pope.L's *Skin Set*, an act that struck me as absurd, yet somehow necessary in my intellectual development.

Before I describe this approach and its personal necessity, I must acknowledge that although I have appropriated Pope.L's work for playful pleasure, what is at stake for me as a White scholar is different from what is at stake for Pope.L as a Black artist. In other words, neither of us can escape the inscribed positions of our raced bodies. For Pope.L, this inevitability means that his life may be literally at stake when, for example, he chooses to crawl across the sidewalks

and streets of Manhattan in a Superman costume, as he has done. For me, I can remix representations of race from the safer confines of my academic office and my White body. This crucial difference has implications that I discuss after I present my remix.

Remixing Greene and Pope.L

To begin this remixing project, I reread parts of Greene's (1995) *Releasing the Imagination* to examine my own previous assumptions in creating a multiracial, cross-class community released through the arts. As I reread the text, I was startled by the ways in which racial conflict was embedded in Greene's writing style, particularly her use of pronouns. For example, she positions herself and her audience as "we" and "us" and positions everyone else as "they" and "them." Greene writes, for example, that "for years, *we* knew no more about people like *her*... the plight of young island women" (1995, p. 160, my emphasis). "Her" refers to Jamaica Kincaid's character Lucy in *Antigua*, and "we" appears to refer to continental Whites who do not know the "plight of young island women." Of course, so-called island girls know their plight. They know it viscerally. "Their" imaginations need not be released to make the empathic leap into bodies of others to understand that plight. Through her use of pronouns, Greene positions imaginations and the need for releasing it in the bodies and minds of White people. She reinforces the invisibility of "other" bodies through silently omitting them as subjects with agency. White imaginations are portrayed as unraced, with the authority to speak for others. As I considered these criticisms, I cringed at my inability to see these assumptions when I started New Urban Arts nearly twenty years ago.

At the same time, Greene (1995) does draw on Morrison's Africanist literary theory to make her case in *Releasing the Imagination*. In developing this theory, Morrison argues that too often Black people have signified little or nothing in the imaginations of White writers, other than,

as the objects of an occasional bout of jungle fever... to provide

local color... to lend some touch of verisimilitude... to supply a needed moral gesture, humor, or a bit of pathos. (2007, p. 15)

Although Greene relies on this literary theory, I would argue that in Greene's writing Black people remain "shadowless," as Morrison (p. 10) puts it. Even as Greene attempts to "open up our experience . . . to existential possibilities of multiple kinds" (p. 161), she creates opportunities for "them" to tell "their" stories, which are stories of pathos. She invites "them" to explain, presumably to the White "we," how "poverty and exclusion have mediated *their* own sense of the past" (p. 166, my emphasis). Greene has set a trap for herself. By reducing, not releasing, Black imaginations, Greene provides "them" the uncompensated burden of telling "us" the "diverse stories" that make "inescapable the braids of experience woven into the fabric of U.S. plurality" (p. 166). And yet, her claim to "release" Black imaginations can be critiqued as an act of colonization whereby Black imaginations are absorbed and subsumed, not woven, into "our" dominant ones.

In rereading Greene, I considered how my failure to see these assumptions may have structured my own approach to community arts practice. In particular, I questioned the extent to which I allowed "others" to speak and imagine for themselves. I wondered how my vision for a utopic community did not afford the emergence of arts-based methodologies that are necessary to confront the irresolvable nature of racial conflict in the U.S. I became disillusioned with my own color blindness as a community artist.

In my effort to prevent this disillusion from hardening into apathy and cynicism, qualities that are not useful for artists/educators/researchers, I turned to Pope.L and his artistic practice. And in an unexpected turn, I became inspired through listening to DJ Danger Mouse's *Grey Album*. In this album, Danger Mouse cuts and pastes sounds from Jay-Z's *Black Album* and the Beatles' *White Album*. He remixes, taking what he likes and leaving behind the rest, to produce a new sound that playfully pushes music in an unanticipated direction. As I listened to the *Grey Album*, I wondered what might happen if I remixed passages from Greene's *Releasing the Imagination* (1995)

and text from William Pope.L's drawing series *Skin Set* (2013) to create something new.

After I selected several examples of text from Pope.L's *Skin Set* (2013) series, I then selected a passage from Greene's *Releasing the Imagination* (1995) in which she ossifies race through the use of pronouns. I decided to create a mash-up by inserting text from Pope.L's drawings into Greene's passage to draw attention to the assumptions embedded in her text, assumptions I had failed to identify two decades earlier. This dialogic approach is broadly consistent with a postmodern representational approach (Lather, 1991), in which words are spoken non-hierarchically from multiple voices, thus continually opening meaning to interpretation and re-interpretation. I opted for this approach to explore releasing pleasure through a playful, absurdist approach to contend with the irresolvable nature of my subject position as a White arts educator and my previous failures in reading Greene.

As I cut and pasted this poly-vocal text, the result felt inadequate but I was unsure how or why. The first result is presented below. Consider two performers reading this bi-vocal text: one speaks Greene's (1995) words in non-italicized text, from p. 160, and the other speaks Pope.L's (2013) words in italics. (Note: this text contains vulgar, racially offensive and sexual content.)

Looking back at the gaps in our own lived experiences, we *Green People Are America Eat Its Ass-ness* might think of silences like those Tillie Olson had in mind when she spoke of literary history "dark with silences," the "unnatural silences" of women who worked too hard or were not embarrassed to express themselves (1978, p. 6) and of others who did not have the words or had not mastered the proper ways of knowing. *We Blue People Cannot Conceive of Themselves* might ponder the plight of young island women, like Jamaica Kincaid's "Lucy" from Antigua, forced to be "two-faced" in a postcolonial school: "outside, I seemed one way, inside I was another; outside false, inside true" (1990, p. 18). For years, we *Black People Are A Musical About Hard Candy, Pork Rinds, Pussy and Money* knew no more about people like

her (who saw “sorrow and bitterness” in the faces of daffodils because of the Wordsworth poem she had been forced to learn) than we *Orange People Are My Balls In Summer* did about the Barbadians that Paule Marshall ([1959] 1981) has described, people living their fragmented lives in Brooklyn. We *White People Are a Desalination Plant in Puerto Rico* had little consciousness of what Gloria Anzaldua (1987) calls “borderlands,” or *la frontera*, on which so many Latinos live or of the Cuban immigrants in “The Mambo Kings Sing Songs of Love,” the musicians whose music is never heard outside their clubs, their enclosed world (Hijuelos, 1989). Who of us *Red People Are the Niggers of the Canyon* truly wondered about the builders of the railroads, those Maxine Hong Kingston calls “China Men,” chopping trees in the Sandalwood Mountains and the Sierra Nevada.

This mashup could go on and on; thankfully it does not. Somewhat paradoxically given their tone and content, Pope.L’s words are relegated to redeeming the failure of Greene’s White imagination. I found my role for Pope.L reproduces offensive tropes found in Hollywood cinema or texts critiqued by Morrison (2007). Pope.L’s words play the role of incompetent, bumbling sidekick to Greene’s philosophical invincibility (e.g. Eddie Murphy in *Beverly Hills Cop*) or, perhaps Greene’s text is elevated now that it stands side-by-side with non-White knowledge (e.g. Kevin Costner in *Dances with Wolves*). Either way, I was uncomfortable with the way in which I relegated Pope.L and his words to this subservient and marginal role.

So I continued to play with the text to attempt to redress these problems. I considered using found poetry analysis to remove words from this mashup (cf. Denmead & Hickman, 2014; Wiggins, 2012). This approach to remix moves beyond “the limits of language and evokes what cannot be articulated” (Eisner, 1997, p. 4). I left behind words to help me invent visions of “what might be,” as Greene (1995, p. 5) puts it, while “making disillusion knowable yet bearable,” as Pope.L describes (Hoffman, 2002, para. 17). I deselected words by making them gray, and bolded those I selected. My criteria for bolding and greying

words were largely poetic. I used alliteration and repetition, for example, by selecting “silences... spoke... dark with silences.” I established rhythm through the “p” sounds of “Pork Rinds, Pussy... and... the Wordsworth poem.” I created unexpected collisions in meaning by putting words like “Pork Rinds” and “Wordsworth poem” next to each other. Their juxtaposition suggested implicit hierarchies, which could then be subverted by speaking the words together in the same poem. In creating form, I established space by choosing words across and down the block of text to suggest “parts” amidst a “whole.” I did not, however, aim to suggest any racial symbolism by my use of black and grey fonts, but rather I used the visual foreground and background to suggest that there are two poems to be read. One is written through selection (black) and the other is written through erasure (grey); in other words, the poem(s) can be read by reading black, grey or both black and grey:

[Looking back at the gaps in our own lived experiences, we] Green People Are America Eat Its Ass-ness [might think of silences like those Tillie Olson had in mind when she spoke of literary history “dark with silences,” the “unnatural silences” of women who worked too hard or were not embarrassed to express themselves (1978, p. 6) and of others who did not have the words or had not mastered the proper ways of knowing. We] Blue People Cannot Conceive of Themselves [might ponder the plight of young island women, like Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy* from Antigua, forced to be “two-faced” in a postcolonial school: “outside, I seemed one way, inside I was another; outside false, inside true” (1990, p. 18). For years, we [Black People Are A Musical About Hard Candy, Pork Rinds, Pussy and Money] knew no more about people like her (who saw “sorrow and bitterness” in the faces of daffodils because of the Wordsworth poem she had been forced to learn) than we] Orange People Are My Balls In Summer [did about the Barbadians that Paule Marshall ((1959] 1981) has described, people living their fragmented lives in Brooklyn. We] White People Are a Desalination Plant in Puerto Rico [had little consciousness of what Gloria Anzaldua (1987)

calls “borderlands,” or *la frontera*, on which so many Latinos live or of the Cuban immigrants in *The Mambo Kings Sing Songs of Love*, the musicians whose music is never heard outside their clubs, their enclosed world (Hijuelos, 1989). Who of us] Red People Are the Niggers of the Canyon [truly wondered about the builders of the railroad, those Maxine Hong Kingston calls “China Men,” chopping trees in the Sandalwood Mountains and the Sierra Nevada.]

For me, this remixed found poem improves upon the previous version. I laughed at the playful combinations of words, both in terms of uttering their unexpected sounds and contemplating their colliding meanings. I was moved, for example, by imagining what it might mean to live in a desalination plant on the border, being stuck in a musical, and the Wordsworth poem she had been forced to learn.

Given the ways in which language nails people to the wall like lunchmeat, testing the pliability of the text untethered me from this world, from this fixed world of “us” and “them.” It moved me beyond a crippling spiral of masochism that can result from dwelling on my own racial biases and beyond a paralyzing dissolution that can arise when recognizing the irresolvable nature of racial conflict itself. I rediscovered playing with material, permission that both Greene and Pope.L afford. When “we” cannot imagine and create a grand solution that might stick, at least we can release ourselves momentarily. “We” can mount the train and ride it out the other side. Of course, once the remixing is over, “we” remain in raced, classed, gendered, and credentialed bodies that this absurdist approach to remixing does not erase.

I appreciate that this specific approach to remixing might not register for others as significant to them or particularly useful. Others might consider my approach to be inconsistent with remixing itself, as remixing in hip-hop culture more likely entails selecting revered materials for appropriation. Altering sounds and texts through remixing registers as a sign of respect. From this perspective, critiquing Green’s text through a remix is not fitting. However, I hope my absurdist approach to remixing invites other readers to consider its pedagogic val-

ue. Using this approach, the resulting form, the “found poem,” is not precious to me. It is far less significant than the mindset it cultivates. For me, remixing as an absurdist practice cultivates an ease with “testing the pliability” of forms and ideas (Lucero & Lucero, 2014, p. viii), particularly those forms and ideas we revere. Cultivating this ease can be relatively cheap and easy; the materials for a found poem come readymade and the assemblages can occur accidentally and quickly. For community arts practitioners, cultivating this flexibility of mind and willingness to tamper with ideas we revere is crucial. In particular, we must continue to test the pliability of the concept of “community” itself. Despite progress by art education scholars who are introducing theories to approach the concept in new ways (Holland, 2015; Illeris, 2015), “community” remains a trap for what it “assumes, silences, and reproduces with regards to racial conflict” (Chernoff, 2015, p. 97). To address the racialized tensions that can be silenced in the name of “community,” perhaps those who educate community arts practitioners might consider their own absurdist approaches to remixing that brings these racialized tensions to the surface. Such an irreverent approach to remixing may offer a protected pedagogic space, albeit a momentary one, that may be less threatening because of its lack of preciousness and its potential for humor.

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Mythical Beings and Becoming: Emerging Identities of Art Educators in India

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ABSTRACT

This essay layers the theoretical concepts of myth (Barthes, 1972) and becoming (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) to examine how we might productively read the identity of contemporary Indian art educators² in order to understand the landscape of art education in India in a nuanced manner. Interpreting narratives of Indian art educators through the mythical concept of *Laxmana-rekha*, the concepts of myth and becoming are applied to make visible connections between Indian art educators' choice of profession as influenced by social constructions of gender. The concept is also used to understand ways in which we receive and perceive the lessons of cultural mythologies in contemporary contexts of perceiving and constructing perceptions of art education.

Myth and Becoming in the Context of Indian Art Educator Identity

Vedanta, a school of Hindu philosophy, is often presented in narrative forms that greatly influence Indian ontology throughout history within and beyond Hinduism. These narratives, including those forming culturally significant texts such as the *Upanishads*, *Mahabharata*, and *Ramayana*, are read on multiple levels in India, namely philosophical, mythical, and historical. As such, they embody originary stories that often form and influence many of contemporary India's value systems and biases in social roles (Chaube, 1992; Embree, 1988). In this paper, I layer the theoretical concepts of myth (Barthes, 1972) and becoming (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) to examine how we might read the identity of contemporary Indian art educators³ productively in order to understand the landscape of art education in India in a nuanced

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2 The terms Indian art education and Indian art educators are used in this paper in the context of being in India, not as they are used in North America

3 The terms Indian art education and Indian art educators are used in this paper in context of being in India.

manner. Specifically, I layer these concepts of myth and becoming to make visible some connections between Indian art educators' choice of profession as influenced by social constructions of gender, and the ways in which we receive and perceive the lessons of cultural mythologies in contemporary contexts.

Research and scholarship about Indian art education are mostly focused on fine art history, studio-centered pedagogy (Kantawala, 2007, 2012), and policy perspectives focused on social development, iterations of Indian aesthetics, and revitalization of traditional crafts (Vatsyayan & Chattopadhyaya, 2009; Maira, 2005; Sudhir, 2005; Vatsyayan, 1972, 1999). These avenues of inquiry have been traveled so regularly that they have almost become originary stories of Indian art education. Existing research presents stories of learning for Indian art educators working in K-12 and other educational settings, as well as stories about art education practice and inquiry in India. However, such research is rarely written from the point of view of the practicing art educator in India. There are stories about what these art educators do or should do, but tell little about who they are, or why they do what they do. I argue that these overlooked perspectives are significant to understand as a just representation of the voices of those in whose interests such research is conducted, and to better understand:

- * how people have come to practice in the field, in order to recruit dedicated art educators more effectively in the future, and
- * how we might think more critically and sensitively about professional development and support systems needed by these practitioners.

To synopsise: in this paper I layer my understanding of the theoretical ideas of myth (Barthes, 1972) and becoming (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) with an examination of how mythical ideas become social action in Indian philosophical and social systems. I do this with a view to unsettle originary stories of being or practice that have become

naturalized. My references to Indian social systems rely on my lived experience and insider understanding of enacted social hierarchies of gender, caste, and economic class that I interpret as myth becoming social action. I provide a brief literature review of how an example of the writing of gender roles in Indian mythology is still being examined. I juxtapose this layering with narratives emerging from interviews with research participants in a case study I conducted in urban India, bringing focus to how social mores arising from originary stories affect professional choices in the participants' lives. I conclude the paper with an analysis of possible impact of such readings on recruitment, and recommendations for how this analysis might be used by researchers and teachers within art education in, and beyond, an Indian context.

Mythical Beings and Originary Stories

Roland Barthes explained myth as a system of communication, not defined by its object lesson, but by the "way it utters its message" (Barthes, 1972, p. 109), a reflection of social usage of ideas. Thus, understanding myth as a value rather than a truth, Barthes posited that myth is "a double system...its point of departure...constituted by the arrival of its meaning" (1972, p. 123). This means that social value systems cannot be read as static histories that are neutral and completed, nor as what Barthes called "frozen speech," (1972, p. 124) pretending to be neutral even as the systems they represent are renewed and restored across their original time and place. One of Barthes' motivations in studying the concept of myth was to examine the ways in which it was received, to see how it transforms ideas into what we come to understand as being natural, preternatural or obvious. As such, we might understand a motivation to semiotically analyze myths as a desire to trace and deconstruct relationships between form and meaning, between two forms of myth, and so on. Scholars in art and visual culture education have effectively employed the study of myths and mythology through methodologies such as semiotic analysis and feminist readings, and to explore the relationships between origins of form and their meanings, and the naturalization of values

in society and in the field of art education (Bowers, 1990; Garber, 1992; Keifer-Boyd & Smith-Shank, 2006; Metcalf & Smith-Shank, 2001; Smith-Shank, 2001; Smith-Shank & Schwiebert, 2000).

Deleuze and Guattari (1987), in articulating the concept of becoming, address a concern similar to Barthes's about the way meaning and identity are understood as being a function of the past, and as being completed rather than a constant process of re-evaluation and confirmation. While Barthes (1972) invites us to revisit assumptions of the obvious in cultural mores and meanings, Deleuze and Guattari (1987), with the idea of becoming, encourage us to recognize how we reframe and re-interpret that which is considered obvious and naturalized through recognizing our own changing selves. Reciprocally, Deleuze and Guattari also invite us to explore how our re-framing and re-interpretation of what we deem obvious and natural can help us perceive ourselves not as beings – fixed cultural identities – but as evolving personifications of cultural value systems that are, productively, always in process. In explaining the concept of becoming as intrinsic change, Deleuze and Guattari carefully distinguish the concept of becoming from resemblance and imitation, from an evolution of one thing into something else, and from a reductive expression of relationship between things. Instead, they clarify that becoming concerns alliance rather than filiation: “a becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself; but also...it has no term, since its term exists only as taken up in another becoming of which it is the subject, and which coexists, forms a block, with the first” (p. 238). Furthermore, they caution that,

It is always possible to try to explain these blocks of becoming by a correspondence between two relations, but to do so certainly impoverishes the phenomenon under study. Must it not be admitted that myth, as a frame of classification, is quite incapable of registering these becomings, which are more like fragments of tales? (p. 238)

Taking up this contention of Deleuze and Guattari, I examine how Indian myths might be read not only semiotically to analyze the myths themselves as historical philosophical systems, and as one form seen

in relation to another, but also in how they relate to the ways that art educators in India come to consolidate their personal and professional experiences and influences into professional belief systems; in other words, the becomings of Indian culture and identity of art educators.

Gendered Explorations of *Laxmana-rekha*, Myth and Becoming

Here I explore the mythological idea of *Laxmana-rekha* as a lens through which to read gendered aspects of an Indian art educator's identity. First, I will describe the myth and its importance in contemporary Indian value-systems.

Myth: The *Laxmana-rekha* in the *Ramayana*

The *Ramayana*, along with the *Mahabharata*, is an important mythological text shaping and guiding popular beliefs and practices of Hindu culture, as these texts describe and explain the philosophical beliefs, and code of conduct that Hindus should follow by laying out abstract philosophical concepts and rituals in context of lived human experience. The *Ramayana* is read by different readers as historical account as well as fable and allegory, not unlike religious literature in many cultures. Consequently, its stories have helped form the cultural beliefs of India over time irrespective of religious affiliation. One of the concepts received from this text into the Indian imaginary is that of the *Laxmana-rekha*: literally, a line or boundary drawn by Laxmana, brother to the exiled king Rama. Philosophically, the *Ramayana* is a treatise on moral duty and action, and outlines the ancient Hindu worldview of social organization and function. It is symbolic of human ideals in thought and action. From some perspectives, it is interpreted as a record of historical characters and events narrated in fictive form so that history has become myth; for others the inverse is true (Arni, 2011; Doniger, 2004; Pattanaik, 2003). At a basic level, the *Ramayana* is a sophisticated fairy tale poem of good versus evil. It is a narrative of the life of King Rama, his wife Sita, their families, and their exemplary lives fulfilling social roles and meeting moral challenges that they eventually triumph over, even to their own personal loss.

In the course of the story, Rama, Sita and Rama's devoted younger brother Laxmana were exiled to fourteen years in the wilderness. One day, Sita saw a golden deer frolicking in the jungle near their hut, and seeing its beauty desired to have it as her own. On her request, Rama left to find the magical deer. In his absence, Rama left Sita under the protective care of his brother Laxmana. Time passed but Rama did not return; then Sita heard a distant cry for help. Alarmed and concerned for his safety, Sita commanded Laxmana to go find and aid his brother. Laxmana staunchly refused since he had promised his brother he would not leave Sita alone and unprotected. Her considerable distress finally persuaded him to go investigate the matter but to keep his promise, Laxmana drew a magical boundary line forming a protective circle around their hut. This protective boundary is called the *Laxmana-rekha*. He warned Sita that so long as she stayed inside this marked boundary she would be safe because anyone trying to step inside to reach her would be instantly consumed by fire. However, if she voluntarily stepped outside of that line, she would no longer be protected, ergo safe. Soon after Laxmana's departure it came about that Sita was lured out beyond that line by her good intentions to give alms to an ascetic. This ascetic however was really a demon king in disguise, and he had conjured the golden deer as a ruse to lure Rama and Laxmana away from Sita because he desired her. As soon as she stepped beyond her marked boundary, the demon king kidnapped her and imprisoned her in his island kingdom. This transgression led to all kinds of trouble including a great war of good against evil where good, personified by Rama, ultimately won though at a heavy price. This price included Sita's purity and faithfulness to Rama being questioned, and her subsequent abandonment by Rama since she was no longer trusted by the people to whom he owed first allegiance as their king. The justification for his abandonment of her was that his duty as a ruler superseded his personal desires and allegiance as a husband.

Sita serves as a personification of perfect Indian womanhood – a devoted, obedient, and self-sacrificing daughter, wife, daughter-in-law, and mother; while Rama is a personification of the perfect Indian

man despite his failure to defend and stand-up for his wife in the face of accusations against her faithfulness to him. These idealizations are deeply contested in contemporary Indian culture, especially in literature and visual culture (Arni, 2011; Malani, 2004; Mani Rathnam, 2010; Paley, 2009). Such contestation of gendered roles and expectations in theory match the reality that in India, expectations of social behaviors of men and women often coincide with the idea of the *Laxmana-rekha* as a set boundary of "good" actions and behaviors, and the belief that rules and limits set for what women can and cannot do are in their own interest and for their protection. The intellectual separation of myth and scholarship might be quite explicit in contemporary India's consumption of the *Ramayana* and its lessons (Arni, 2011; Malani, 2004; Paley, 2009; Patel, 2010). However, the archetype of Sita continues to influence the social mores of desirable and noble Indian womanhood, and the archetype of Rama, that of a desirable and noble Indian male. They influence the roles that men and women continue to play towards being good sons and daughters and husbands and wives, and in their choosing of who they are, consciously and unconsciously

The idea of the *Laxmana-rekha*, and the role of Sita in the *Ramayana* in context of gendered morality has been scrutinized across disciplines. For example, Nina Paley's film *Sita Sings the Blues* (Paley, 2009) explores Sita's viewpoint of the *Ramayana* in parallel with Paley's own husband's ending of their relationship. The film, set entirely to jazz and blues music, revisits an episode in the *Ramayana* from the contemporary perspective of a woman of the Indian diaspora and calls for justice and equal treatment of the women in the myth and in real life. Arni (2011) writes an illustrated book telling the story from her perspective, making the story not so much about morality and duty and character of men and women, but more about the fallout of war, the need for compassion and justice for women and children, and a call to revisit the grounds upon which the characteristics of integrity are defined. The *Laxmana-rekha* itself has been written about at length in feminist and women's studies (Joshi, 2001; Kohli, 2012; Mathur, 2006; Puniyani, 2013). The idea of marked lines of permission, acceptance,

and legitimacy in contexts of art and craft have been explored, though not in specific reference to *Laxmana-rekha*, in literature on Indian artistic traditions (Vatsyayan & Chattopadhyaya, 2009; Maira, 2005, 2006; Vatsyayan, 1999).

Several scholars including Jauhola (2010), Grace (2013), and Brodbeck (2009) have written about the idea of becoming (something else) in the context of gender specifically using references of mythology in Asian and South Asian cultures. Myth and becoming as theoretical concepts have been skillfully employed in art education literature including towards suggesting best practices in museum education (Garoian, 2001), in understanding creativity in early childhood (Fulkova & Tipton, 2011; McClure, 2011), and in defense of social justice in art education research (Jagodzinski & Wallin, 2013).

In the next section, I explore the influence of the *Laxmana-rekha*, and the *Ramayana* as an aspect of identity for Indian art educators in my analysis of the language several of my participants used in describing their own locations in the profession.

Tales of Origin: Being Indian as Daughters, Wives, Sons, Husbands, and Art Educators

Over the course of two years, I interviewed seventeen educators teaching art classes in studio, history and theory, and teacher preparation across various educational settings including K-12, higher education, and museum and community settings in two metropolitan cities in India. The interviews were based on voluntary participation in the study. Through them, I examined the motivations and circumstances of entry into the profession, pedagogical practices and teaching philosophies, and the motivations and challenges encountered that affected participants' presence and practice in the field. Statistically, the ratio of men to women employed in the institutions I visited was biased in favor of women in at least two locations out of five. Although the gender ratio was not quite so imbalanced in these institutions as it was in my study, only three of the seventeen voluntary participants in the study were men. This skewed gender ratio is reflected in the

presentation of my analysis, and I make this clear in the interest of transparency.

The stories that participants Aarti, Gauri, Meera, Ayesha, Dana, Prita, Annie, Vijay, Adil and John⁴ shared about how and why they entered the field indicate the presence of spoken and unspoken influence of filial and spousal duty. For example, Aarti sketched an abridged trajectory of her life from her childhood to marriage in Southern India to several years lived in Northern India before returning to her city of origin to teach in an institution of higher education for women only. As she spoke, I realized that although she quit her studio practice to move north with her husband for his job as a university professor, she conflated the move for his job as her own. "*I was posted in three different places [emphasis added] but I taught in three different colleges,*" she shared. She reminisced with a smile: "I was quite happy painting at home. It was purely a twist of fate that led to me to get my PhD; maybe I was destined to come back here and teach someday." She added, " If not for my husband's encouragement to go ahead and pursue my desire to do research and teach, I don't think I would have been doing this." Ayesha and Gauri, Meera, Pritha, Annie, and Dana echo the "permission" they received from their fathers in entering the field of art. Each of them used the terms "allowed" and "he let me" to describe parental blessing—specifically patriarchal blessing—in following a career in the arts. While Ayesha, Riya, Meera, and Gauri mentioned their mothers having a role in influencing their interest in the arts, mostly through art lessons with private tutors and traditional crafts learned at home, Riya was the only participant who mentioned receiving "encouragement," rather than permission, from her mother to pursue art as a career; later in the interview I learned that Riya came from a single parent home.

Going on to speak of the college students she currently teaches, Aarti said,

we don't see many artists emerging out of here; for the past ten years I've been struggling against this...you can count about five

⁴ All names have been changed to protect participant identities.

to six students who are practicing artists no more. We are a little stronger in design; there are quite a few of us in the workforce there. It pays more, so girls get permission to work in design . . . Once they [fine art students] leave college they need a studio space or a place where they can paint or practice, and that is a problem....Over a period of time I find that even very talented students drop out on the way and only five or six are able to sustain any kind of practice even if they are attached to it. Then if they begin to sell work perhaps they can continue to make work...you know it's very hard to ask fathers and husbands to support you for a long time in that.

I emphasize here that it is not just the financial support of a professional practice that I bring focus upon, since this might be a matter of economic reality; rather it is the necessity for adult women to obtain patriarchal permission not only to work but to maintain their creative practice professionally. I perceive this to be a socio-cultural stagnation, an echo of the myth of the *Laxmana-rekha* as a marker of appropriate gender roles. Mathur (2006) echoes this idea as she notes that for the Indian woman, the home is a threshold, the crossing outside of which is a transgression that results in some loss of respectability in a patriarchal world (p. 86).

My own story included negotiating and receiving patriarchal permission to pursue a fine arts degree in college, although I was not allowed to join a painting program since there were doubts about the moral and economic payoffs in the latter as a socially respectable profession. As I sat opposite Aarti in her office, looking outside the window at "those girls" who lived by a series of permissions, I felt, as an Indian woman, a dividing conflict between guilt, relief, and vague embarrassment at having gotten permission from my own father to pursue my dreams and was reminded of my freedom from any husband whose permission I needed to seek.

Gauri also shared that although she is trying to find balance in juggling her roles as wife, mother, artist, and teacher, she is mostly the one compromising to spend enough time at home "because my hus-

band is in advertising and his hours are uncompromising." For her, it is not a question of who earns more, though he certainly does that. "It's just easier all around if I do it," she said, "though it's difficult and one can't find balance [between work and home] all the time; when it works it's wonderful." Aarti described making time each night to paint from 10:00 pm till about 1:00 am because she can't imagine not being able to paint. Every single one of these female participants acknowledged (without being asked) their luck in having fathers, husbands, in-laws, and other patriarchal figures who allow them to be who they need to be, and to do what they need to do. Pritha and Annie (both single women in their mid-twenties) confirmed, upon questioning, that they teach at a co-educational institution because their fathers "allowed it" since "the way they see it, teaching is a lot more respectable and trustworthy as a profession than working in advertising or in the art world." However, they both felt that their male peers within that institution do not take them seriously as professionals, "because we're girls [sic], and young ones on top of that. They treat us like we're still students, sometimes, although we've both been teaching here for three years now—same as two of our male colleagues." Annie added, "Even they treat us like we're their juniors." She shook her head, "It's quite frustrating because these are good people and I don't know if they realize they are undermining us in this way."

The stories shared with me revealed that socially imposed limitations about the consideration of art and art education as appropriate professions and choice of career apply to men as well as women. Gauri, for example, shared that her father worked as a photographer in his youth but had to get "a proper engineering job" and take up photography as a hobby in order to "properly" support his family. Vijay, Adil, and John, the three male participants in my study, all teaching in higher education programs, shared stories that included frustrated dreams of pursuing careers as studio artists. These limitations arose from family obligations where they, as males, "were expected to" provide for and support their families. "As a man, one has to prove that one is stable and able to provide" said Adil, "so I got into teaching. I came to love it later, but initially I was quite bitter at having to settle."

He laughed, "It really affected how I taught and treated myself for the first few years." John's story held similar tones, as he explained, "I found teaching was the most safe job since as the son I have to support my parents. I come from a middle class family [and got] good grades . . . [my] taking up arts was shocking to them.... Luckily I was able to do my master's and get a university job so now there is more respect." I found these reports interesting since, as Mathur (2006) notes, in contrast to women, traditionally when men have chosen to transgress the threshold of expected norms of behavior they have been praised and honored. Mathur gives the cases of Siddharta, Mahavira, and Tulsidas as examples, who went on to found Buddhism, Jainism, and write the *Ramayana* respectively (p. 86). However, the halting speech, the sometimes embarrassed, sometimes resentful sharing of the personal choices of Adil and John negate this myth that the experience of men is more privileged over that of women in all things, and that their choices are, by default, less problematic. In this case at least, it did not seem so.

Vijay, a Jesuit priest teaching in a visual communication program at a parochial college, was the only one of the three men whose family had an art and education background. He shared that he came from a family of artists and teachers, that this was his heritage, although his father taught "English and history . . . and proper subjects" (emphasis added). Vijay's tone held pleasure while telling this story. He was clearly proud of the heritage of artistry in his family that had been recognized by the local royalty. Even though he mentioned that female members of his family were also artists, he did not mention that they were also recognized as being a part of this heritage by the community in the same way that the men were. Talking about his own educational journey that brought him to his current position, Vijay recounted,

Since I joined the Jesuit order, I *did not have the place to think* [emphasis added] that I would like to be an artist or anything . . . I guess I did know that I felt I must do something in this line: but since it was in my blood and I was doing other things—it never

could . . . well. . . . there was not too much opportunity . . . but I tried . . . well . . . meanwhile . . .

His speech faltered; after a few minutes he continued in a firmer tone,

There were other responsibilities that didn't allow me to continue with that, so I continued with English, Communication, etc. And then, later, since they [the institution] needed someone to teach art and work in the communication department, I *could* come back and do this.

Both Vijay and John expressed that they had chosen bachelorhood, in some part, because they did not feel they could adequately support a family without "forcing" their spouses to have to work. "There is no status nor money in this line," John laughed, "and how many women will be looking for that in a prospective husband, yes?"

Mythical Boundaries as Consciously Encountered Thresholds

The men and women I interviewed are intelligent, accomplished, learned, and dedicated art educators. Ten out of seventeen participants had significant tales of regret and compromise as their origin stories in becoming art education professionals. These ordinary stories embody confused remixes of multiple mythologies enshrined and advocated as traditional Indian culture struggling with more modern social values. For example, Vedanta values the teacher as an embodiment of the divine, a representation of the highest caste in the Hinduverse—the Brahmin—whereas a postcolonial, corporate-friendly culture claims that those who cannot do, teach. This particular dilemma of the role of the teacher clashes with the role of the artist and craftsman, who is valued and admired for skill but is designated as a caste of tradespersons—the Vaishyas—the third in a hierarchy of four castes. While the caste system is not rigidly adhered to in contemporary India, its associated stigmas and honors linger in perceptions of professions till today in common practice. For instance, in the postcolonial society with the remnants of Victorian values that characterizes India today, artists are often perceived as being morally

ambiguous and lacking the traditional value and application of art and craft in the design and ritual of everyday life (Vatsyayan & Chatopadhyaya, 2009; Eck, 1998; Maira, 2006).

India is a postcolonial society re-imagining definitions of the traditions and contemporaneity of its multiple cultures. Reading the originary stories of my research participants shared above in juxtaposition with clashing traditional and colonial perceptions of the artist and of the teacher in society reveals that perceptions of art education as a desirable and noble profession are quite confused. This is especially true because art education lies as a borderland between the more fully formed professional identities of artist and teacher, at least from the perspective of social understanding. Layer onto this gendered social expectations, both traditional and modern: The interview excerpts shared in this essay reveal that the men are expected to be protectors, the primary providers and decision makers, self-sacrificing in the interests of the family, such as in Adil's case and in the case of Gauri's father, and in Vijay's expression that he did not have the space to think of being an artist, primarily. Yet, according to what Gauri, Aarthi, John, and Vijay shared, they are expected to be in control of the women and children they are responsible for. According to mythical descriptions such as those of Sita's character, women are expected to be nurturers, revered as embodiments of goddess power—in theory they are extolled as creators and caretakers of family and society, and therefore powerful. This is evident in everyday life and rhetoric in India on a familial level, as well as in popular and visual culture including television and film characters. According to their own experiences that Aarthi, Priitha, and Annie describe above, however, it might be understood that in reality women's prioritization of the home is often interpreted as subservience or a lack of true commitment to their work even as they venture out into professional workspaces.

Mythical Boundary Becoming Social Action

The data I share in this essay illustrates that intellectual understandings in relation to internalized practices of gendered, classed, and

philosophical expectations of social roles form a significant source of conflict in modern and contemporary Indian culture. For example, viewing the gender roles described by the participants through a western or contemporary globalized Indian feminist reading that privileges the equality of an individual (man or woman) leads to reading with skeptical criticism the "permissions" sought and granted by the women. However, a reading through an interpretative lens of Vedanta traditions would value self-sacrifice and denial of the ego in deference to elders and other family structures, since the distinctions of the self from the universal are understood to be illusory or temporal, and individual desire secondary to the communal (Deutsch & Dalvi, 2004; Vivekananda, 2010). In such conflict, Indian culture in contemporary contexts can be understood as a becoming such as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe it—a negotiation of internalized acceptance of individual desire as secondary to community desire (such as family) and a contemporary ambition to push personal goals and privilege individual skill and desire. To explore authenticity of culture and Indian-ness, dismissing the *Laxmana-rekha* based on a feminist construction of gender equality based on westernized ideals could be construed as a colonizing act, a rejection of "tradition"; to accept it unquestioningly would be a stagnation of thought and ideology and thus equally inauthentic, and conflicting. With this understanding, the myth of the *Laxmana-rekha* can be reconsidered as a cautionary boundary, the crossing of which leads to a break with social expectations and traditions. By focusing on the decision to cross the boundary, the structure of the boundary itself—and the actions, motivations, and character of that which awaits the crossing of the *Laxmana-rekha*—can be understood as a becoming of teacher identity in terms of how decisions about professional aspirations and practice are taken. With this view one can challenge the static myth that to cross a traditionally defined threshold (such as the gender assigned roles described by the participants) is a transgression that takes away from the dignity and respect due the transgressor. One can also reject the frozen speech type of myth (Barthes, 1972, p 124) that, ideologically speaking, bestows respect to teachers while not equitably respect-

ing artisans and artists as teachers. As such, I interpret that these iterations of, and tentative transgressions from, artist and teacher identity in India have become mythical in nature.

Earlier in this essay I said that with the idea of becoming, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) encourage us to recognize how we reframe and re-interpret that which is considered obvious and naturalized through recognizing our own changing selves. In reading such teacher identity as mythical and refocusing on what it is becoming, one can go beyond binaries of the way things were versus what is valued now, and instead pay attention to what is happening in the now and what it might mean to the individual and to the profession. I suggest that this is a mythical becoming. Not only would this be a more holistic approach, but also, such a critical reading enables a respectful consideration of traditional cultural ideas in dialogue with contemporary ones by unseating the neutrality and naturalization of the teachers' narratives.

Becoming Indian Art Educators

Authors writing on multicultural art education and policy researchers looking to build training and professional development programs in India might find the idea of mythical becoming useful as they seek to understand the socio-cultural factors that influence Indian art educators, and to consider what kinds of support and advocacy might be needed to make the field more attractive to professionals and retention of teachers more enthusiastic. As I explained at the end of the previous section, the idea of mythical becoming refers to a reframing of naturalized beliefs and actions in order to analyze our changing selves and the aspirations, actions, and beliefs of these changing selves – a critical scrutiny of the relationship between the beliefs we inherit, what we aspire to do in current contexts, and the actual actions we perform in practice. Employing this idea of revising the identity of Indian artists and art teachers as mythical beings –static, frozen identities connected to static, frozen ideas of what they should be – to more dynamic becomings of teacher identity, might

also allow a new way to consider how traditional and contemporary art of India and South Asia might be taught more critically. In India and abroad, rather than teach about Indian art in artificial divisions of past tradition and contemporary modernity, or of art and craft, a mythical becoming might allow a fresh perspective on continuity, and a reciprocity of voice in an east-west conversation, where cultures juxtapose their ways of thinking and doing in discussion and debate, rather than learn “facts” about one another as givens, as comparisons and contrasts.

Another context I look to in considering the application of this idea involves the nationalized curriculum in India that calls for teaching traditional histories and practices of Indian arts and crafts in an overall context of westernized classrooms and curricula. Policy and curriculum directives in India today instruct art educators to value traditional arts and crafts (NCERT, n.d.), even as artisans and art teachers remain undervalued as professionals in society. These conditions may be identified as a *Laxmana-rekha* that can be studied and debated as mythical, to examine how change might result in a becoming for artisans and craftspersons as art educators, and reciprocally, for art teachers becoming artists and craftspersons. As art educators, in India and abroad, we can purposefully ponder the challenges we encounter and the weight and consequences of the decisions we make to meet them from the perspective of identifying the mythical preconceptions that define curriculum and policy. Doing so can help us discuss and strategically act upon what these definitions and decisions mean to who we are becoming—as actors within specific national, cultural, and geographical fields—and as disciplined professionals, and to explore how we want to expand these boundaries. This might help us to critically question balances of power in professional development choice, opportunity, and motivation.

In Conclusion

Without a consideration of the location, identity, motivations, and struggles of practicing art educators, art education policy and pro-

gramming in India today would appear to be at cross purposes with its own goals,= and sense of social belonging. Policy and programming offer a variety of services with end goals (outcomes) and end users (students) in mind, but without a considered understanding of those who actually provide the service (art educators). In other words, policy and programming at institutional levels in India have created an admirable array of opportunities for the professional development of artists and craftspeople wishing to teach their skills, as well as for teachers wishing to utilize the power of the arts in their repertoire. However, more research is needed on critical engagements with and by art teachers in India, both in K-12, higher education, and other educational settings. Such research is needed in order to gauge the identity and form of the profession and its value in contemporary Indian education, as well as on its role in redefining what is taught about Indian culture and its traditions. These considerations might be used to good effect to recruit dedicated and critical art educators from art, education, and social work programs. They can also be used in liberal arts and general education courses, to better educate the next generation about how to rethink static and placid understandings of Indian culture and its expressions in art and crafts. Importantly, it can serve as an argument for the importance of studying critical art education in schools, and promoting a mindset that perceives the teaching of arts and craft not only as a respectable, but also a desirable and valued profession.

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Stories of Becoming an Art Educator: Opening a Closed Door

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes recollections of my personal experiences in Israel and their interplay with my decisions as an art educator. These stories are examples of how the borders between the professional, the personal, and the institutional are blurred. Becoming and being an art educator in a country which is deeply affected by a long-standing, deep-rooted, stubborn, and violent conflict, I struggle to find ways to teach art in a meaningful way and to react to the culture of conflict through critical art pedagogy.

Becoming an Art Educator

The question of what is involved in the process of becoming a good art teacher guides many of those who teach and research preparation programs for art teachers. Some of the curricular deliberations are concerned with the necessary knowledge and skills art teachers should demonstrate in art making, visual culture, art history, art criticism, art teaching methods, pedagogical skills, child development in art, art education theories, and research methods (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2002; Burton, 2004; Day, 1997; Eisner, 1994; Erickson, 2004; Freedman, 2003). Other curricular decisions stem from developing teachers' identities and voices (Giroux, 1988; Greene, 1995; May, 1997). The process of developing teachers' identities engages with discourses and the knowledge we utilize to make sense of who we are, who we are not, and who we want to become (Britzman, 1992).

The term "teacher's identity" as it is used by post-structuralist theorists suggests that the "self" is constructed rather than grounded (Spivak, 1987). It implies a holistic outgrowth, often elusive, of a set of embedded processes and practices that concern the whole person. It is shaped in and across social and cultural contexts by various interdependencies among person, context, history, and teaching (Britzman, 1991; Cochran-Smith, 2005; Olsen, 2008).

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As part of my research dissertation I collected tales of Israeli art teachers and studied the ways they negotiated their teaching identities within and against their schools' normative discourses. I learned that being and becoming an art teacher involved an ongoing process of negotiation between personal and professional experiences, knowledge and beliefs, and the school's discourse. Their beliefs and identities couldn't be separated from the socio-cultural environments and the discourses in which and through which they were constantly (re)constructed (Cohen Evron, 2004). Our identities as teachers are neither fixed nor are they an inventory of knowledge or technical procedures of teaching experience. We continually reconstruct our views of ourselves in relation to others, workplace characteristics, professional purposes, and cultures of teaching. Furthermore, we bring to our teaching profession our personal and institutional biographies (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Sivertsen, 1994). Our biographies in part account "for the persistency of particular worldviews, orientations, dispositions, and cultural myths that dominate our thinking, and in unintended ways, select the practices that are available in educational life" (Britzman, 1991, p. 3). Therefore, personalities, interests, weaknesses and personal life experience are important components of our becoming and being teachers. They influence what we do as teachers, how we interpret what happens in our classes, and how we continue to shape our teaching (Anderson & Holts-Reynolds, 1995; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

This study is concerned with my own teaching identity and is based on self-narrative research. As such, it includes stories which do not necessarily accumulate into a whole biography; rather, it is a collection of short descriptions and accounts. They are significant because they are one way of defining the self (Josselson & Lieblich, 2001). Like any stories of past events, they are explicitly reconstructed by me as the person who experienced them. They make sense of life experience by connecting the personal occurrences with meta-narratives of community and history (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Neisser, 1994). They describe some of my own stories of being and becoming an art educator in Israel. I reassembled stories of my personal experiences

in this place and their interplay with my decisions as an art educator. Examining processes whereby self-narratives are produced, poststructuralist discourse extends the possibility for empirical researchers to focus on the condition of social practices and cultural patterns (Sondergaard, 2002). Drawing from this discourse, the study enlarges the range of the socio-cultural environment of becoming an art educator beyond the school's discourse. While contextualizing my personal experiences of living and working in Israel, I do not intend to offer generalizations about other art teachers' ways of becoming in this country. In the coming sections I will provide stories which describe recollections of my personal experiences in Israel and their interplay with my decisions as an art educator.

Contextual Voices: Facing a Culture of Conflict

When I gave birth to my tiny premature twin baby boys, the first person who greeted me was the cleaning lady in the operating theater. She congratulated me: "Mazal Tov, two soldiers are born!" I heard her blessing with horror. At the moment of their birth, their future roles as part of the Israeli military had already been declared². She affirmed the institutional and social expectations that involved the readiness to kill or sacrifice their lives on behalf of the country, and my readiness as their mother to educate them to this end. Like Adrienne Rich (1976), I resist the idea that by becoming a mother of boys I have to accept the army's assignment of raising my sons to become combatants in a militaristic society.

The story of this random blessing provides a glimpse into the culture of conflict within and against which I live and teach in Israel. The culture of conflict constructs national identity and pride, builds collective memories of past traumas and celebrates Israeli heroism (Bar-Tal, 2007). It influenced not only my maternal experiences but also the challenges of being an educator in this country. In deep-rooted, stubborn, violent, and ongoing conflict which exists in places such as Israel, the conflict becomes an inescapable part of daily life for the

2 At the age of 18 Israeli-Jewish men are conscripted for three years and Israeli-Jewish women for two.

members of the communities, and it constructs and influences their experiences and their social world (Ehrlich, 2013; Salomon 2002). Such a conflict is characterized by existential fears, and an "us and them" mentality. It is accompanied by negative collective images about the other³ who is perceived as a carrier of hostile intentions, unaddressed historical grievances and traumas, economic asymmetries, and the frustration of collective human needs such as identity, security, recognition, dignity, participation and justice (Raviv, Oppenheimer, & Bar-Tal, 1999; Salomon 2002; Spyrou, 2002).

As part of the culture of conflict, systematic efforts are undertaken within the public education system, both in terms of curriculum development and pedagogical practices, to prepare Jews⁴ from kindergarten through high school to fulfill their military duties. Building collective memories of past Jewish traumas and celebrating the Israeli heroism inherent in Jewish myths and holy days are presented as neutral knowledge (Gor, 2005). Such educational practice creates nationalist subjects and eliminates any discussion of shameful acts of the past, such as atrocities and violations of human rights (Salomon 2002; Spyrou, 2002). Many efforts and resources are dedicated to increasing the number of combat soldiers graduating from high school. The preparation of combat soldiers became one of the most important goals of Israeli educational policy as one learns, for example, from the announcement of Gideon Saar, the Education Minister, to the press on December 1, 2009:

Our nation was helpless for many generations and therefore condemned to persecutions and annihilation. Today, as well, there is no existence to Israel and its citizens without the army's force of defense. But the army service is also a virtue. It expresses the values of giving

3 The other in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict includes the Arabs in general and the Palestinians in particular: those in the occupied territories and the 20% Palestinians who live in Israel and are Israeli citizens.

4 The Israeli school system segregates Jewish students who are taught in Hebrew from Palestinian students who are taught in Arabic, from kindergarten through high-school. Orthodox Jews have a separate education system, which does not encourage the students to join the army.

and contribution to all and is a melting-pot of the Israeli society. ... The mission we set for ourselves is to return the Israeli society to itself and that is why I have set the encouragement of army recruitment as one of our goals, and like in any other matter we formulated a practical working plan in conjunction with the IDF to achieve this goal. I see a great importance in the cooperation with the army.

www.kav-lahinuch.co.il/Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/sken.doc

Promoting educational programs which have “emotional” goals such as adopting different attitudes toward the culture of conflict, cultivating mutual understanding and social solidarity (Simon, 2001), unlearning stereotypes, or raising questions concerning militaristic norms all involve taking risks. In times of national conflict, universal sympathies, or studying a conflict by learning the narratives of both adversaries are condemned and regarded as dangerous (Noddings, 2007).

Opening the Closed Door

My beliefs and knowledge as an art educator were partially constructed within and by the art communities to which I was exposed during the 1970s as a student at art school (Cohen Evron, 2004; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). They were influenced by art teachers who were leading artists in Israel and provided up-to-date knowledge about the local and international art world. My entrance at the age of 20 into an art school seemed a foregone conclusion. As the daughter of a well known Israeli painter,⁵ it seemed as though I was following in her footsteps. It accords with cultural myths and expectations that artistic talents and orientations run in the family. But I didn't experience a continuum. Although I was born in a house with paints, brushes, and canvases, they belonged to my mother's studio, a forbidden territory

5 My mother, Ruth Schloss (1922- 2013), was born in Germany and escaped to Israel during the Nazi regime. Her paintings depict those who were voiceless and marginalized in Israel such as internees in camps of new Jewish immigrants from Arab countries during the 1950s, Palestinian refugees, children and women (Tamir, 2006).

for me as her child. In this “room of her own”⁶ that provided the separation she needed from the family's interruptions, she painted every day, all day, in the manner of a blue-collar worker. Therefore, entering art school was for me more of an experience of crossing boundaries and opening a closed door to a world into which I could previously only glimpse.

Once I entered the forbidden territory and became part of the Israeli art community, I was mostly exposed to the discourse of art for art's sake of the post-minimal and conceptual art of the late 1970s. I became immersed in a very different art world, with different values from those of my mother, and guided by US American art magazines such as *Artforum*, *Art in America*, and *October*. The art school's habitués provided me with a critical gaze at my mother's German Expressionist style of political-realistic paintings. At the same time, I was aware of alternative art paradigms than those which became my artistic language. This awareness enhanced my critical point of view regarding the new world that became the central component of my own identity. I was grateful to learn the language of art, to think through art, to be encouraged to dare, to be creative and to give voice to myself. It became my desire to introduce others to the wonders and pleasures of this art world. Nevertheless, I resented the narrow view inherent in art for art's sake and looked for something more meaningful. I found it in art education.

Critical Art Pedagogy

After graduating from college I attended an art workshop that proved to be a major influence on my teaching. It was comprised of artists from various disciplines including architects, sculptors, jewelry designers, and painters whose teaching methods combined art, politics, and education (Cohen Evron, 1987). The workshop was located in a small town of low-income Jews who had immigrated to Israel from northern Africa, Yemen, and Iran. Students from elementary and

6 *A Room of One's Own* is an extended essay by Virginia Woolf (1929). The essay is considered a feminist text arguing for the time and space women, like men, need to produce creative works.

middle school attended this art workshop during their school day, accompanied by their classroom teachers, for an hour and a half every week. Our curriculum was constructed around project-based learning related to real-life issues, and we used the arts to deconstruct local and global social issues. Using art materials, we gave the students opportunities to represent real-life issues in a controlled way, and to create alternative situations to those they had actually experienced. In several of the projects we used reconstructed reality as a stage for role-playing. For example, we reconstructed a robbery that had occurred in a nearby grocery.⁷ With the artists' help, the students rebuilt the local grocery to scale and installed sculptures of the people involved in the episode, including the grocery salesman, the robber, the policemen, and other clients. While dealing with questions of representation of the scenery in three dimensions, the students interpreted this violent event and gained control of it. Their identification with the life-scale figures they designed was interrupted when they were asked to perform the event, acting out the roles of figures in the grocery other than those they had actually constructed. Their role-play of robbing the reconstructed grocery was interrupted again when, at critical moments, they had to freeze the drama for photographs taken by their peers. These photos became part of an article that described their version of the event in a newspaper they produced themselves. The activity was rounded off with the distribution of this newspaper to the local community. Through representation and construction of the real in an unreal situation, the students could examine and reexamine their reality, gaining different perspectives of it. It provided the students with opportunity for studying their own world and developed a critical view of the mechanisms that construct it (Aronowitz, & Giroux, 1991).

Through this teaching experience I learned that while trying to pursue a contra-hegemonic agenda there are ways we can use the process of

creating art as an effective means for analyzing our reality in a critical way, without falling into an authoritarian pedagogy (Duncum, 2008). Expanding our teaching beyond visual vocabulary and self-expression, we related to the social functions of art that allow us to question widely-accepted concepts, ideas, and theories. This way of implementing critical art pedagogy involved the students in real-life issues rejecting the instrumental⁸ and supposedly objective knowledge that supports myths accepted by the hegemonic culture (Cary, 1998). It was this teaching experience that helped me understand Paulo Freire's argument about the process of education:

There is no such thing as a *neutral* educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring conformity to it *or* it becomes "the practice of freedom," the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (1970, p. 16)

Theorizing these critical art teaching experiences became central to my pedagogy and writing. I started to collect stories, examples, and theories of art education that provide us with opportunities to re-conceptualize our identities and to reconsider our own positions. Through creating and investigating art and visual imagery, these art teachers followed Paulo Freire's (1971) rejection of teaching as transmission of knowledge (Cohen Evron, 1987; 2005b; 2009).

Facing the Culture of Conflict as an Art Educator

Becoming an art teacher at a middle school, and a teaching supervisor at an art teachers' preparation program, I could not ignore the political mechanism of the educational system of which I was part. Being political became a significant component of my identity as an

7 Other examples of teaching are: we dealt with consumerism by reconstructing car production, social and environmental issues by designing neighborhood models, and the democratic process by creating an election campaign for prom queen and king.

8 Instrumental knowledge is an approach to teaching that positions knowledge as dispensed without disruption of the information or questioning and active engagement of the learners. It is measured by the students' ability to reproduce received forms of knowledge (Britzman, 1991).

art educator, not only because any content included or excluded in the curriculum is a political choice (Apple, 1993; Giroux, 1981; Shor, 1992), but because of the culture of conflict that characterizes Israel and its educational system, as described above. Although displaying nationalistic symbols and images that contribute to the construction of Israeli students' national identity and collective memory (Nora, 2002) is part of art teachers' routine work in schools, the majority of the art teachers I encountered were not aware of their role in the culture of conflict. Most of them also ignored the influences of the violent conflict on their students' experiences and social world (Raviv, Oppenheimer, & Bar-Tal, 1999).

As part of being a political art educator I started to collect stories and practices of those art teachers who tried to address the challenges this conflict situation provoked (Cohen Evron, 2005a; 2007; 2008). Their teaching wasn't limited to teaching about art, to accumulating knowledge and ways of expression, but learning from it in the light of tacit understandings students derive from life experience and the mass media (Britzman, 1998). Their strategies differ in terms of their goals and in the risk inherent in their effort to engender moral commitment to cultivating mutual understanding and social solidarity between the parties to the conflict (Simon, 1992).

I was particularly interested in art teachers who aimed at creating situations that questioned what is otherwise taken for granted. Their pedagogy dealt with political art and imagery without detaching it from the violent conflict, and aimed at unsettling the students' simplistic dichotomy of "us" as good versus "them" as evil (Cohen Evron, 2005a, 2008). Their practice can be identified as pro-social and social activist (Duncum, 2009). Using visual inquiry, these art teachers were seeking to unlearn some of the biases and stereotypes and uncover the socialization process that disseminates the official nationalistic narrative of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Raviv, Oppenheimer & Bar-Tal, 1999). Relating to visual images as fragments that depict life, these art educators emphasized the ways the imagery – displayed in schools as well as in the media and other sites of public pedagogy

– influences and constructs our identities and understanding (Giroux, 2006). They utilized the visual images as a departure point for questions raised by Roland Barthes (1957) such as: What and who is represented and what is ignored? Whose view is represented and whose is ignored? What are we looking at? How do we look at this image? What can we understand from it?

Deconstructing visual images of Israeli heroes, soldiers and role models involves reexamining the images of the students' fathers, brothers, and neighbors. Therefore this process engaged more than visual inquiry and understanding "the ambiguities, conflicts, nuances and ephemeral qualities of social experience, much of which is now configured through imagery and designed objects" (Freedman & Stuhr, 2004, p. 821). In examining these images, the students are not engaged with the pleasures of transgressing rationality (Duncum 2009), but rather are challenged by the difficult task of questioning their worldviews and the myths that construct their understanding of their reality.

Taking Risks

Facing the culture of conflict not only by participating at demonstrations against racism and unjust occupation, but as an art educator, involves taking risks. Some of the risks of situating oneself outside of the accepted norms of society can result in the loss of one's teaching position at school and even in the university.⁹

Other risks are pedagogical: art teachers who apply critical pedagogy take risks by teaching "unpopular" subjects that call into question

9 Recent events reported in the news include a civics high school teacher who faced dismissal after questioning whether the IDF [Israeli Defense Force] is the most moral army in world. Published by Ahiya Raved 01.20.14/Israel News, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4478917,00.html>. During the 2014 war with Gaza, an Israeli university rebuked a professor who expressed sympathy for both Israeli and Gazan victims. "The matter will be handled with appropriate seriousness," says 'shocked' Bar-Ilan University dean after students, parents complain." Published by Or Kashti Jul. 29, 2014. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/israel/.premium-1.607888>

that which is taken for granted (Britzman, 1991). Violence and political art are not unpopular as such. It is the way they are presented – as problems connected to students’ life experiences – that arouse undesired and uncontrolled reactions. For example, as part of critical analysis of war photographs, one of my art student teachers showed her high school pupils a photograph of a premature baby¹⁰. At first the students reacted with empathy to the screaming baby. But when she told them that this was a Palestinian baby who died soon after this photo was taken because she was detained so long at an Israeli barricade, the students shouted “she should die, all the Arabs should die.” The inexperienced art teacher almost burst into tears. After the lesson, she reflected on how she should have reacted. As a critical pedagogue she did not want to use her authority and repress the students’ voices. Yet, remaining silent made her appear complicit with the horrible views expressed in her class. As an experienced art teacher I couldn’t provide her with an immediate solution, and felt just as helpless. As critical art educators we give up measuring immediate outcomes and settle for a more ambiguous educational process, which we cannot – nor should we try to – predict (Rogoff, 2008). Talking about and reexamining student experiences complicates the normative pedagogical situation because students are confronted with “difficult knowledge” (Britzman, 1998). Students and teachers often resist difficult knowledge because it presents them with moral conflicts within their own reality and unsettles the worldview with which they were raised. Therefore, art teachers who raise universal sympathies or question in any other way the militaristic norms or the culture of conflict are taking the risk of having to face pedagogical difficulties (Cohen Evron, 2005a).

Conclusions

Raising awareness that those who have the power also have the privilege to decide who are and are not the heroes and legitimate victims of violent acts is considered a dangerous and undesirable educational task. Thus taking risks becomes another junction where the boundar-

ies of being and becoming an art educator blurred with my motherhood. My sons decided to resist the blessing they got at their birth. They sent a public letter declaring their conscientious objection to serving in the army in protest against the military occupation of the Palestinian Territories, and paid the price by being imprisoned and delegitimized by the majority of Israeli society.

Becoming and being an art educator in Israel intensified my urge to teach and research teachers’ positions that resisted and questioned the official hegemonic agenda. In my teaching and research I do not intend to highlight easy or naive solutions. But, without ignoring the risks involved, I believe in the importance of providing examples of teaching that use the power of art to question norms and conventions. Performing this kind of pedagogy entails blurring the borders between the personal, the political, and the professional, a blurring that was described by Maxine Greene in the following terms:

Neither the colleges nor the schools can legislate democracy. But something can be done to empower teachers to reflect upon their own life situations, to speak out in their own ways about the lacks that must be repaired; the possibilities to be acted upon in the name of what they deem decent, human, and just.

(1978, p. 71)

While my experiences in Israel shaped my conceptualization of art and art education, I believe that teaching art in a meaningful way without detaching it from our students’ life experiences and circumstances is relevant to art educators whose life experience differs from mine.

¹⁰ Taken by the Israeli photographer Miki Kratsman, 2002.

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Materializing Transversal Potential: An Ecosophical Analysis of the Dissensual Aestheticization of a Decommissioned Missile Base

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the researcher maps the collective aesthetic practices of a community of makers who have transformed a decommissioned missile base into a residence and community space. The site of the missile base is framed as an assemblage of physical and temporal universes mixed and layered, where its previous uses and occupation have formed a subjective residue that expresses itself physically via objects and architecture and mentally through a kind of collective memory inscribed in the site.

Félix Guattari's (1992/1995) ecosophical approach to analysis is used to consider how subjectivity is produced through collective aesthetic practices, focusing on the potential of bringing communities together through anti-capitalist exchanges of time and skill. The concepts of transversality and dissensus are introduced to identify ways that art educators might work together across prescribed social groups and spaces to question habituated ways of thinking and acting, considering the revolutionary potential of art education to contribute to "a new art of living in society" (Guattari, 1992/1995, p. 21).

Introduction

Our survival on this planet is not only threatened by environmental damage but by a degeneration in the social solidarity and in the modes of psychical life, which must literally be reinvented. The re-foundation of politics will have to pass through the aesthetic and analytical dimensions implied in the three ecologies – the environmental, the socius, and the psyche. We cannot conceive of solutions...without promoting a new art of living in society. (Guattari, 1992/1995, p. 21)

In this article, I introduce a decommissioned missile base located in North Texas that has been transformed into an artist's residence and

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community space. I introduce the current owner, Mike, and his community of friends who assisted in the social and material transformation of the site. I analyze how subjectivity was produced through their collective social and aesthetic practices and how the materiality of its past resonates today.

Rather than simply examining the site's new use as an example of repurposing an abandoned space, the goal of the place-based research is three-fold: 1) to consider the life of the base and its broader implications for reordering the social and material structures of institutional spaces (Guattari's [1992/1995] environmental ecology); 2) to consider the radical potential of DIY practices and informal art education by exploring how Mike's process of coming to and transforming the site affected his subjectivity (psychic ecology); and 3) to provide an example of collective anti-capitalist aesthetic practices by examining the community of makers who have assisted him in repurposing the site (social ecology). These three goals relate to Guattari's three ecologies described in the quote that opened the article. I developed a methodological assemblage that combined nomadic inquiry with ethnographic methods to research the materiality of the base and social relations among its occupants.

To analyze the interrelated significance of the site's environmental, social, and psychic elements, I employ Félix Guattari's (1992/1995) ecosophical approach. As Guattari argues in the quote that opened this article, considering solutions to the increasing damage being done to our environment has to start with changes in our social and psychic life. We cannot consider nature or man-made environments apart from our individual and social relations on and with them. The concepts of *transversality* and *dissensus*, explained below, are introduced to consider ways that we might work together across established social groups to change habituated ways of thinking and acting. Analyzing the political potential of the collective and anti-capitalist aesthetic practices of the owner and his community of friends may illuminate art education's revolutionary potential to contribute to "a new art of living in society" (p. 21).

Becoming Curious

The following vignette describes how I discovered the missile base while working on a photographic inquiry into backyard underground shelters in my community.

I had never really thought about bomb shelters before. The suburb I grew up in was developed in the late 1970s, so bomb shelters were not a consideration. In the spring of 2012, I worked on a project that required regularly driving around neighborhoods in my community. I was surprised how many houses had underground shelters in their backyards. I became curious about the characteristic rusted vents sticking out above cement slabs. Once I became aware of them, I found myself looking for underground shelters all the time. I would get out of my car and snoop around people's fences to photograph them where I could. I tried to capture their mystery in the photographs (see Figure 1).



Fig. 1 Image of underground shelter.

I thought about the culture and mental climate of the U.S. in the 1950s, and how fear of war and natural disaster might produce the desire to install these kinds of structures. I talked about my new interest with friends and learned that there was an old missile base just north of

town. It had been built in the early 1950s, and having live missiles so close to a residential area intimidated community members who built bomb shelters in response. I decided I would drive out to see the missile base first hand, hoping it might add to the series of photographs I was developing. I imagined the base as a shiny and minimal structure like something out of a science fiction movie.



Fig. 2 Exterior of administrative building

The following week, I went to find the base and passed what looked like an abandoned elementary school (see Figure 2). There was a chain-link fence with a gate that said “Keep Out.” The gate was open, so I went in anyway. I drove past an empty guard stand and realized there was a group of buildings—all cement structures, few doors or windows remaining—overgrown grasses, and old equipment piled up. I noticed a newer model car parked in the distance, so I quickly turned around and headed back out the main gate.

A few months later, I had been thinking about the missile base again, but I was afraid to go alone. I asked a friend who was a photographer to come along, suggesting that he might get some good photographs out of it. As we approached the long chain-link fence, I noticed the gate was



Fig. 3 Guard stop in at entrance of missile base.

open again. I turned in and we started past the guard stop (see Figure 3). I could sense my friend’s reluctance to drive any farther.

“Cala, maybe we really should ‘Keep Out.’ I think we’ve passed four of those signs so far.”

“No, come on. Let’s see what it is. It doesn’t look like anyone’s here. There aren’t even any windows on the buildings. Isn’t it creepy? It feels like a post-apocalyptic elementary school.”

As I drove up past two more buildings, I noticed the car I’d seen before parked at the end of the driveway. It looked at least ten years old, so I told myself that maybe it had been abandoned there. We slowly walked up the hill towards a building without windows or a door. Old plastic chairs were sitting in a circle just outside the entrance to the building. I saw Tibetan colored flags and Christmas lights hanging inside (see Figure 4). I looked back at my friend as he looked up at me. “What is this place?”

At that moment, the owner of the property, Mike, came out of another building.² I apologized for trespassing, and he explained that he lived

2 A pseudonym has been assigned to participants out of respect for their privacy. The owner of the base generously consented to allow me to share this research about his life and his work on the missile base.



Fig. 4 Interior of mess hall. *there and that he and his friends had renovated parts of the land to make the space a community site for their group. He showed me around and agreed to work with me on an inquiry into his process of transforming the site. Over the next two years, I returned to the base many times to visit Mike and attend the group's gatherings.*

Place-Based Pedagogy

In addition to the photography project on bomb shelters, I was researching histories of do-it-yourself (DIY) approaches to education and preparing a research proposal that would focus on place-based learning through an inquiry into social and material practices embedded in domestic spaces. Narratives about homes and the objects in them can illuminate residents' values, providing insight about cultural history and significant social practices. The missile base was a unique site, bridging my interests in the subjectifying effects of institutional power that I was exploring through the bomb shelters and the radical potential of aesthetic practices in domestic spaces.

Pedagogies of place (Callejo Perez, Fain, & Slater, 2004; Ellsworth, 2005; Gruenewald & Smith, 2008) draw attention to the vitality of a

physical setting to instruct, oppress, structure, and inspire. In art education, scholars using place-based inquiry are often focused on the potential of learning beyond the institutional setting, on domestic spaces (Ballengee Morris, 2000; Congdon, 2006), public places (Duncum, 2011; Trafi-Prats, 2006, 2009), and the natural environment (Blandy & Hoffman, 1993; Garoian, 1998, jagodzinski, 1987), and through direct engagements with built environments (Gude, 2004; Powell, 2008, 2010).

Environmentally conscious researchers in art education have questioned the hierarchy of humans over the environment (jagodzinski, 1987) and attempted to “demonstrate the interdependence of all living and non-living things” (Blandy & Hoffman, 1993, pp. 24-25). Others argue the potentially negative impacts of institutional environments across ecologies (Graham, 2007; Wallin, 2007). Through this research into the missile base I contribute to place-based research in art education by further probing the potential of informal modes of art education, with a focus on domestic spaces, leading to a questioning of the production of individuals' subjectivity in relation to social and material practices. The transformed missile base provided an opportunity to link institutional space with domestic practices as an aesthetic intervention. Moreover, I build on place-based scholarship in art education by employing Félix Guattari's (1992/1995) ecosophical approach to spatial analysis to map relationships between subjectivity, social relations, and material environments.

Mapping Ecosophical Assemblages

Over the course of two years, I visited the missile base approximately fifteen times to engage with and document the material aspects of the site, learn about Mike's interest in and process of transforming the land, and discuss his and his community of friends' collective aesthetic work on the base. In my research question, I asked how an ecosophical lens—through which I examine spaces as assemblages of social, mental, and environmental factors in flux—might produce new ways of understanding subjectivity. This question related directly to my

understanding of Guattari's (1989/2000) work in *The Three Ecologies*, where he argues that subjectivity is produced through assemblages of social, mental, and environmental vectors (the "three ecologies").

To engage with and document these varied elements, I developed a methodological assemblage that combined nomadic inquiry (Braidotti, 2011; Coats, 2014; St. Pierre, 1997), cultural and historical research, and a range of ethnographic methods, including interviews, observations, audio recordings, written reflections, and photographic documentation. Mike provided tours of different areas of the base. I photographed the spaces, and he responded to formal and informal interview questions during the tours. Mike discussed his perspectives on his experiences prior to and in the process of transforming the base. I documented what the base had become through photographs, looking both at its original structure and how it had changed through its various uses.

After my initial formal visits to the base, I began attending gatherings with his community of friends. I recorded what I learned through conversations with his friends through personal reflections. Data related to participants' subjectivity emerged from my analysis of their stories about choices, insecurities, sacrifices, actions, and values. I also researched the cultural history of missile bases to consider how the site was layered through temporal and physical changes, where historical artifacts such as architectural structure or material objects existed as a subjective residue, an idea I will develop further throughout the article.

I mapped my shifting understanding through a form of nomadic inquiry³ that focused on curiosity, activated thinking, affect, and reflexivity. As in the vignette that opened the article, I created written and audio reflections along with photographs to develop narra-

3 Inspired by "nomadology" (Deleuze, 1990; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) and nomadic methodologies (Braidotti, 2011; St. Pierre, 1997), I developed a form of nomadic inquiry in an attempt to map the activity or process of thinking by becoming attuned to ruptures in participants' and my own habituated ways of knowing.

tives and map my process of coming to know the space and people. I transcribed the interviews and reflections and coded them, looking for themes related to process, ethics, education, relationships, culture, and values. I analyzed how social and material practices together affected Mike and his friends' subjectivity as well as mine.

The concept of *assemblage* operates as description, methodology, and theory throughout this article. I use the concept of an assemblage in its more common context as aesthetic terminology, where previously unrelated objects have been joined together in a new context. It also relates to my methodology as a composite of a number of different approaches pieced together. Theoretically, it relates to Deleuze and Guattari's (1972/1983, 1987) concept of the assemblage and Guattari's (1992/1995, 1989/2000, 2009) application of it in other contexts. Finally, I position the entire site of the missile base as an assemblage of physical and temporal universes mixed and layered, where its previous uses and occupation have formed a subjective residue that expresses itself physically via objects and architecture and mentally through a kind of collective memory inscribed in the site.

The Three Ecologies

In this section, I will provide a general explanation of Guattari's concept of ecosophical analysis, and introduce two concepts: *transversality* and *dissensus*. As stated in the introduction to this article, the three ecologies are the environmental, the social, and the psyche. Guattari's ecosophical concepts derive in part from the broader practice of *schizoanalysis* that he developed with Gilles Deleuze (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983). Deleuze (1990) explains, "Cartography can only map out pathways and moves, along with their coefficients of probability and danger. That's what we call 'schizoanalysis,' this analysis of lines, spaces, becomings" (p. 34). Unlike structuralist forms of psychoanalysis that Guattari argues are embedded in dual and binary relations, focusing on lack and aimed at representing and coding the subject, schizoanalysis positions all forms of relations in terms of machinic parts assembled to produce forces.

The machinic aspects of Deleuze and Guattari's (1972/1983, 1987) theories are critical to understanding a shift away from anthropomorphic-centered values to an understanding of the interrelated forces of materiality, expression, and thought. If we eliminate notions of diagnosis or coding that produce static beings, and instead consider that we are always in a state of becoming in relation to our environmental or *ecological* conditions, then every place, moment, and relationship provides the potential for change or becoming something else. Guattari's (1989/2000) objective was the "reconstruction of social and individual practices" (p. 41).

Guattari's ecosophical approach broadens more common ecological frames based in the natural environment to consider how spaces become what he called "territories of existence" (1989/2000, p. 35). For Guattari, environments operate as subjective assemblages through "a heterogenous complex of interlocking, conjugated, and transdisciplinary flows [where].... The environment cannot be thought outside these three overlapping mental, social, and natural registers" (Jagodzinski, 2007, p. 342), where subjectivity is perpetually nascent. In this way, machinic registers produce environments or territories that are open to perpetual modulation and potential for social, mental, and environmental shifts.

Dissensual Subjectivity

The primary purpose of ecosophic cartography is thus not to signify and communicate but to produce assemblages of enunciation capable of capturing the points of singularity of a situation.... Like the symptom for Freudianism, the rupture of sense, the dissensus, becomes a privileged primary material. (Guattari, 1992/1995, p. 128)

Dissensus as "privileged primary material" relates to the recognition and dehabitation of naturalized ways of being. In the quote above, Guattari argues that the aim of ecosophic analysis is to assemble enunciative forces that express the lived specificity of a situation in the everyday. In other words, ecosophical cartography locates specific

ruptures in a broad field of practice, and dissensus is the active expression of becoming.

Guattari's interest in subjectivity is inherently tied to the effects of post-industrial capitalism, or what he terms "Integrated World Capitalism" (IWC) (1989/2000, p. 47).

It is no longer possible to claim to be opposed to capitalist power only from the outside, through trade unions and traditional politics. It is equally imperative to confront capitalism's effects in the domain of mental ecology in everyday life: individual, domestic, material, neighborly, creative, or in one's own personal ethics. Rather than looking for a stupefying and infantilizing consensus, it will be a question in the future of cultivating a dissensus and the singular production of existence. (Guattari, 1989/2000, p. 50)

IWC is essentially Guattari's term for globalization or post-industrial capitalism. He argues that the decentralized nature of IWC makes it nearly impossible to locate any singular source of power. In response to the delocalized force of IWC, the production of a simultaneously collective and singularized dissensual subjectivity is necessary. In other words, we must act through individual or singular force with the awareness of a responsibility to our always-collective existence. While dissensus relates to singularization, transversality privileges the "group-being." The notion of the "group-being" allowed me to better understand how aesthetic social and mental practices might produce a collective and simultaneously dissensual subjectivity.

Transversal Relations

Social ecology will consist in developing specific practices that will modify and reinvent the ways in which we live as couples or in the family.... It will be a question of literally reconstructing the modalities of "group-being" [*l'être-en-groupe*], not only through "communicational" interventions but through existential mutations driven by the motor of subjectivity. (Guattari, 1989/2000, p. 34)

From his interests in the significance of shifting social relations and the “group-subject,” Guattari developed the concept of transversality, which is critical to the potential for realizing a group subject in the social ecology. Transversality is rooted in Guattari’s rethinking of the meaning of transference in psychoanalysis, challenging the privileged function of interpretation by the powerful and all-knowing analyst. Transversal relations, on the other hand, are an effort to overcome hierarchies of coding and interpretation, to produce maximum communication among actors positioned variously within social structures (Genosko, 2009).

This concept emerged early in Guattari’s career, in part from his work at La Borde, a psychiatric clinic in France. In a description of Guattari’s work there, Wallin (2013) explains how Guattari created a “transversal remapping of the institution” (p. 40) by reorganizing the subject position of the various occupants—between doctors, staff, and patients. As he explains, “Mobilizing transversal thinking against the overstratified routinization of the clinical model, Guattari would rethink the institution by drawing clinical staff into direct and non-hierarchical relationship with patients” (Wallin, 2013, p. 40).

Transversality is the degree to which established subject groups communicate across predetermined group boundaries and become open to one another (Elliott, 2012). This notion of thinking across relates to the concept of transversality in other disciplines, such as transverse lines, which are lines that cross each other. As a mathematics concept, transversality relates to points of intersection between lines and spaces. So if we apply this spatial notion to social groups, we might consider how a group may be initially defined by a social status, then identify what is produced from previously separated groups intersecting transversally. This idea is not about transcendence or a move beyond, but rather thinking across. Together, dissensus and transversality provide radical potential for communities coming together through collective singularization.

Globalization and Abandoned Buildings

My inquiry into bomb shelters and the missile base stemmed from an interest in links between materiality and subjectivity. The photography project triggered a realization that bomb shelters installed in people’s backyards could act as an index for homeowners’ subjectivity during the Cold War era in the U.S., specifically highlighting ways that feelings of fear manifested in material objects. My shock at finding the missile base being used for what seemed to be creative purposes triggered a realization of new potential for institutional and manufacturing sites abandoned as a result of shifts to a Post-Fordist society. Post-Fordism relates to shifts away from a factory-driven economic model to networked systems of production in many industrialized nations during the last half of the 20th century. Hardt and Negri (2004) explain that,

Beginning in the 1970s, ... the techniques and organizational forms of industrial production shifted toward smaller and more mobile labor units and more flexible structures of production, a shift often labeled as a move from Fordist to post-Fordist production. (p. 82)

Globalization has also affected military structures. Hardt and Negri (2004) compare shifts from mass, state-organized armies to guerrilla forms of rebellion and parallel these strategic military changes to similar shifts in U.S. industrial manufacturing. Both roles, that of soldier and factory worker, have now been outsourced in significant ways to contractors or overseas manufacturing plants that can do the jobs using cheaper labor with less regulation and government oversight.

Over the last forty years, a post-Fordist economic model has expanded exponentially, leaving abandoned the physical structures built for military and manufacturing during previous eras. Across the country, examples of repurposed structures originally constructed for a Fordist model of institutional and capitalist production have been left vacant.

Some have become communal spaces developed from shared knowledge and a concern for environmental sustainability.⁴

Project Nike and Production of Missile Bases

As a result of a Cold War military ammunitions program called Project Nike that began in 1944, 241 missile bases were constructed across the United States throughout the 1950s. The missiles developed through the Nike project were self-propelled, guided weapons directed by a computerized system, all of which were located on the bases. Missiles with similar capacities had been developed first in Germany during World War II. At the end of the war, the United States began to set up a long-term missile-based weapons system in North America.

The newly constructed bases had a uniform structural layout with three parts. The first area was the integrated fire control (IFC) that included radar with a computer system to control targeting. The second was the administrative area located next to the IFC with “the battery headquarters, barracks, mess and recreation halls, and motor pool” (Bender, 2004, n.p.). Approximately one hundred officers and men ran each base continuously. The third part of the base, roughly forty acres away, was the underground missile magazine. A magazine is a space in which ammunition or explosives are stored. Missile magazines for Project Nike were constructed above ground in early bases and later below ground. They would hold eight to twelve live missiles.

In May of 1972, the United States and the Soviet Union signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, that regulated the production of nuclear weapons for both countries (Hardt & Negri, 2004). The Cold War struggle was no longer based primarily on the singular threat of intercontinental ballistic missiles. Instead, a new form of war would be composed of ongoing, smaller conflicts. This move shifted or ended the condition of modern warfare, characterized by “unrestrained high-intensity conflict” (Hardt & Negri, 2004, p. 38). In this new

context and twenty years after their conception, the U.S. government ended the deployment of the Nike bases in 1974. The Army National Guard offered bases to local municipalities and school districts rather than demolishing them.

Becoming Community through Collective Production

Mike bought the missile control side of the base for \$50,000 in 1995. It housed administrative buildings and the IFC on ten acres of land. During the mid-70s, the base had passed to the local school district after the Army National Guard moved out (Mike, personal communication, February 2, 2013). Mike spent three years cleaning out the buildings from the previous twenty years of being used to store the school district’s furniture. Mike saw the missile base and land around it as a readymade community center. It was secluded but close enough to town to afford easy access for his friends. The open interior spaces and solid cement structures that had been designed to house a hundred soldiers would be ideal for a community of artists and musicians.

For the six years prior to buying the missile base, Mike lived far north of town in a place called Rainbow Trail (also referred to as Rainbow Valley) with a community of people who, together and without contractual labor, built homes using a ferrocement process with rebar support. Ferrocement and rebar are building materials used in sculpture and as prefabricated building components. They are lighter than other forms of cement, and one can learn to use them with little apprenticeship in building.

Over time, conflicting priorities developed, and by the mid-’90s, relations between the community members at Rainbow Trail had broken down. Mike moved from the community because he felt that the governing regulations of the homeowners group had become biased and possibly more concerned with financial interests tied to the land than communal living. While Mike wanted to leave the regulations of community membership there, he was still deeply connected to his friends there and in other local communities. He wanted to find

⁴ Crew members from other bases return annually to see the base they occupied. Many other townships have used the spaces and buildings for recreational purposes and municipal services (McCrary, 1991).

a place to bring them together without the codes that had begun to polarize social relations at Rainbow Trail.

Mike explained that after buying the missile base, he and his friends collectively repaired many of the utilities that had fallen into disrepair over the forty years since its construction. They bartered time, knowledge, skill, and other goods rather than relying on capitalist forms of currency and exchange. For example, he noted that he learned to refurbish the sewage system through guidance on plumbing from a friend, where the friend's knowledge and labor were bartered for future labor. Guattari (1992/1995) describes how, "in archaic societies, there was what they call 'participation,' a collective subjectivity investing a certain type of object, and putting itself in the position of an existential group nucleus" (p. 25). This kind of collective subjectivity embedded in participation is illustrated in the group work that Mike and his friends invested in the missile base. The community spaces of the base were developed not simply through good will but, more deeply, on interdependence.

Transversal Potential

While Mike owns the land, he expressed the importance that no single individual acts as leader there. Every building except for the small one in which he resides is considered communal, and friends, at times, live in some of the other buildings. As I met his friends, I learned that they felt a distinct sense of pride about and ownership over certain parts of the property because they had helped repair, construct, and adorn those areas.

Realizations of their subjective possessiveness emerged from two types of engagements: narrative and corrective. Narrative examples were typically information provided by friends on the base that accompanied Mike's stories. Corrective engagements, on the other hand, emerged from actions or behaviors I was doing that did not align with the understood rules of the base.

Narrative examples emerged during several visits to the base, where

I met people who supplemented Mike's stories with specific details about the length of time a specific area took to construct or challenges that they faced through the process. These anecdotes demonstrated, to me, a sense of ownership over certain areas of the base because they contributed time and labor. Their participation was not related to construction alone. I learned that regularly on weekends, his friends would play stick hockey at the base, on what was originally a basketball court. Players I met were a graphic designer, a mover, a farmer, a teacher, and an owner of a local coffee shop. Over time, I realized that those hockey games generated other collaborative efforts and bartering for skill and time beyond the spatial boundaries of the base.

As stated earlier, transversality is the degree to which established subject groups communicate across predetermined group boundaries and become open to one another (Elliott, 2012). The environment of the base provided a site of social and material engagement through labor and play. I learned through repeated conversations with Mike's friends that the group derived a feeling of community through blurred roles of owner and guest and through shared labor and mutual generosity that merged community-based social groups.

On other occasions, corrective engagements illuminated his friends' subjective connection to the site, for example when I was instructed about the rules of the base. For instance, I brought beverages in glass bottles to a winter party, and two separate people approached me to request that I take them back to my car because the community did not use glass containers for fear that they might break, leaving glass shards on the floor and ground outside. This was important because at other times of year, people liked to walk barefoot there and, annually, local belly dance groups performed at the summer solstice party.

Participation in the material and social modulation of the existential terrain of the missile base produced a collective subjectivity. In Guattari's (1992/1995) terms, the significance of such experience is the creation of "complexes of subjectification: multiple exchanges between the individual-group-machine" (p. 7). The residence illustrates how the social vector (community members operating transversally)

might affect physical structures (reconstructing, altering, and occupying land and architecture) as an ecological assemblage that produces a collective subjectivity for many participants at once.

On the base, a transversal shift emerged for me, and I would argue for the other community members, through a process of direct encounters with material practices girded by shared values about a democratic use of time, skill, and knowledge operating outside of capitalist machinic force. Guattari (1992/1995) explains that we cannot produce a pedagogy of values, and that instead,

The Universes of the beautiful, the true and the good are inseparable from territorialized practices of expression. Values only have universal significance to the extent that they are supported by the Territories of practice, experience, of intensive powers that transversalize them. (pp. 129-130)

Collective work on the missile base recomposed subject positions that had been previously inscribed via social and spatial hierarchies. The physical structure of the base is no longer the subject of military structuring designed for routinized daily living and regimented hierarchal order. And unlike the collective subjectivity of the soldiers, where social relations are verticalized, the collective/group subject of the base-turned-community space is produced through a transversal sharing of knowledge, skill, and time.

Subjectivity in the Making

I consider how Mike's DIY ethic, evidenced by his social and aesthetic practices, provide an example of a materialist approach to dissensus through direct relations through which capitalist forms of exchange are resisted by bartering time and labor rather than currency. I learned about Mike's childhood, education, and family, allowing me to better understand how his values emerged. Cement became an important motif repeated through decades of stories, revealing the significance of material practices throughout his life. Growing up, Mike poured concrete with his father to extend a patio. He described the simplicity

of mixing Readymix cement in a wheelbarrow and spreading it with a trowel. The experience became a node in his subjective development. He repeatedly described learning through need-based and informal approaches, developing a DIY ethic, with the example of pouring cement with his father as a kind of initiation. That ethic was further cultivated when he lived with the Rainbow Trail community, building homes through collective bartering of time, labor, and skill, before moving to the base.

His stories of cement also highlighted his dissensual pragmatism. Living at Rainbow Trail, Mike's use of Readymix rather than the ferrocement process made him an outsider. The community expected the ferro approach because it had been the tradition in similar communities, but Mike considered it unnecessary when Readymix was cheaper and easier for him. His pragmatism distanced him from the

regulations of a group that thought of themselves as escaping capitalist-driven social regulations.

In a feature of the missile base particularly important to his vision of its community-driven potential and as a reference back to his experiences with his father, Mike extended the patio outside of the mess hall (see Figure 5) to make it possible for more people to stand near the building. Along with friends, he removed the windows in the building to facilitate interaction from the inside



Fig. 5 Extended cement patio and school chairs in front of the mess hall.

out.⁵ Many of the structural and large-scale embellishments made on the missile base include cement.

Recognizing subjectivizing nodes, by which I mean experiences that produce a rupture in our habituated ways of being—such as Mike’s experience with his father—is critical to the function of the ecosophic cartographies. The subjective rupture that formed through that experience developed an ethical and aesthetic line of flight that materialized in a variety of ways later in his life, such as his pragmatic approaches to production and environmentalism evidenced at Rainbow Trail and on the base, his ability to see potential of abandoned structures, and his willingness to work through collective production to transform the site.

Modulating Expressive Assemblages

After settling at the base, Mike learned how to weld. He initially learned out of necessity to repair and alter structural elements throughout the property. He has applied that knowledge to an aesthetic practice where he makes welded sculptures of collected agricultural tools (see Figure 6). Various rooms on the property are embellished with steel objects, some left from the site’s previous uses and others collected by Mike at flea markets.



Fig. 6 Welded sculptures on the floor in administrative building.

In the building that once held a one-ton computer, Mike has

covered all of the walls with machine parts and dismantled industrial elements to produce new visual designs with the steel objects (see Figure 7). Mike describes his visual assemblages as hieroglyphs. Some of the designs reference popular culture while others produce dynamic non-referential aesthetic combinations. He calls the room the ballroom because tables are set up inside to play handball.

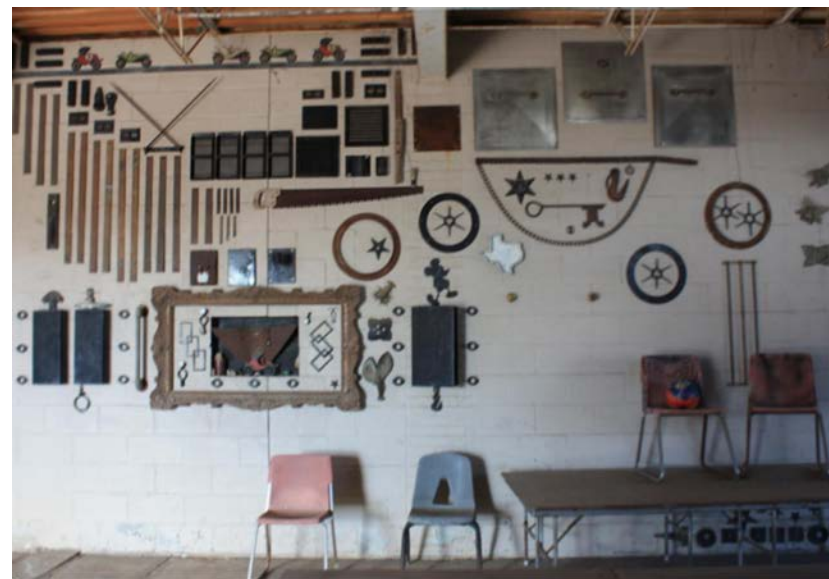


Fig. 7 Interior wall of the ballroom, which was one the IFC.

If we apply a Guattarian analysis to consider how the space expresses through its transformed material components and social function, we can see how Mike’s aesthetic practice of reordering the objects on the wall to create a visual language and transforming the function of the room for play has modulated its enunciative registers. As explained earlier, the goal of Guattari’s (1992/1995) approach is “to produce assemblages of enunciation capable of capturing the points of singularity of a situation” (p. 128). If we think of enunciation as the way expression is produced, the ballroom expresses differently through the reordering of its machinic parts into aesthetic assemblages. The restructuring of social practices from military preparedness to leisurely play highlights the singular force of Mike’s aesthetic practices. The room that once held the computer, a military machine controlled by

5 In Figure 3, the windows are covered with black wood that Mike installs every winter to block the strong winds during cold weather.

soldiers on the base whose purpose was to direct nuclear missiles, has been dismantled and composed differently as an aesthetic assemblage for playful interaction.

Guattari (1992/1995) describes “constellations of referential components” within existential territories that produce “Universes of Value.” These referential components exist in the material and social ecologies. He goes on to suggest that these constellations can be “overtaken” but never wiped out as they reside in “the incorporeal memory of collective subjectivity” (Guattari, 1992/1995, p. 27). The missile base works precisely in this vein.

Instead of wiping out the semiotic registers of the military machinery, Mike has produced an intensive repetition. Elements such as the guard stand, the “No Smoking in Bed” sign that remains in the old barracks, and the institutional layout of the buildings strewn with colored plastic chairs (see Figure 3) are referential components that produce a subjectivizing residue of the site’s virtual potential, where referential components are layered over time. Mike’s changes and additions to the property modulate the previous semiotic registers to produce a new kind of incorporeal subjectivity among its occupants. The machinic modulation of the physical, social, and mental composed over time provide a glimpse into a future revolutionary force of this kind of territorializing activity. Again, this notion of the machinic is critical to understanding the significance of ecosophical analysis because its goal is not to code or privilege a subject position, but instead to understand how elements flow together to produce forces and territorial assemblages simultaneously.

Cultivating Dissensus

Mike’s material transformation of the missile base supports the emergence of a form of tactical environmentalism based on a posture of defiance, an outlook that may be examined through Mike’s points of view on his own values. Mike does not see himself as an activist, and he goes so far as to call environmentalists petty, refusing what he sees as a blinkering consensus required to identify as such. This concept of blinkering is related

in part to the blinding or blinker hoods worn by horses to limit their sight. In terms of a consensual following, blinkering refers to blinding oneself to other perspectives in an effort to follow a singular ideology. In a Guattarian sense, blinkering functions in the institution “by constricting the image of institutional life along narrowly delineated routes of subjective expressions and enunciative potentials” (Wallin, 2013, p. 38).

Mike stridently refutes passive consumption, opting for his own methods of production through revitalizing antiquated technology. I came to realize the complexity of his dissensual approach each time I tried to interpret his actions definitively. His actions are often pragmatic and based in a relational ethics and a dissensual approach to capitalism and regulatory forces in the everyday.

At the highest point on his property, there is a strip of land lined with trees forming a path with cement columns at either end. The oak trees along that path were the first Mike planted (see Figure 8), and since then, he has added approximately eighty more throughout the property. Mike describes the trees as an act of defiance. He explained that the land around the missile base has been purchased for residential and commercial development. By planting 100 live oak trees on



Fig. 8 Cement seating area with planted trees.

his property, he has produced a challenge financially and logistically for developers to eventually build on his land. Removing live oak trees requires that builders acquire a separate permit for each tree, with a fine and a reforestation requirement for each tree damaged or destroyed. Mike imagines the visual potential of the trees when they have all reached maturity: “there’s about a hundred trees, I’d like to plant a hundred more. It’ll be my contribution” (Mike, personal communication, April 20, 2013).

Planting the trees is an act of resistance. Mike exploits environmental policies in tactical ways to mount a defense of his land in opposition to local commercial development. Similarly, when he moved onto the land, he also bought goats and sheep to gain the advantage of state tax policies for agriculture land use: “I cut my taxes and became a farmer and raised sheep” (Mike, personal communication, February 2, 2014). He further recognized the potential for a symbiotic relationship with animals. They could roam over a large area of land, and the tax break afforded by raising the animals saves him money. Constructing a tactical subjectivity in his defense of the land, Mike appropriated a federal site built for war to build a community center, created a population of farm animals supported by state government tax breaks, and planted trees as a way to protect the land by invoking environmental regulations.

Mike’s ethics emerge from practical choices. Planting the trees was a tactical production using resources that benefit the land, and he bought the land in the first place because it already had a strong infrastructure. Mike brought together a community to develop the site, creating a communal investment in sweat equity:

You can do it or pay someone else to do it. I mean you can physically do it yourself. I don’t want to pay someone else to do it. It’s not that it’s a waste of money, but money you could spend a different way. And this place when I bought this it was already built. So just restore it. Fix the doors and windows, and a sewer system that runs across the street. (Mike, personal communication, February 2, 2013)

I recognized how an ethical frame and pragmatic approach flows throughout Mike’s interpersonal relationships and productive practices on the property. He recognizes that change takes time and long-term personal investment.

Mike’s tactical subjectivity was produced from an early age through direct engagements with people, objects, and nature. He resists the forces of consensual thought, predetermined morality, and capitalist development. Mike’s work on the base illuminates the potential of mixing prescribed policies and exploiting juridical codes. The agricultural tools and machine parts welded together that are scattered across the site act as referential components talking across time. Material traces of the past sixty years including deteriorating architectural elements and old school chairs produced a sort of subjectifying residue on Mike’s land, by which I mean that the remnants of the past serve as reminders of its previous uses, affecting the way occupants today relate to the space. He has created a space that holds a collective memory of U.S. history and local culture, and while the embellishments of the various buildings produce an aesthetically charged environment, the transversal relations among occupants generate a social vitality on the land.

Art Education’s Ecosophical Potential

By researching a specific site, where I could focus on aesthetic work as praxis, I saw the missile base as a unique place to explore institutional power and DIY practices. Art educators interested in critical pedagogy and visual culture have questioned inequality through aesthetic resistance with a social justice agenda (Ballangee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001; Bell & Desai, 2011; Darts, 2004, 2006a, 2008; Dewhurst, 2010, 2011; Duncum, 2010; Quinn, 2006; Sandlin, 2007; Sandlin & Milam, 2008). This study builds on that work. Questioning how the social and environmental ecologies of art education’s spaces produce subjectivity is political work aimed at identifying how our places and practices produce our students. The significant anti-capitalist force of Mike and his friends’ work on the base bridges art educators’ interests in visual

culture, community, institutional settings, and socially engaged art. Below, I will introduce tactics learned from the research process that I hope will inspire art educators to consider their ecosophical conditions and their dissensual power to modulate environmental, mental, and social vectors.

Stay Curious

This research started as photographic inquiry. Curiosity consistently drives my research, particularly in relation to photography. The affective materiality of the base realized through a corporeal engagement generated interests in a military and cultural history I had never considered. While initially trespassing on the missile base may have been dangerous, that curiosity-driven experience produced a new kind of subjective relationship with a geographic area I thought I knew well.

Moreover, the research with Mike allowed me to see the networked relations between my local community and the Cold War, globalization, and the international art world. As art educators, we must become and develop a community of inquirers with an experimental spirit. The material, social, and pedagogical potential of our local communities is limitless. Curiosity and inquiry push us into new worlds. We cannot know immediately where our formal and informal pedagogical events will take our students and us.

Become Affected through Direct Engagement

Art education takes place in domestic, institutional, museum, and community settings through myriad formal and informal approaches. When planning educational spaces, we often think about design elements, resource organization, and seating arrangement. Through repeated visits to the missile base, I realized that the environmental ecology included such things as art objects that Mike created, but it also included grasshoppers leaping around me in the summer heat, children running during a party, deconstructed machine parts scattered over the land, and empty rooms with signage left from when they were used as a mess hall or barracks. All of these elements pro-

duced intensities that affected a spatial subjectification.

The missile base provides an example of how communities emerge from environments, whether we think about the base as military installation or the base as community center. Material and social elements are mutually constituted through direct engagement. The physical aspects of any space operate as semiotic machinery working in tandem with language and codes to produce components of subjectification. We must take into consideration all of the physical elements of a place and realize how they work with the social and corporeal forces intersecting them.

Sensory engagements with schools, homes, community, and natural settings are often ordered through perpetually planned movement and time, allowing students few opportunities to register how they affect the site and are affected by it. Bells, artificially controlled room temperature, directed movement, limited natural plants, florescent light—these factors affect the life of the space. As art educators, we need to recognize how the physical environment of our schools or other setting affects us. Becoming conscious through activated engagement with people and places is one step in dehabituating ways of thinking and being.

Share Ownership

The social and environmental ordering of public schools is specifically designed to habituate students into certain ways of behaving. Educational environments are produced as coded territories, hierarchically ordering bodies, and directing physical engagement. With students educational spaces, how might we produce shared responsibility in these environments? While I realize that the large number of students in public schools and often mixed ages and social demographics in community education sites can make a certain amount of spatial ordering necessary, how can we create spaces of collective individualization through transversal relations? Guattari's transversal reordering at La Borde provides an example of ways that shared social responsibility and the removal of hierarchies through direct social and

material engagement produce a collective subjectivity.

As a material and later aesthetic practice for Mike, DIY projects with his father and friends highlight radical potential for informal modes of art education and direct engagement to produce desire for and value in collective efforts that affect our spatial relations. Mike and his friends illuminate the potential of a group subject through participants' ethical frame and ways of acting with and for a community. On the property, each person feels a sense of ownership. They have been asked to contribute time and effort; they were trusted to make material changes, and they expect new visitors to respect the property. What responsibilities can students take on in schools and community sites, and how might this produce a different kind of subjectivity in relation to those sites?

Question Codes

Art education's transversal potential in the institutional spaces of public schooling holds enormous promise. Discursive formations, subjugating codes, and ordered environments become fertile terrain for intervention. Mike's environmental intervention with 100 oak trees inspires us to ask what codes we might exploit to benefit the natural environment of our communities. How are codes – written, spoken, or incorporeal – expressed in the social ecologies of our educational spaces?

The most pervasive coding instrument in schools currently is testing. Tests produce curriculum, behavior, affect, and subjectivity in the public school environment. We might begin to intervene in them by asking who has developed the tests and the policies that structure schools around them. How are the rules expressed and how might they be subverted? Mike's exploitation of tax policy and juridical codes might inspire us to consider what policies we might use to our students' advantage to change the subjectifying force of testing culture in the school environment.

Artists and art educators have been questioning pervasive codes

and naturalized cultural norms expressed through visual culture for decades. Art educators interested in public pedagogy and socially engaged art have intervened in public sites to question neoliberal capitalist policies and consider the potential of an art of living. How might we take that kind of subversive work and apply it to the corporeality of social structuring in institutional environments through collective aesthetic work in the form of material production and performative action?

Producing democratic educational spaces that are structured and organized collectively through shared knowledge, space, and time might be one step in transversalizing the fragmented strata of our field that are too often captured and structured by capitalist forces and neoliberal desires.

Rethink Time & Production

Fordist social formations residually structure many educational spaces as assembly line factories based on production. Time is ordered to limit the possibility of thinking beyond the fragmented nature of organized education. Art teachers feel pressure to produce work within a class period to adorn hallways. Community art spaces are often driven by paid hours with the expectation of the production of discreet objects. So, how might we think time differently without falling into the neoliberal trap that has made all hours and spaces sites of production, where we are constantly working?

To rethink time, we have to rethink artistic production and pedagogy as vital processes. The difference needs to come with the realization that authentic learning takes time that cannot be accounted for in the confines of a lesson or unit and that time operates outside of capitalist currency. As Mike's lifetime of DIY work illustrates, sweat equity and real learning takes time and repetition, failure and trying differently. We might rethink art education sites as open spaces for experimentation and failure, where there is no beginning and end structured by units, lessons, or hours, but instead as places of material, corporeal, and intellectual engagement constituted through inquiry, practice, and play.

Reinvent your Curriculum

What habituated hierarchies are performed through our curriculum, and how might we produce a dissensual pedagogy? For instance, how do we reify naturalized beliefs about identity, nationality, and capitalism through our discourse and the lessons we teach? Mike's aversion to adopting the identity of environmentalist was surprising to me until I realized how limiting identity politics could become. We should be mindful of ways we privilege individuality, for fear that we reinforce capitalist-driven beliefs about a productive citizenry or a consumerist morality.

Mike's work on the base was driven by necessity, and he learned through questioning and asking for help. Even his stories with his father were about collective production. He taught himself to weld on the base at first from necessity and then used those skills to make his steel sculpture assemblages. As we think about possibilities for art education, how can practical and need-based skills not mire us in just repairing broken elements, but push us to take those need-based skills and create art? On a very practical level, these questions might produce at least a momentary rupture in habituated ways of thinking art education beyond the predetermined confines of making and individual expression. How, instead, can direct engagement and skill development flow into new territories of practice to again think about a transversalizing of aesthetic practices?

From the models of praxis introduced at the missile base, we might consider dissensual interventions in the institutional ecology of our public schools, the too-often neoliberal spaces of museum art education, and the under-utilized political landscape of community-based art education. How can we modulate the ecosophical components of our existential terrains to produce new Universes of Value through dissensual practices and transversalized subject positions of student, teacher, administrator, staff, and community to produce "a new art of living in society" (Guattari, 1992/1995, p. 21)?

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The Spaces in which We Appear to Each Other: The Pedagogy of Resistance Stories in Zines by Asian American Riot Grrrls

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ABSTRACT

The early 1990s marked the onset of Riot Grrrl, a grassroots feminist movement which galvanized in women-driven punk scenes in cities like Olympia, Washington, and Washington, D.C. Riot Grrrl was a new kind of feminism, one that was unapologetically aggressive and forthright in its responses to patriarchy, mass media, and consumerist culture. The message of the movement was, in part, disseminated through the use of zines—the small stapled booklets in which grrrls asserted their feminist ethos, shared personal stories, and reviewed bands and shows. In this paper, I report on a study of one subgenre of zines—those by Asian American riot grrrls. Zines used in the study were sampled from the Barnard Zine Library, a library dedicated to the presentation and preservation of feminist zines by women and girls living and working in the New York metropolitan area. Building on Maxine Greene's (1995; 2001) theories of aesthetic encounters and Lee Ann Bell's (2010) concept of "resistance stories," I examine the pedagogical possibilities of Asian American riot grrrl zines.

Introduction

In 1991, members of Bikini Kill, a punk band based in Olympia, Washington, released the zine *Bikini Kill #2*. In its pages, *The Riot Grrrl Manifesto* appeared for the first time. Typed across an 5.5 by 8.5 inch page, the manifesto begins, "Riot Grrrl is..." The lines that follow do not, however, offer a definition. Instead, the manifesto's punchy opener declares, "BECAUSE us girls crave records and books and fanzines that speak to US that WE feel included in and can understand in our own ways"² (Hanna, Wilcox, & Vail, 1991, n.p.). Continuing until the end of the page, the statements offer biting rationales for a new kind of feminism, a counterpoint to the "Instant Macho Gun Revolution"

1 Correspondence regarding this article may be sent to the author at goulding.cathlin@gmail.com.

2 Some of the sampled zines did not have dates or page numbers; publication date and pages are noted whenever possible.

(n.p.), the “capitalist way of doing things” (n.p.), and “self-defeating girltype behaviors” (n.p.). These musician-writers were naming a different feminist ethos, one in which girls formed their own bands, wrote and distributed publications, and unapologetically claimed a new world order where “true punx, real soul and the revolution girl style now” (cited in Piepmeier, 2009, p. 1) reigned supreme.

The Riot Grrrl Movement, which began in the early 1990s in such cities as Olympia, Washington, and Washington, D.C., was a third wave³ feminist movement aimed as a response to patriarchy, domestic abuse, and sexual assault. Emerging from their involvement in punk scenes on the West and East Coasts, college-aged women (mostly white and working middle class) developed a multi-pronged grassroots movement disseminating a message of rebellious, aggressive female empowerment. This particular kind of feminism was unapologetic, Do-It-Yourself (DIY), and declarative. Tobi Vail, a member of Bikini Kill, rewrote the word “girl” as “grrrl” to reflect the angry snarl of the movement (Piepmeier, 2009). As explained in the opening lines of *The Riot Grrrl Manifesto*, the movement was also motivated by the dearth of spaces for young women to voice their rebellion and produce their own music and media (Duncombe, 1997; Star, 1999). Distributed at punk shows, libraries, and coffee shops, zines became one of the primary means through which the message of this new, unabashed feminism was broadcasted. Zines reflected the “unfiltered personal voices of young women and queer youth who are struggling against the societal and patriarchal corset and challenge the conventional meanings and expectations of femininity” (Zobl, 2003, p. 61). Embedded in punk, feminist, and queer subcultures, zines offered these young women a venue for writing outside and in resistance to traditional media. The Riot Grrrl movement would spawn much of the publication of zines by women and girls in the early nineties and continued to shape much of the emotional tenor, content, and aesthet-

ic of those produced in its wake.

Zines and Asian American Riot Grrrls

“We asians [sic] are known to be superachievers, particularly math-science wizards who maintain high grade point averages and graduate from prestigious ivy university [sic] with honors,” (n.p.) writes Lynn Hou (1999) in her zine, *Cyanide No. 2: Resist Psychic Death*. Hou continues with a pointedly sardonic list: “we asians are an extremely submissive, quiet, and good species that rarely open our mouths” (n.p.) and “we asians are silent talented musicians who play a mean violin and set our piano on fire” (n.p.). At the end of the list, Hou adds, “What a crock of bullshit” (n.p.). Hou’s zine, full of frank quips countering racial stereotypes, is one example of a sub-genre of zines, those by Asian American riot grrrls. Asian American grrrls and other women of color have a lengthy and rich history of zine-making; however, their contributions have been less emphasized in both scholarly literature and within the larger Riot Grrrl Movement (J. Freedman, personal communication, April 25, 2012). Riot grrrls of color have long critiqued the members of the larger movement for allowing their privilege as white, middle class women to remain unacknowledged and under-examined (Zobl, 2009). The release of zinester and academic Mimi Thi Nguyen’s (1999) anthology *Evolution of a Race Riot* addressed many of these critiques and featured the work of women of color to support their “talking to each other, relating, learning, commiseration, laughing, recognizing little bits and pieces and whole chunks of our individual life-worlds in the writing or art of others” (p. 5). Recently, digital archives like the People of Color (POC) Zine Project and collections like the Barnard Zine Library and NYU’s Riot Grrrl Collection have turned their attention to zines by women of color. For grrrls of color—as Hou’s “we asians” statements tartly demonstrate—zines provide aesthetic and material forums for Asian American LGBTQ-identified and cisgender women and girls’ resistance stories.

Resistance stories, according to Lee Anne Bell (2010), are those stories

3 Third Wave feminism refers to a generation of feminism that occurred in the late 20th century, situated in the backlash against the feminist movement, Reaganomics, globalization, new internet technologies, post-modernism, and post-colonialism (Garrison, 2000; Piepmeier, 2009).

that “resist racism [and other forms of inequities] and challenge the stock stories that support it to arrange for more equal and inclusive social arrangements” (p. 61). Resistance stories challenge normalizing racial and gender discourses. As mentioned above, zines aptly function as imaginative, creative mediums for such stories and, moreover, have implications for teaching and learning. Bell explains that resistance stories have the

capacity to instruct and educate, arouse participation and collective energy, insert into the public arena and validate the experiences and goals of people who have been marginalized, and model skills and strategies for effectively confronting racism and other forms of inequality. (p. 62)

Using zines collected in the Barnard Zine Library, a library that preserves feminist zines by women and girls, I examine a series of zines that intend to arouse responses and instruct about social inequities as experienced and made sense of by Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA) women and girls. Furthermore, I consider how the zine aesthetic provides a forum to explore, exhibit, and put forth resistance in ways that are pedagogical.

Resistance stories in zines by APIA grrrls confront “model minority” myths about Asian Americans. Historically, Asian Americans have been cast as docile, obedient, and as “good subjects” (Nguyen, 2002, p. 144) who, through sheer determination and hard work, acquire academic and economic success (Lee, 1996). Perspectives of APIA students are largely absent from educational scholarship, which scholars have argued is due to the prevalence of the model minority myth (Ng, Lee, & Pak, 2007). Despite the diversity within this demographic, APIA students are widely perceived as academically high achieving students who require little attention in educational research. Asian Americans have also long been cast as foreigners who have little stake in racial equity in the United States (Inkelas, 2006). Such myths also serve to position other racial minority groups deleteriously, thus sustaining the status quo and white hegemony. In other words, the myth acts as a “hegemonic device” that “[desensitizes] the public about

the deep and troubling history of race relations in the United States” (Ng et al., 2007, p. 99). Zines by APIA riot grrrls demystify the model minority myth and reposition Asian Americans as a highly diverse group with multiple and intersecting identities, and as comprised of persons with a potent voice in the body politic.

For me, riot grrrl zines offered a first, searing glimpse into a way of being Asian American that had little to do with model minority myths. As a mixed-race, fourth-generation Japanese American, I had long served as a quiet and well-behaved placeholder teachers deployed in their seating arrangements to calm their more rambunctious students. A long-brewing rebellion, though, stirred within. Like many young women, my engagement with feminism, punk, and activism began as a college student in the Riot Grrrl Movement’s 1990s heyday. During a Take Back the Night Rally on our campus, Sabrina Margarita Alcantara-Tan, a well-known Filipina zinester, spoke. Alcantara-Tan’s zine, *Bamboo Girl*, had a fierce, boiling interiority and captured the messiness and here-nor-there experiences of being a mixed-race woman. It was my first exposure to an Asian American riot grrrl zine. In its pages I found a recalcitrant, impertinent Asian American-ness, one that also bubbled underneath my quiet exterior and silence in class discussions. *Bamboo Girl* soon inspired my own zine making efforts: I cobbled together *Freeze Dried Noodle*, a zine on Asian supermarkets, foodways, and mixed-race identity. In the zine, I constructed hasty collages of fish-tanks and Japanese supermarket advertisements and wrote stories of self-conscious shopping trips to my local Asian supermarket, Lucky Seafood. Immediately hooked from my college years, I became a life-long reader and writer of zines, haunter of zine distros, and a teacher of zine-making to my own high school students.

Zines as Aesthetic, Political, and Educative “Shocks”

Zine studies is a fragmented, multi-disciplinary field and draws on arenas as vast as art history and aesthetic theory, crafting and design, literary studies, queer and feminist scholarship, public pedagogy, and aesthetic education. Much of the literature on zines revolves around

their physical appearance, construction, and homemade feel, qualities that make them an appealing and critical alternative to popular media (Poletti, 2005; Triggs, 2006; Whitlock & Poletti, 2008). Much of the pleasure and power of zines resides in the act of physically handling and interacting with them. Zines offer a pleasurable tactile experience such that the bodily interaction with a zine fosters a connection between author and reader (Piepmeier, 2008). Other scholars have studied the multiple meanings embedded in the physical qualities and constructions of zines (Congdon & Blandy, 2003). Text, graphics, and photography are utilized within a zine format to create disorder, lack of resolve, inconclusiveness and, ultimately, come to embody the very disjointedness of contemporary life. In the vein of literary and prose studies, some scholars conduct textual analysis of the narratives and life stories told within the form (see e.g., Stockburger, 2011). Another body of research has a decidedly less material and aesthetic bent. Instead, these scholars have focused on how zine writers pose critiques of existing power structures and norms, subvert traditional gender norms, and create spaces of expression and resistance for women, girls, LGBTQ-identified persons, and youth of color (see e.g., Buchanan, 2009; Chu, 1997; Gustavson, 2002; Harris, 2003; Jacobi, 2007; Sinor, 2012; Starr, 1999). Feminist zines, which stem from a long history of women as artists and makers (Stankiewicz, 2003), explore the fluidity of gender and sexuality, reflect intersectional identities, and excavate the invisible histories of queer women of color such as Josephine Baker and Alice Walker (Licona, 2005; Piepmeier, 2009).

In the field of education, practitioner research has examined the use of zines as a visual and narrative forum for students to tell their life stories in classroom settings (Alyea, 2012; Bott, 2002; Fraizer, 1998; Guzzetti & Gamboa, 2004; Moore, 2009; Poletti, 2005). Other researchers have written about zines as engaging texts that support adolescent literacy (Congdon & Blandy, 2003; Wan, 1999). Less attention is given to zines as a form of pedagogy in and of themselves (see Comstock, 2001); however, Sandlin, O'Malley, and Burdick (2011) identify zines as a kind of *public pedagogy*. In their terms, public pedagogy is the

various forms, processes, and sites of education and learning occurring beyond formal schooling It involves learning in institutions such as museums, zoos, and libraries; in informal education sites such as popular culture, media, commercial spaces, and the Internet; and through figures and sites of activism. (p. 339)

Zines are a kind of “feminist participatory media” (Sandlin et al., p. 344) and “circulate liberatory discourses and [help] produce among women and other marginalized populations collective identities oriented toward social justice activism” (p. 344). A form of pedagogy working outside of conventional academic spaces and institutions, zines are fruitfully contentious spaces in which power hierarchies can be challenged and interrogated.

Zines are pedagogical in not only the political discourses they circulate and the coalitions they cultivate, but on aesthetic grounds, too. Maxine Greene (1995) writes of the “shocks of awareness” (p. 135) that the arts allow. These shocks, she explains, “leave us (should leave us) less immersed in the everyday and more impelled to wonder and question” (p. 135) and “leave us somehow ill at ease or prod us beyond acquiescence” (p. 135). Works of art shake us out of passivity and activate our ethical and political orientations and obligations. Aesthetic encounters enable learners to notice and see (Berger, 1972) and cultivate a capacity to sit with unease, be more watchful, and “wide-awake” to new possibilities (Greene, 1978, p. 173 & elsewhere; 1995, p. 4 & elsewhere; 2001, p. 26 & elsewhere). As readers of an aesthetic text such as a zine, we immerse ourselves in collages, scribbles, and pastings that display toughness, beauty, vulnerability, fear, rage, and humor. In submerging oneself in the aesthetic experience we are, as Greene argues, less likely to fall prone to dichotomous, uni-dimensional thinking, instead making empathic connections to the artists and subjects they conjure. Through their aesthetic forms and narratives of resistance, zines serve as shocks of awareness; they are, as Piepmeier (2009) notes, “uniquely situated to awaken outrage and—perhaps more crucially—the imagination” (p. 159).

Research Methods

The zines used in this study were collected from the Barnard Zine Library in New York City. Founded in 2003 by librarian Jenna Freedman, the library is housed at Barnard College, an all-women's college affiliated with Columbia University. It contains over 2,000 zines in its collection, 800 of which are available in the public stacks. The collection has a special emphasis on urban women and women of color and contains "personal and political publications on activism, anarchism, body image, third wave feminism, gender, parenting, queer community, riot grrrl, sexual assault, and other topics" (Freedman, 2009, p. 4). The zine library serves as a place of learning (Ellsworth, 2004), one in which knowledge and resistance is shared, interchanged, and furthered (see Kumbier, 2009).

To locate zines for the study, I consulted with Jenna Freedman and also used Columbia University's library catalog system to search under "zines" and subject "Asian American." Each available zine was cataloged under its author, title, subject matter addressed (e.g., Arab identity, personal zine, literary zine, dating, sexual abuse) and a short summary of the contents. I sifted through 103 entries, reading summaries and tagging those zines in which resistance stories might surface within the content. Of the 103 total zines, I eliminated those in which resistance, at least from the brief summaries in the catalog, did not seem to be a prominent theme. In the end, I selected 31 zines for analysis. I read across these 31 zines, using sticky tabs to mark passages, images, and graphics in which resistance surfaced. Then, I used document analysis of these marked pages, drawing upon some of the techniques used by zine researchers and scholars (e.g., Piepmeier, 2009), such as textual analysis of content, and descriptions and interpretations of graphics, layouts, design, and photographs. Employing a "constant comparative method" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 73), I generated and modified definitions of Asian American women and girls' resistance as zines were reviewed.

After completing data analysis, I wrote the findings in conventional academic form and also created a zine of the research (See Figures

1 and 2). The zine included a narrative of my personal history with the form, scribbles on the major findings, and hodge-podge clippings from the zines I selected for the study. Mindful of my use of the zinesters' work for academic research, and in the spirit of a zine ethos of reciprocity, I sent my research zine and a decade-old copy of *Freeze Dried Noodle*, my own college-era zine, to the Barnard Library. The sharing of the research zine (at the library and an education research conference) has had unexpected, happy reverberations—two Asian American scholars conducting research on model minority myths and Asian American grrrl zines have reached out to me and librarian Jenna Freedman related to me the Zine Club at Barnard College has read and enjoyed my small contributions.



Fig. 1 The cover of the author's research zine. Used with permission of author.



Fig. 2 A page from the author's research zine that describes her history as a zine maker. Used with permission of author.

Findings

The Space for Appearance

One of the major concerns within the 31 zines studied is the struggle to find spaces in which grrrl zinesters can appear to others as their “true selves.” Hannah Arendt (1958) wrote of the “spaces for appearance,” which are, generally speaking, the spaces for action and speech in which human beings can be at their freest. In the case of the zines studied, zines operated more as spaces for speech rather than political action in the strictest sense of the word. However, some of the zines’ authors explicitly mention activism inspired by their zines and relationships to other zinesters. Many of the APIA women and girls in this sample have the urge to appear to others as *they are* and as they *see themselves*—as, say, queer, adopted, deaf, asexual, transgender, or punk—but find it difficult to do so within a society in which whiteness, heterosexuality, femininity, and able-bodiedness are privileged. In fact, expressions of identity in the sampled zines point towards the heterogeneity of Asian American identity as well as the intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991) of race, gender, and sexuality within this demographic, a characterization model minority myths obscure and one that is scarcely addressed in educational scholarship (Ng et al., 2007). The zines reveal narratives and images of how their authors resist the expectations and norms imposed on them. What follows are some of the ways zines were spaces in which their authors strived to appear with fullness and complexity.

Queer identity and troubling gender norms.

Almost all of the sampled zines deal with issues of sexuality and gender, as many of these zinesters identify as LGBTQ. This finding is not surprising, given the long tradition of riot-grrrl zines as affiliated with queer culture. The zinesters “come out” to the reader early into the pages of their zines, using “I am” statements in order to directly and forthrightly claim their identity as “queer and Asian” or “queer and mixed-race,” for example. Many of the authors discuss having crushes on girls, liking women but lacking sexual experience with them, or having a shifting sense of their sexuality such that they were attracted

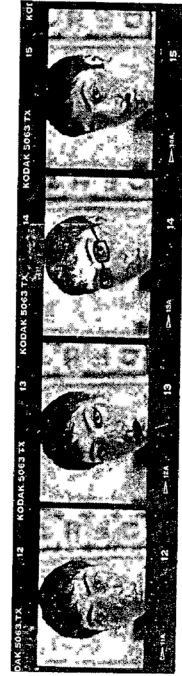
to both women and men, or were simply asexual. On this latter point, mixed-race queer zinester Lauren Jade Martin (2002) explains her asexuality at length:

I believe that sexuality is fluid, and that I can go through stages and phases with varying levels of attraction to people of assorted genders, but I can also go through stages and phases when *I am attracted to no one*. I don’t even remember the last time I had a crush on someone. (p. 22)

Across the zines, there is an assertion of sexuality that is not caught up in strict definitions or categories. Many of the APIA zinesters studied navigate and assert multi-faceted identities as both women of color and as queer.

Notably, a couple of the zinesters write about the difficulty of coming out to their Asian immigrant families (Anna, 2005a, 2005b; Lee, 2003). Stories were told in which zinesters would pose a hypothetical, “What if I was gay?” to their parents, to which they would receive some version of the reply, “But that would never happen!” Many of these writers assumed because of certain cultural factors—parents’ conservative politics or religion, for example—they would never be able to come out as gay to their families. In contrast to the silence within their Asian families around queerness, zinesters used the space of the zines to declare their sexuality and openly explore their desires.

Some of the queer-identified zinesters used the aesthetics and designs of their zines to resist gender norms and present a more complex vision of their sexuality and gender. One revealing technique used by a few of the zinesters is self-portraits (see Figure 3). Photographs are integrated within the text, depicting the zine authors bending gender norms through costume, dress, and makeup. For example, in Martin’s (2003) *Quantify*, she uses a series of Cindy Sherman-esque black and white photographs in which she appears as plain faced, hyper-feminine, and conventionally masculine. Photography is employed in these zines as a means of self-revelation but also to play with gender and undermine assumptions about how someone who is biologically female should act and look.



Through Strangers' Eyes

My style, my presentation, is wholly inconsistent, changing day to day, even hour to hour, and the reaction I get from people alternately ranges from smiles and whistles to glares and nasty comments. The "safe" Lauren: looks female, Asian or white, light-skinned, is small, quiet, non-threatening, speaks English. The "dangerous" Lauren: is ambiguously gendered, a person of color (race unknown), doesn't smile, looks like a big ol' dyke, looks like a flaming fag, talks loud when she gets excited. Which Lauren has more privilege, which gets harassed more, which worries more about getting her ass licked, which gets talked less seriously, which gets interviewed for jobs, which gets the job? Impossible to answer, because strangers will simultaneously read me in both (or other) ways, some picking up on cues or codes (how is my hair styled, what am I wearing, what neighborhood am I in, who am I with?), others making assumptions based on stereotypes, all of them making inferences about my gender, race, class and sexuality.

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The answer to "What are you?" (in terms of gender, race, class, sexuality and a host of other queries) is not so simple, so easy. Nine years ago, six years ago, three years ago, the answers sometimes terrified me, sometimes confused me, sometimes kept me up at night scribbling in my journal. But, as I've stated in other places, I am no longer in identity-crisis mode. (And just because the crisis is over, that does not necessarily mean that the process of naming is complete). I have reconciled the fact that my identity does not have to be consistent, and that it will probably never match up with people's preconceived notions as long as they are operating under a binary belief system. That is, it all started with race and my knowledge from an early age that the black/white dichotomy left no room for me, that my existence as a mixed-race Asian/Jewish person queers and totally fucks with that dichotomy. Throw in some queer and gender theory (i.e. break down those old-fashioned illusions of homosexuality versus heterosexuality, of male versus female) and everything just becomes so postmodern you can barely even handle it.

This Lauren is integrated, but she still likes to collect nicknames and alter-egos for herself. She has always had secret lives and competing personas—not just imaginary friends but imaginary identities. I grew up with the mythologies of Super Heroes and after-school cartoons, content with the knowledge that with the utterance of a few magic words, or the donning of a cape, or the alignment of the moon and stars, the body could be magically transformed, a new person could emerge, with super powers, even. These were not brand-new mythologies, of course, but rather

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Fig. 3 Lauren Jade Martin's (2003) self-portraits in the zine *Quantify*, no. 5. Zine by Lauren Jade Martin. Used with permission of author.

Mixed-identity and acting against racial binaries.

A number of the zine authors identify as mixed-race and write about their experiences both appearing and not-appearing to others. These mixed-race writers explain how people can often not tell "what" they are racially, so they must navigate how they will reveal themselves to others via speech or providing other cues. These mixed-identities are also discussed in terms of family dynamics. In Anna's *Behind Wire Fences* (2005a, 2005b), there is a startling narrative about being a Korean adoptee with a white mother and a Japanese American father. This zine addresses a population—Asian adoptees—and how their Asian phenotypes shore up against the very different races and identities of their parents and the mostly white communities in which they are raised.

In zines by mixed-race authors, the concept of "passing," or being able to conceal parts of one's identity from others, is also prevalent. In *Quantify*, Martin (2002) uses poetic language and a sparsely-designed page to demonstrate how people often mistake her race, ethnicity, and gender. She gives the following account of passing:

If I keep my mouth shut, I can pass. It always happens when I am shopping. They say, "Can I help you sir?" Or they tell me in Chinese the price of three bananas. If I keep my mouth shut, I can pass. If I try to answer back, my trickster façade fades away and they are forced to do a double-take, to peer closer at this incongruous person with the too-high voice & the Staten Island accent. "Oh I'm sorry, ma'am," they'll reply, or they'll cluck their tongues and rephrase what they were saying in English. (p. 15)

This passage speaks to the complex, internal negotiations mixed-race, queer Asian Americans experience in interpersonal encounters. They can choose to be silent and allow the assumptions to remain unchecked, or choose to reveal themselves and observe the uncomfortable effects of that revelation. Some of the zines by APIA women and girls of mixed-race, then, reveal identities that defy easy interpretation and disrupt uni-dimensional understandings of gender and race.

Invisibilities and hyper-visibility.

Among the selected zines, there are multiple examples of zinesters' feelings of hyper-visibility and, conversely, seeing themselves as invisible. On this latter point, Anna (2005a) writes,

I've spent a large portion of my life, feeling invisible. It's not just white folks or non-Asian folks of color. Invisibility comes from a lot of different places and people in my life My invisibility comes from my parents and my friends. It comes from places inside me that I'm trying to work on. (n.p.)

On the other hand, moments of hyper-visibility are apparent across the zines: zinesters described how people approach them in public spaces and blatantly ask about their racial or ethnic backgrounds. These themes also surfaced when some of the zine writers explained how they often were unable to "be themselves" fully among non-Asian friends or times where they subsumed their Asian identity in order to fit in with their white counterparts.

There are a few narratives about being mistaken for another Asian person, the idea being that "all Asian people look the same." An apt example of this mistaken-identity phenomenon appears in trans-identified Felix Endara's zine, *I Lie Like a Rug* (1997b). On one particular page in Endara's zine, there are several blurred images of a person whose gender is ambiguous. Against these images is text in which examples of being mistaken for someone else repeat and overlap (see Figure 4). Endara's artwork highlights how the medium of zine, in which textual messiness and ambiguity is encouraged, can be a potent tool for interrogating racial invisibility.

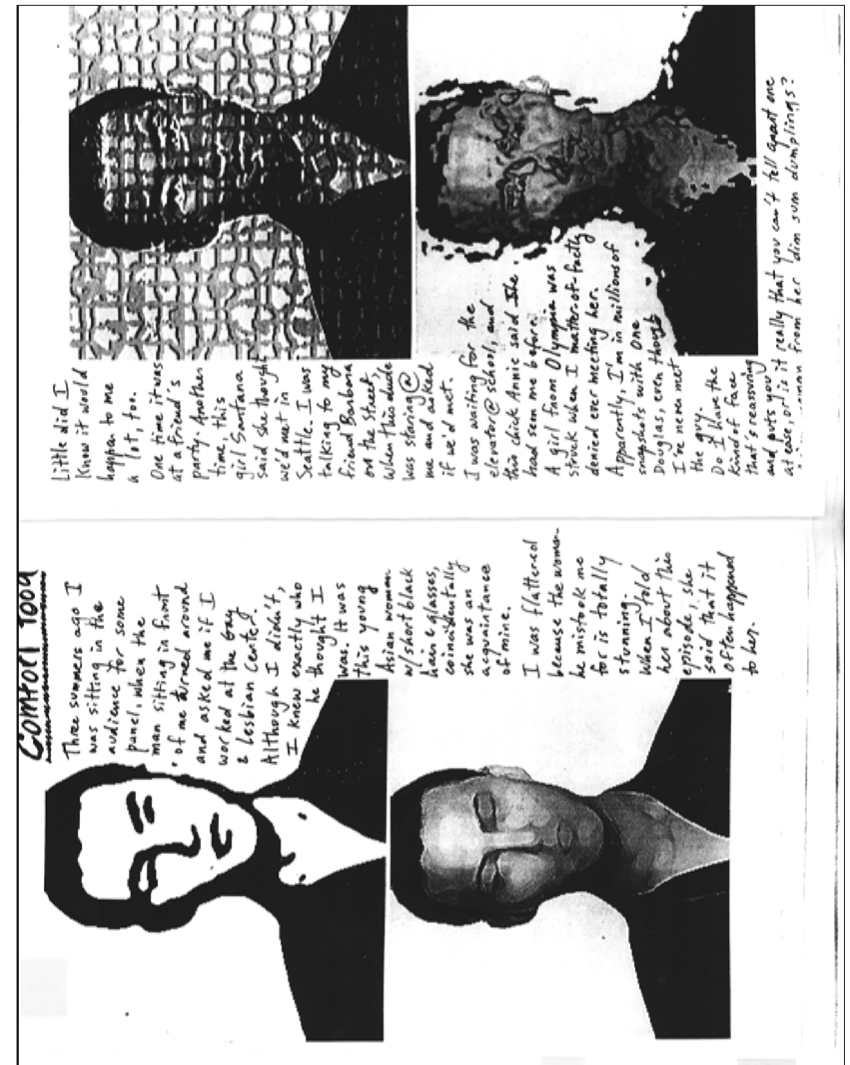


Fig. 4 From Felix Endara (1997b)'s zine, *I lie like a rug*. Used with permission of author.

Our multiple languages, our families.

Additionally, in the study sample, there are revelations about language use within families and in other spaces. Within some of the zines, writers express regret about not having learned the language of their parents or describe awkward encounters with both non-Asians and Asians who expect that APIA persons should speak their “native” tongue. In one of the only examples addressing issues of ability, zinester Lynn Hou (1999) writes about her deafness and her parents’ decision to raise her to read lips, speak orally, and not use sign language. Hou’s deafness interplays with both race and language (for example, her brother was taught Chinese; Hou learned only English). Hou writes, “Part of my need and desire to unleash myself towards the world comes from being someone who has never known what [it] is like to live with natural hearing” (n.p.). Zines, then, became a space in which Hou could “unleash” herself, taking up not only deafness but also responding to racism and homophobia. Zines like Hou’s take Piepmier’s (2009) discussion of intersectionality in zines to new heights.

Speaking Against

A second overarching finding is how the zine authors speak against injustice. As the zine tradition is highly personal, most of these injustices are grounded in the everyday experiences of APIA women and girls. For the most part, the zines describe a narrative of these zinesters’ direct experiences of racism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism. However, the zines also are explicitly pedagogical, as many of the writers acknowledge they are seizing the opportunity to educate their readership about critical race theory and Asian American history, and interrogate unquestioned norms and stereotypes about Asian Americans. The message is carried out in aesthetically creative and highly imaginative forms—collage, repetition of images, playing with fonts and layouts, and re-purposing magazine images and song lyrics to subversive effect.

Troubling white privilege.

White privilege is a highly salient theme throughout selected zines, especially as it exists within activist, punk, or LGBTQ communities. There are a number of narratives about countering white privilege during activist events, at work, or at punk shows. These conversations about privilege are a source of great frustration for the zinesters. There are many examples of “failed conversations” about privilege, in which a white friend, co-worker, or colleague is not receptive to listening or even acknowledging their privilege and power. Conversations within the white queer community, according to the zinesters, tend to dead-end, as many saw themselves as “oppressed” as LGBTQ and therefore did not feel that they needed to examine their privilege as white persons.

There is an entire zine (see Figure 5) dedicated to the work of addressing white privilege within the punk community. With humor and defiant plays on language, *Chop Suey Spex* (Endara, 1997a) tells how its authors⁴ entered Excene Cerbenka’s (a prominent feminist punk rocker) novelty store in Los Angeles. In this store, the authors spy a pair of “chop suey spex,” or glasses in which slanted eyes are papered into the lenses. The zine is a multi-narrative effort to depict the confrontation the two authors have with Cerbenka about the racist glasses. Initially, as “typical Asian women” (n.p.), they were “too timid to approach” (n.p.), Cerbenka, but eventually decide to tell her the glasses are racist. The zinesters script out the encounter, which ends with a hostile dismissal (Cerbenka tells them, “Whatever. I don’t care. You can steal them” [n.p.]). In an ironic play on the stereotype of the “quiet Asian woman,” the authors re-stage the encounter in fragmentary segments, collages, and a juxtaposition of photographs of the authors wearing the glasses against Cerbenka’s feminist and social justice-oriented song lyrics. The zinesters expose some of the tensions between Asian American femininity and direct, vocalized

⁴ *Chop Suey Spex* is listed in the Columbia University Library catalog as authored singularly by Endara (1997a). However, the zine includes first-person anecdotes by “Karla” and “Kelly,” who lend their perspectives to the incident at Excene Cerbenka’s store.

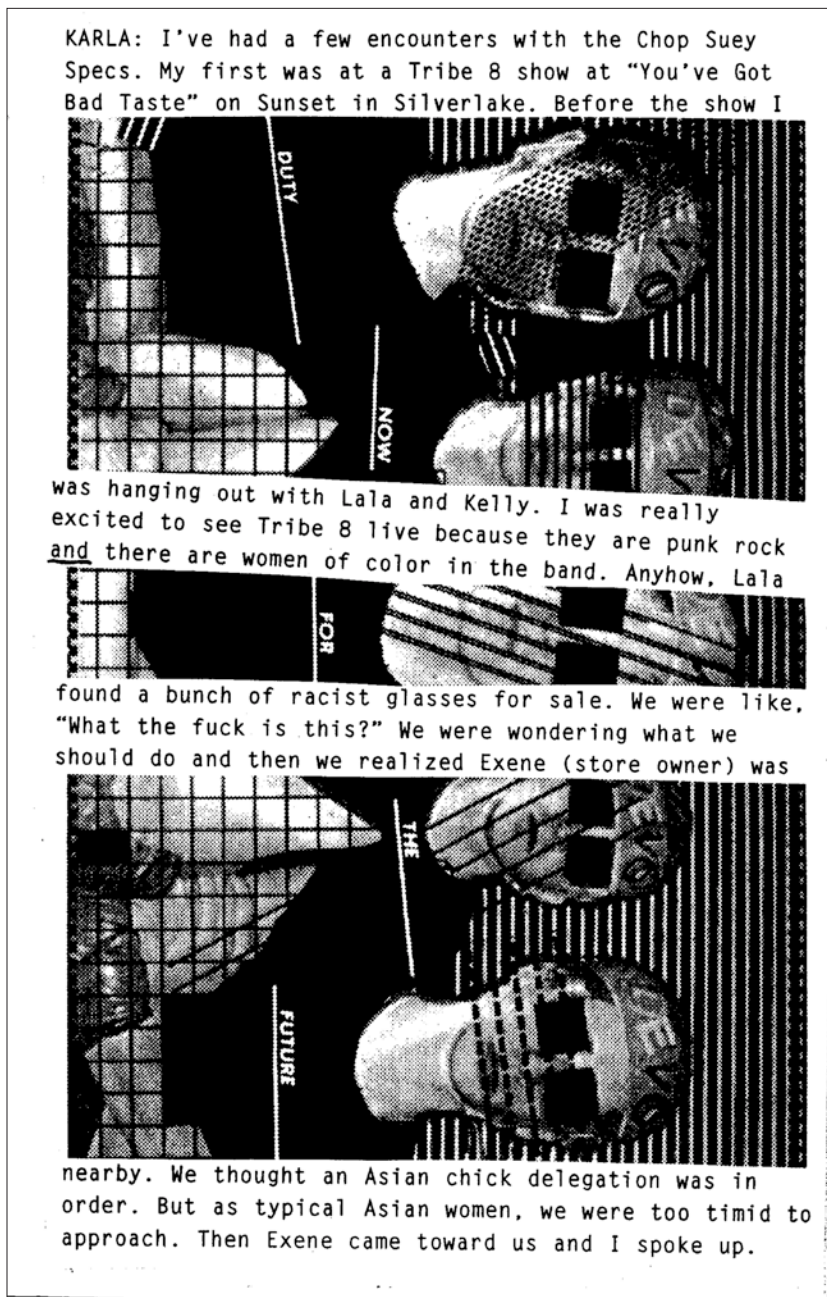


Fig. 5 Page from Felix Endara's (1997a) *Chop Suey Spex*. Used with permission of author.

responses to racism. The zine format permits its writers the space to explore such tensions and opens up other possibilities of what constitutes confrontation and anti-racist work, especially for Asian American women. The zine also exposes some of the hypocrisy that exists within the white, feminist punk community; that is, while writing lyrics and professing social justice and solidarity with people of color, some white feminist punks are unable to take responsibility or even engage in dialogue about their own privilege.

Combating racism and stereotypes about Asian Americans.

Importantly, these zines serve as spaces in which APIA women and girls can enter the racial dialogue. Some of the zinesters express frustration that the racial conversation in the United States is heavily focused on black-white relations. As Martin (2003) writes, "It all started with race and my knowledge from an early age that the black/white dichotomy left no room for me, that my existence as a mixed-race Asian/Jewish person queers and totally fucks with that dichotomy" (p. 5). A notable analysis of how Asian Americans fit into the black-white racial dichotomies appears in Mimi Nguyen's (1999) introduction to her compilation zine *Evolution of a Race Riot*. She asserts APIA persons have typically (and falsely) been considered more "white" than "colored." Nguyen argues punk communities have been more "accepting of Asian and biracial kids because of white perceptions of racial 'safety' or whatever, not because we actually are less 'dangerous' in reality" (p. 6). Her analysis underlines how white supremacy positions select racial groups as "better" than others; moreover, it challenges ways of theorizing about race relations in the United States premised on a white-black binary.

In the zines studied, there are several accounts of APIA women being called "chinks." The women and girls write of the shock and pain they experienced at hearing this racial slur directed towards them. As Yumi Lee (2000) writes, "I tell myself it doesn't matter and try to laugh it off. But words like chink, nigger, wetback hurt. And I'll always feel some initial shock/horror/rage/indignation upon hear-

ing racial slurs directed at me, my family, my friends" (n.p.). In these stories, the zinesters note how the word "chink" often did not apply to the zinesters' actual racial identity but the word became a blanket epithet directed towards all Asian persons, reinforcing their feelings of sameness and invisibility.

Stereotypes about Asian Americans are troubled within the zines, often through unexpectedly humorous and rhetorically sophisticated approaches. In *Consider Yourself Kissed*, Yumi Lee (2000) writes about being an "overachiever." She gets straight As, plays in an orchestra, and is accepted for early admission at Harvard University. While she acknowledges that she conforms to many of the stereotypes about Asian Americans as "nerds," Lee puts a new spin on her achieverhood. She explains, "My achieving was a way of showing them that I could beat any of their white asses when it came to math or violin (so there!)...it showed that I was definitely at least equal to any of them" (n.p.). In another zine, Lynn Hou (1999) also rejects a model minority status, writing that it is based on a long "string of established stereotypes based on shallow and seemingly positive oversimplified impressions" (n.p.). These responses demonstrate the intellectual rigor, humor, and rebelliousness in response to these pervasive stereotypes about Asian Americans. These stories, as Piepmeier (2009) explains, destabilize the "power of certain stereotypes to shape what's available to see and to feel, and to shape the notion of 'normal' and 'natural'" (p. 141). In observing how such stereotypes function, these zinesters disarm their power and pervasiveness.

Responding to the exotification and feminization of Asian women.

Many of these female zine authors write passionately about being sexualized as Asian women. Discussions of the ways APIA women are hyper-sexualized vary. In the case of *Lipstick My Espionage*, Kat Asharya (n.d.) takes a more personal approach, explaining how she is often worried when she dates a white man if he has dated Asian women previously or has an Asian fetish. Am I really beautiful,

wonders Asharya, or it is just "by proxy of my race?" (n.p.). *Bamboo Girl* (Sandata, 1995) takes a more aggressively funny, pedagogical approach, listing "Asian Fucking Stereotypes" (p. 29) such as "The Submissive Step-All-Over-Me-Thank-You Asian" (p. 29) and "The Don't Use My Chopsticks Or I Kill You Gangsta Chick" (p. 29).

Living with and against the weight of history.

Lastly, across many of the zines, there is a shared sense of an Asian American history, a desire to reference and grapple with certain historical moments. Sometimes, this grappling surfaces in the forms of manifestoes or declarations. *Chop Suey Spex* (1997a), for example, quotes at length from Jessica Hagedorn's (1993) seminal anthology of Asian American literature:

The slit-eyed, bucktooth Jap thrusting his bayonet, thirsty for blood. The inscrutable, wily Chinese Detective with his taped eyelids and wispy mustache. The childlike, indolent Filipino houseboy. Effeminate. Untrustworthy. Yellow Peril. Fortune Cookie Psychic. Savage. Dogeater. Invisible. Mute. Faceless peasants breeding too many children. Gooks. Passive Japanese-Americans obediently marching off to "relocation camps" during the Second World War. (p. xxi)

The inclusion of these texts speaks to how Asian American zines are part of a larger movement to map out an Asian American history. Additionally, in a couple of the sampled zines, the Japanese American incarceration during World War II arose as a significant part of the zine's narrative. In *Behind Wire Fences*, zinester Anna (2005a, 2005b)—the Korean-adoptee with a mixed-race family—writes about her Japanese American grandmother's experiences in the camps. Martin (2002, 2003), too, shares a fictionalized account of a young woman attempting to discover her family's history in the camps. Uncovering and sharing moments of history, especially through one's own family's experiences, is one way these zinesters conceive of and develop a sense of themselves as Asian American.

Conclusion: Zines as Pedagogy

What, then, do zines by APIA women and girls teach? In the broader sense, zines push us to re-conceive what counts as pedagogy, in what formats, modes, and spaces teaching and learning can occur. For one, as I found in this study, zines are out-of-classroom spaces that permit their writers to appear with fullness and complexity and speak against normalizing discourses and myths. Through their pasted-together, informal, and penetrating visuals and text, zines rouse the political engagements of grrrls of color and, through a culture of material exchange, build alliances and coalitions. As a form of visual culture, zines foster “the subversive activism of girlie culture and enable young women to reclaim and gain control over their femininity and feminist politics” (Buffington & Lai, 2011, p. 6). And, finally, zines invite emotional and empathic responses from their readers; they intend to provoke ethical and political obligations from audiences who may or may not share a social location with the zine-maker. Maxine Greene (1995) explains in our encounters with artistic works, we “may experience all sorts of sensuous openings” (p. 137) and “unexpectedly perceive patterns and structures...[and] discover all sorts of new perspectives as the curtains of inattentiveness fall apart” (p. 137). Zines, then, are a multi-directional flow of pedagogy: Grrrl makers engage in learning in the very process of constructing and writing their zines; zinesters teach other zinesters within their own socio-cultural milieu; and zines, as an aesthetic and political encounter, teach their various and sundry readers.

What prominently surfaced during my analysis of these zines was how the zines themselves acted as spaces for learning about the self. As mentioned in the findings, zines facilitated spaces APIA women and girls could respond to the various forms of prejudice and discrimination they experienced in their lives. The authors of the *The Riot Grrrl Manifesto* (Hanna, Wilcox, & Vail, 1991) wrote of “doing/reading/seeing/hearing cool things” (n.p.) that help young women “gain the strength and sense of community that [they] need in order to figure out how bullshit like racism, able-bodiedism, ageism, speciesism, clas-

sism, thinism, sexism, anti-Semitism and heterosexism figures in our own lives” (n.p.). For the APIA grrrl zinesters studied, the zine format supported expressions of aggression and verve, one that counters the aforementioned tropes of Asian Americans as “foreigners” or “over-achievers.” These zinesters, to use a phrase from Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), were “[wakening] the Shadow Beast inside” (p. 20). Though self-revelation, an assertion of their sexuality, and their reach towards other ways of knowing and being, these writers galvanize their own intelligence and power. For Asian American grrrls, zines play a role in reconfiguring APIA women and girls’ position within enfolded and static racial hierarchies, in histories of immigration and exclusion, in their familial relationships, and, ultimately, in their relationship to themselves.

In this study and as noted above, zinesters served as informal teachers of each other. Perhaps one of the most remarkable findings that emerged from the small sampling of zines studied was their intertextuality. Zinesters’ practice of exchanging zines was not merely for the pleasure and benefit of making and receiving zines. It was also a way communities among zine writers were established and sustained. It was surprising how many of the zine writers seemed to know each other and reference each other’s work. At the end of many of the zines, there are lists and reviews of other zines and many of the zines selected for the study’s sample were discussed among grrrl zinesters. Sometimes, writers would talk about meeting or doing activist/art projects with other Asian American zinesters. As Anita Harris (2003) writes, grrrl zines are a “space where young women can communicate and organize together outside surveillance, silencing and appropriation” (p. 46). In the case of zines sampled for this study, zines built alliances and friendships, stirred dialogues intra- and inter-racially, and became spaces in which resistance was lived and sustained.

It is precisely because of these powerful self-disclosures and disruptions that zines are pedagogical to their readerships. They urge us to reconsider times in our own lives where we felt the effects of racism, sexism, or ableism or where we participated in or stood silent during

these kinds of encounters. In educational institutions where teachings and conversations about white privilege and white supremacy seem fraught with silences, tensions, colorblind rhetoric, and political correctness, these zines offer a critical counterpoint. Because they operate outside of conventional academic spaces and institutions—and are part of a long tradition of DIY, anti-hegemonic, and subversive subcultures—they are fruitfully contentious spaces in which privilege is interrogated and dismantled. That is to say, there is no apology, no obfuscation, or euphemistic language in which privilege may hide and be eluded. While it is not certain zines could be introduced into formal classroom spaces without losing their political edge and verve, there are possibilities here of looking towards zines as pedagogical tools to teach about privilege, racism, homophobia, and ableism. By placing us so intimately within the emotionality, visual and aesthetic constructions, and life histories of the zinesters, zines confront their readers towards what is uncomfortable and difficult. Reading a zine is a pedagogical confrontation, one in which we may find both resonance and disjuncture.

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Dumarka Soomaaliyeed Voices Unveiled: Undoing the *hijab* narrative through a participatory photography exhibition

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ABSTRACT

The photographs and narratives collaboratively created by the women of *Dumarka Soomaaliyeed² Voices Unveiled* (DSVU) offer multiple *hijab* narratives. This article explores how these narratives initiate a process of undoing certainties such as the stereotypes and singular representations of Muslim women and thus serve to agitate public space. Drawing on Rogoff (2000), this article describes DSVU, presents photographs and stories from the exhibition in an effort to undo the singular *hijab* narrative, and theorizes this work and project as an agitation of public space.

Introduction



Here in Columbus, we are at a crossroads. People still don't know what to make of us. They've gotten used to the fact that Somalis live here, but there is still a misunderstanding that inhibits any kind of progress as far as getting to know who Somalis are and what we're all about. (Qorsho)

Dumarka Soomaaliyeed Voices Unveiled (DSVU) is an exhibit of photographs and written narratives created through participatory photography, using a participatory action

Fig. 1 Muna (2013). Used with permission of the participants.

research (PAR) method, with five young Somali women in Columbus, Ohio (DSVU, 2013). Through the presentation of the photographs and narratives created collaboratively by the women of DSVU, this article offers multiple *hijab* narratives to initiate a process of undoing certainties such as the stereotypes and singular representations of Muslim women. *Hijab* is the Muslim custom of modesty commonly practiced by wearing a headscarf. The ways Qorsho, Nasra, Hoda, Muna, and S. talk about and visually represent themselves regarding *hijab* offer a rich site to explore the relationship between place, representation, identity, and belonging. Community art education initiatives addressing identity and representation, such as DSVU, can thus serve to agitate public space by undoing certainties through the presentation of multiple stories (Rogoff, 2000) and emphasize the fluid nature of culture and identity. What follows is a description of the DSVU project, a presentation of photographs (Figures 1-12) and stories from the exhibition in an effort to undo the singular *hijab* narrative, and a theorization of this work and project as agitating public space.

Somalis in Columbus

Columbus has the second largest Somali population in the United States. It is a diverse community, yet for the general American population the Somali community is seen as homogenous, typified by language (Somali), dress ("traditional"), and religion (Sunni Muslim). Women wearing the veil are a common and visible sign of these generalizations and among Americans are often perceived as oppressed. However, this homogenized cultural framework obviates the various migration histories; economic, educational, and religious experiences; and ethnic affiliations informing the decision to wear (or not) *hijab*. The prevalence of these singular representations of Somali culture affirm Roble and Rutledge's (2008) assertion that the Somali community in Columbus is still preparing to participate³ and negotiate its place in central Ohio.

³ Participation is a concept describing Somali resettlement experience. Participation occurs when Somalis are able to take part in aspects of American culture

A Participatory Photography Project

Participatory action research (PAR) is a methodology which seeks to work with participants to define and carry out research that is not only about understanding the world but working to change it (Hunter et al., 2013; Stringer, 2007). *DSVU* began with one Somali woman, Qorsho, and the goal of challenging stereotypes about Somali women.

PAR forefronts relationships and it was through personal recommendations that Qorsho, a young woman with whom I had previously worked at a local Somali social service agency, introduced me to a friend (Nasra) and family (Hoda), and suggested student organizations to contact at The Ohio State University. Through these conversations, a form of snowball sampling (Stringer, 2007), five women between the ages of 18 and 31 agreed to participate in the project. Each woman was connected to The Ohio State University either as a current undergraduate (Muna, English and International Studies) or graduate student (Nasra, Masters of Social Work, and S., doctoral candidate in Education Teaching and Learning), recent alumna (Qorsho, International Studies), or employed in the medical center research lab (Hoda).

As a PAR project with the goal of generating a “community response to a community issue” (Kreig & Roberts, 2007), collaboration with participants was vital. All participants worked together to develop the project, each offering their input regarding the process, their level of participation, and content. We chose to use participatory photography, a process that engages community members in photography and storytelling about issues relevant to their daily lives. Derived from Wang’s (1999) photovoice method, participatory photography aims to promote critical dialogue and knowledge, and enacts social change. We decided that I would take the photographs, although each woman was offered the opportunity to do so herself. Together, we decided on the focus of our investigation and subsequently explored questions of

which suit their definition of self but not those that violate their dedication to family or religion (Roble & Rutledge, 2008, p. 14). Participation assumes visibility, agency, and some degree of power and freedom.

dress, traditions, family, religion, and the participants’ role in the community through photographs and individual interviews. We jointly edited the resulting transcripts into narrative accounts and chose the photographs that presented a myriad of perspectives of Somali women in Columbus, Ohio. Finally, we created an exhibit of photographs and written narratives in order to educate non-Somalis about Somali culture and challenge stereotypes about Somali women. The project continues as the exhibition travels to libraries in central Ohio and new initiatives begin⁴.

Positionality and the Single Story

Rogoff (2000) explores the disruption of singular narratives through positionality and the agitation of public space through the undoing of its certainties in order to repopulate previously unknown images. *DSVU* functions as an agitation of public space, proffering a series of stories that first claim singular narratives in order to retell them in detailed complexity to construct a language of lived experience, how it is received, perceived, and often misunderstood. Collaborative projects such as *DSVU* that put first the concerns of the participants present “possibilities of greater plurality of coexistent fragmented voices and identities” (p. 151) within their respective geographic region – in this case the Somali diasporic community in Columbus. However, there is a danger to overlook the very real possibility that, despite efforts to reclaim complex identities and encourage collaboration, these images and stories may nonetheless “masquerade as the sole legitimate representation” (p. 151) of Somali women. For example, the women whose stories are presented here have similar migration histories, socioeconomic statuses, education levels, clan affiliations, and religious identification as a result of being recruited through a single source. Asserting this project as inherently representative of the “plurality of coexistent fragmented voices” would be a deception.

Stressing the ongoing nature of the project, and indeed the impossibility of its closure, is vital to working towards its goals to challenge,

⁴ All project initiatives are housed on the project website: dumarkasoomaaliyeedvoicesunveile.weebly.com

agitate, and undo. The project continues to collect images and stories, with explicit efforts to include those from other geographical and cultural places by facilitating projects with women in other locations in Columbus and in other cities across the Somali diaspora. Presenting stories from women in many locations helps emphasize the connection between place, identity, and positionality; works to dispel stereotypes; produces a space where there is multiplicity in representation; and resists a politics of closure, finality, and simplification. The *hijab* narrative presents one such site of undoing and agitation, where the female body is viewed as the site of geographical ambivalence (Rogoff, 2000), inhabiting many spaces rather than a single story.

Hijab Narratives: Undoing the Single Story

Somali women are subject to misrepresentation and stereotypes concerning Islam and Somali culture. In the dominant cultural narrative in the United States, veiled Muslim women have been depicted as oppressed and without agency or voice (Lombardo, 2013). As a result, Berns-McGown (1999) found many Somali women were denied jobs, stared at, or reacted to in fear or dislike simply for covering. Though *hijab* is often equated with a headscarf, it is a practice of modesty subject to cultural, temporal, and geographic variation. For example, what many Americans consider “traditional” Somali dress – long dark dress and a flowing headscarf – is actually a recent fashion⁵. The *hijab* narrative becomes one about a religion of the “Other” and a culture from which women need to be liberated (Abdurraqib, 2006). However, for Somali women there is much to say about wearing *hijab*, and the *hijab* itself has an extensive language. As Roble and Rutledge (2008) write, simply by looking at a woman’s *hijab* you can tell

who is married, who is single, who is more religious, who is less, who is rich, who is poor, who is celebrating a special occasion, and who is simply getting through her day. If mainstream Americans cannot understand a woman who wears a *hijab*, it is

5 For more about the recent history of the veil see Ahmed (2011). For more about traditional, religious, and western clothing worn by Somalis in the United States see Akou (2004).

because they have not learned to speak her language, and this will not change when the woman simply removes a piece of cloth from her face. (p. 99)

There is no single story when it comes to *hijab*; each woman comes to the practice differently and from a different positionality.

Undoing the Single Hijab Story

Veiling for the women of *DSVU* is not simply a matter of culture or religion. For many of the participants, there is a blurring between religion and culture. They are not opposed, but rather go, as one participant put it, “hand in hand” (personal communication, October 28, 2013). Qorsho elaborates this point:

I personally don't like mixing culture and religion, but I realize I'm a product of it because the Somali culture is heavily based in Islam. What I disagree with is when there is a blur between religion and culture and how Somalis have created a code that Islam and Somali are synonymous. And they're not, they're really not. Culture and religion are two different things. They blend well together sometimes, but sometimes they disagree completely. And when they do, I would go towards the route of Islam rather than our culture because I know that the first thing I am is Muslim, and then I am Somali. (*DSVU*, 2013)

Hijab is an expression of overlapping identities of Somali, Muslim, and U.S. American. It is personal, political, religious, and cultural (Akou, 2004). It is a matter of choosing one’s identity and subsequent representation, and as Berns-McGown (1999) describes, “it is simultaneously a departure from and a reinforcement of tradition, so the decision of whether to don the *hijab* is not straightforward” (p. 78). In these stories, women who wear a *hijab* according to Abdurraqib (2006) can never construct a comfortable and singular narrative within U.S. culture, and those that do not cover challenge the constructs within Somali American culture so that as a result all “must create a new genre” (p. 56). Between the deference of a fixed identity and the conscious choosing of which elements of U.S., Muslim, and Somali cultures to participate in and which to do differently, the women’s

stories interrupt and undo the single *hijab* narrative.

The photographs included below (Figures 2-12) do not serve as illustrations of the text. When installed, the exhibition deliberately does not align a particular image with a particular story; instead, the images and stories are intermixed, offering different forms of narrative exploring the same topic. Instead of offering individual stories of *hijab*, the intentional juxtaposition of multiple stories and images of *hijab*; its role in the Somali community; and what it means in the lives of Hoda, Muna, Nasra, Qorsho, and S. serves to interrupt single stories of *hijab*, undo certainties regarding Somali women, and ultimately agitate public spaces. The following section closely approximates the exhibition as it would be viewed in person, unadorned with captions (DSVU, 2013).

Dumarka Soomaaliyeed Voices Unveiled

There was a time when I had to go downtown to one of the government buildings to do something with my taxes.



Fig. 2 Muna (2013).
Used with permission of
the participants

When I went through security, they asked me to take off the zippered sweatshirt I was wearing. It was part of my uniform for work. It would not have been appropriate to take off my sweatshirt in such a public setting, so I tried to explain the situation and said I could not do this in the lobby. The security guard said I was not dressed like a Muslim, simply because I was not wearing *jilbab*

– a big scarf – so obviously I was not Muslim. Because of this she would not give me “special

treatment” and allow me to use a private room. I wear my *hijab* every day, but because I was wearing my work uniform, khakis, and a sweatshirt, I was told I was not Muslim by someone who



Fig. 3 Muna (2013). Used with
permission of the participants

had a very narrow concept of my religion. You cannot generalize the entire community, especially based on appearance. I am not more or less Muslim because of my dress. (Nasra)

I was age 11 when I began to wear *hijab*. I started wearing it because I wanted to imitate my mom. I saw her wearing it, and I decided to wear it for a while. (Hoda)

I don't dress the part. I feel that I will wear *hijab* when I'm ready, when it comes

from the heart and not just because I'm supposed to do it. There was a point in my life where I thought I was ready and wore it for a year straight. I still wore jeans and stuff, but I tried to cover my hair. One of my really



Fig. 4 Hoda (2013). Used with
permission of the participants

good friends, she started wearing it. I respected her a lot for putting it on.

She uplifted me a little, and I thought, “It’s time to grow up.” So I put it on. I saw that friend switching back to her old ways and for me to see that she was even becoming worse. I thought maybe I just did it in the heat of the moment. I’ve realized since then that I wasn’t ready and just jumped into it. In the Islamic religion, we call that having



Fig. 4 Muna (2013). Used with permission of participants.

low *iman*, which is faith. That’s just what I went through at that period of time, and I took it off and said, “You know I’m just going to restart. I’m still not ready to wear it. Hopefully one day soon.” (Muna)

I stopped wearing *hijab* for a year, around 9/11. My mom didn’t feel safe with us wearing it. She had an incident at work, and she didn’t want us to be discriminated against.

She never really told me the full story, but from what I gathered, she was intimidated by someone at the grocery store bakery where she worked. I don’t know if the person was wielding a knife, but they blamed her for what happened. That really scared her. She ended up quitting, and it spurred her to make us look less Muslim. Then my grandmother came to stay with us for a while, and her coming really changed my opinion on Islam. I learned more about it. I always had questions about it – why do I have to do this, or do that? I didn’t always feel I got the best answers from my mom, so I asked my grandmother. She gave me answers that I was really happy with. I started praying and wearing *hijab*. Not just *hijab* but also the skirt. Since then, I haven’t stopped wearing it. (Hoda)



Fig. 6 Hoda (2013). Used with permission of the participants

One of the things that almost set us back is the way we dress because people assume that we don’t speak English and that

we don’t know how to interact with males. A lot of negative assumptions are made when we’re looked at and to me it’s completely the opposite. To us, our dress means so much more. It’s not about covering us up and hiding our jewels. It’s more about our devotion to God. Initially, I perceive Somali women who do not cover negatively because it seems like they are Westernizing our values and our customs. It’s weird because I



Fig. 7 Nasra (2013). Used with permission of the participants

consider myself a Western individual because I was raised here, but in some

ways it seems that they are changing the perception of Somali women as if they were oppressed and now they're liberated because they don't wear the same clothes. Now I realize it's more of a personal choice – it's really up to the individual how they want to dress, and how they want to express themselves. And if those women choose to not wear the *hijab* it's really between them and God. I realize I shouldn't be so judgmental. It's easy to be judgmental; I know that. I still don't agree to it – I believe that what makes us Somali is our commitment to our faith and we go against the norm in many ways and it's a marker of strength because we're able to do so much in such a strong way; it's almost that we're showing American society that we're not going to change. We'll do some things - we'll learn English, we'll adhere by the laws of America, but we are going to choose to wear what we wear because it's important to us. (Qorsho)



Fig. 8 S. (2013). Used with permission of the participants

I started wearing *hijab* when I was twenty. By the time I started wearing *hijab*, I understood that it was for modesty and a commandment from God. Now many years later, I feel that *hijab* is like a second skin. It's part of who I am. (S.)



Fig. 9 Hoda (2013). Used with permission of the participants

I talk to women who don't cover and they definitely understand why I wear it. They agree with me that we have become a visual



Fig. 10 Qorsho (2013). Used with permission of the participants

society and in many unfortunate ways the image of women has been degraded, especially with popular media. For non-Muslim women, they find it refreshing that somebody would not ascribe to those beauty ideals. There is a lot of pressure for everybody to have the perfect body, to have the perfect face and features. A lot of my friends are not Muslim, and they might not be wearing headscarves but they understand the whole issue of modesty. It is not just a matter of dress, but also of character and how you

carry yourself. I also have friends who are Muslim and don't cover. We have conversations about *hijab*. For some Muslim



Fig. 11 Muna (2013). Used with permission of the participants

women they have lots of pressure. "Should I do it, should I not? Am I going to be pressured by the community to cover?" And I just tell them, "Your time will come. Don't rush it." I was somebody who didn't rush it. I wore the headscarf late, and for me it was doing my own research and coming to the decision on my own. So I tell them my story and remind them that there are other ways to display modesty. That's what I advise them to do. (S.)

Agitating Public Space

The stories and images of *DSVU* work to agitate the public space of central Ohio, which many veiled and unveiled Somali women inhabit. While the exhibit's explicit goals are to interrupt the misperceptions of the Somali community held by non-Somalis, there are also implicit goals to represent Somali culture and identity as fluid by exploring multiple perspectives across different segments of the community. Agitating public space entails challenging the single stereotypes through claiming and retelling stories of lived experiences. The *DSVU* exhibition does this



Fig. 12 S. (2013). Used with permission of the participants

by acknowledging the presence of a single story and re-presenting multiple stories and images of *hijab*.

The stories and the photographs of *hijab* offer a different representation of feminine identity in the diaspora – one that is shifting with time and place, relationship to others within the Somali community and with non-Somalis, and the positionality of each of the women portrayed. The presentation of multiple stories serves to challenge the certainties of identity in public space. Moreover, the *DSVU* exhibition initiates dialogue about the representation and conceptualization of what it means to be a Somali woman among Somalis and non-Somalis alike. For example, after viewing the exhibit, one young Somali woman approached me about initiating a *DSVU* project among her peers and as a result, nine women gathered to write about, photograph, and discuss a variety of issues surrounding the role of women in the Somali community and as U.S. American Somalis. For non-Somalis, the images can challenge certainties regarding belonging. One woman asked library staff upon viewing the photographs, "Where are all the American kids?" (personal communication, November 13, 2013). The images in particular challenged this viewer's preconceptions of who is American, and contributes to the public dialogue of what constitutes "American." Moreover, the variety of *hijab* stories in particular challenge the stereotypical *hijab* narrative prevalent in U.S. culture. The visibility of women who are differently gendered and differently embodied (and as a result have different access to power) can facilitate viewers in questioning the ways they inhabit, make, and remake their own culture; the exhibit subsequently agitates public space.

The title of the project - *Dumarka Soomaaliyeed Voices Unveiled* - offers another site of agitation. Since the project's intent was to reveal different perspectives and complexities in identity, and generally interrupt preconceptions about the Somali community through sharing stories, "voices unveiled" seemed an appropriate metaphor. However, "unveiling" has significant connotations for the women of the project. Like many other Muslim women, for several of the women of *DSVU* wearing a headscarf meant that they were representing the entire

Muslim community, as *de facto* ambassadors for their culture and their religion. While each woman was aware that she was in a position to represent the Somali community by participating in this project, “unveiling” their voices in some regards is taking off that responsibility and individualizing the representations of community, ultimately interrupting any single definitions of what it means to be a young Somali woman in Columbus through the juxtapositions of experiences, perspectives, and understandings portrayed in the stories. These definitions come from within the community in the form of expectations, as well as from non-Somalis through stereotypes and singular representations. While practicing *hijab* is certainly a norm within the Somali community, the reasons for wearing it, what it means, and the decision to actually wear a *hijab* vary among individuals.

While the women of the project approved of the title, non-Somalis challenged the use of “voices unveiled.” In one experience, a library staff member was concerned that the women involved in the project might find the use of “unveil” offensive as if I were trying to remove the *hijab* and free them from their oppression. As I explained at the time, the five participants were involved continuously in the decision making for the project, including the title. Moreover, as one participant commented, “It fits” (personal communication, December 2, 2012). However, the significance of being informed by a fellow “outsider” about what “unveiled” would mean for these women was not lost: two non-Somali women were in conversation about what “unveiled” would or would not mean for the Somali women involved. If asked, the Somali women claim “unveiled” as an assertion to differentiate their work and their voices from the dominant narratives of what it means to be a Somali, Muslim woman.

Collaborative efforts like *DSVU* that utilize participatory photography offer art educators a way to explore and re-present positionality. Working with participants to define questions of importance; choose methods of practice; and create art together as a form of research, public education, and advocacy presents an opportunity to make a difference. Moreover, this collaborative process works to agitate

public space through its ongoing nature, the presentation of multiple perspectives, and attention to the fluid nature of identity and culture. Attending to the relationship between space, place, and identity enables art educators to work to undo certainties through community arts initiatives rather than reinforce them.

Reconsidering static understandings of culture and the way that women embody markers of culture are important efforts toward eradicating stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings. Viewers of *DSVU* are offered entry into particular aspects of culture and the opportunity to reflect on the role of individual agency through the creation and exhibition of personal narratives. Working with participants to create visual and written narratives about their experiences with culture, identity, place, and belonging and engaging those participating in comparing their stories to those around them presents a legible body of experiences emphasizing the fluidity of stories and calling attention to the idea of culture as dynamic and the relation between individuals, place, time, and culture as something in flux. Art educators can harness participatory artmaking, storytelling, and exhibition to explore lived experiences of culture, place, and identity and work to undo the certainties of single stories.

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Art Education as Exhibition: Reconceptualizing Cultural History in Singapore through an Art Response to Ah Ku and Karayuki-san Prostitution

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ABSTRACT

In this essay, the author discusses her understanding of art education in relation to her exhibited artworks, which were developed on the basis of research on particular historical figures in Singapore. These historical figures were referred to in the book entitled *Ah Ku and Karayuki-san: Prostitution in Singapore, 1870-1940*, written by James Francis Warren who is a renowned ethnohistorian and professor at Murdoch University in Australia. According to Warren (2003), both terms referred to prostitutes. *Ah Ku* was a term that was used to address in Cantonese² a woman or lady irrespective of age, the polite way to address a Chinese prostitute in colonial Singapore³. *Karayuki-san* was the word used traditionally by the Japanese of Amakusa Island and the Shimabara Peninsula, Northwest Kyushu, to describe rural women who emigrated to Southeast Asia and the Pacific in search of a livelihood.

The author translated the contents of Warren's book into a series of paintings that were used as an art education tool to educate viewers about the history of Ah Ku and Karayuki-san. In this essay, the author addresses her understanding of art education, re-defines the history of Chinese and Japanese immigrant prostitutes as part of Singapore cultural heritage, and describes the research methods used to derive the artworks as well as the exhibition format to explain the relationship between the meanings of the paintings and Warren's book.

Introduction

In introducing their anthology *Remembering Others: Making Invisible Histories of Art Education Visible*, Bolin, Blandy and Congdon (2000) wrote,

The purpose of this anthology is to introduce art educators, and other professionals concerned with art and culture, to historical

1 Correspondence regarding this article may be sent to the author at cokuan@googlemail.com

2 Cantonese is a dialect in Singapore.

3 Singapore was under the British colony from 1826 to 1959 (Landow, n.d.)

perspectives on art education that are inclusive of stories, experiences, teaching methods, and cultural groups whose histories have not been fully explored and documented. (pp. 4-5)

In view of the above, I am motivated to write this article to discuss my artistic endeavour that is not commonly explored by many artists in Singapore. It is to translate the contents of a book into a series of paintings to be used as an art education tool to promote knowledge of and understanding about a little recognized group of individuals in Singapore's history and cultural heritage. In this article, I share with readers how I created these artworks as an educational tool to learn about the histories of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san*. As a painter, art has become a primary medium for me to express my personal history and culture in Singapore. I use art to express my thoughts, and to educate and promote history and culture derived from research on historical literature and historical documents. I use symbols to depict the historical and cultural contexts of Singapore history. I display my artworks with short write-ups to enable audiences to relate the symbols to historical and cultural contexts of Singapore history. My aim is to help viewers to understand how symbols are used to create an art form to relate history and culture of Singapore. The creation and exhibition of art based on history is central to my understanding of art education.

A project that reflects my views of art education is a series of artworks that were exhibited in the *Roots* exhibition in early 2012 in Singapore. The theme was the cultural heritage of Singapore. The exhibition was organized by a group of undergraduates from the Department of Arts Management at one of the art institutions in Singapore. I was invited as one of the five featured artists. The invitation provided an opportunity for me to utilize social science research methods to examine historical literature and historical documents as my resources in creating artworks as a platform to educate audiences on a historical theme in Singapore and to show how I translated historical research into a series of paintings.

The theme for my paintings was based on a book entitled *Ah Ku and Karayuki-san:-Prostitution in Singapore, 1870-1940*. The book was writ-

ten by Professor James Francis Warren. I focus on his book because of his desire to educate people about misconceptions of prostitutes at the turn of the 20th century. His history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* (different terms for prostitutes in Singapore, as explained more fully below) challenges the conception of these women as choosing a life of promiscuity. Warren's research inspired and propelled me to offer a broader understanding of these undervalued "voices" by undertaking background research on the historical prostitutes from Professor Warren's book. The study gave me insights to frame the history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* as part of Singapore's cultural heritage in order to provide the correct contexts of the history of these women for the audiences who visited the exhibition. The study on the history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* also enabled me to comprehend how women arrived at a profession of prostitution. Furthermore, undertaking this research assisted me in discovering a method to translate literature into visual images for the exhibition.

Three premises were developed to create and display the artworks:

1. An understanding of Singapore's history and culture with reference to Warren's study, *Ah Ku and Karayuki-san:Prostitution in Singapore, 1870-1940*.
2. Development of research methods to translate literature from Warren's book into visual images.
3. Development of an exhibition format to serve as an art education platform.

Definition of Singapore's History and Culture with Reference to Ah Ku and Karayuki-san

This section highlights my argument with regard to *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* as part of Singapore's history and cultural heritage because many people in Singapore are not aware of the history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san*.

Being invited as one of the five featured artists for the *Roots* exhibi-

tion, I was assigned to create five artworks on a theme about cultural heritage of Singapore. The initial response of the organizers was that my chosen theme deviated from the cultural heritage theme. Knowing about and relating the little-known history outlined below convinced them of the appropriateness of the theme. Before I discuss the history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* as part of Singapore's cultural heritage, it is important for me to explain why early Singapore encouraged prostitution. In order to do so, I will draw from Warren's (2003) book: "The daughters of rural families in Southeast China and Japan were sent into a life of juvenile prostitution in Southeast Asia also as a consequence of natural catastrophes, famines, floods, and earthquakes early in this century" (p. 28). As this quote suggests, *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* became prostitutes in order to support their families as the families were struck by natural disasters that caused them to live in poverty. Warren (2003) notes,

Patriarchy in traditional Chinese and Japanese culture was responsible for the exploitation of women financially, physically, sexually, and emotionally. Prostitution in Singapore was directly linked to the economic, social, and personal problems experienced in traditional family life due to a "male" ideology that asserted that there could be no such thing as equality for women. The family systems of China and Japan were organized around the kinship and lineage of men. The patrilineal principle, the worship of the male ancestral line in a lineage hall, has been instrumental in controlling women, their social roles and sexuality. (p. 29)

In other words, daughters were considered insignificant in traditional Chinese and Japanese families resulting in not opposing their daughters becoming prostitutes. Warren (2003) also explained the reason for the British government's encouragement of prostitution in Singapore:

The intensity of the male demand for women who were sexually able and willing was great enough to justify the existence of the *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* in the eyes of the colonial government. British officials could not neatly resolve the paradox of

the indispensable links between prostitution, immigration, and urban-economic development to give these migrant-labourers a more "normal" life. (p. 34)

The British government encouraged prostitution in Singapore for the purpose of enhancing and supporting the needs of the large influx of male migrants such as the rickshaw coolies⁴ from China and labourers working at the warehouses in Singapore. The government supported prostitution guided by the patriarchal belief that migrant coolies would be motivated to work and contribute to the economy of Singapore, a belief lacking in consideration for the women involved.

In summary, the conditions under which these women became prostitutes were largely affected by the poverty they and their families suffered in patriarchal China and Japan. As the status of a girl or a woman was undervalued, most of them were either compelled or motivated to become prostitutes in order to remit money to their families so the families would have a better livelihood. Additionally, prostitution was highly encouraged by the British government (Warren, 2003).

Understanding *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san*, then, must be understood not as women of a lowly nature, but on the contrary, as people whose history was very much driven by survival and both economic and political exploitation. Their history, however, has often been misrepresented and or unknown in Singapore (Warren, 2003).

One of the reasons that many people are not aware of the history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* was because it has not been taught during history lessons in schools in Singapore. Hence, I felt that it was crucial to share with Singaporean audiences the history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* before it is completely forgotten.

For this exhibition, *Roots*, the theme centred on cultural heritage, often defined as inherited practices, beliefs, myths, oral history and historical documents (Blake, 2000). As Warren's (2003) history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* was written based on oral histories of Singapore and

⁴ Coolies were male labourers, mainly from China and India, who were not equipped with any skills.

historical evidence that the author gathered, I argue that the history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* qualifies as part of Singapore's cultural heritage. Though *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* could not be defined as a personal cultural heritage among many Singaporeans, the history of these women should be considered as part of Singaporeans' history because "migrants" and "migration" played a key role in early Singaporean history and cultural heritage (Ee, 1961).

The concepts of "migrants" and "migration" also relate to the history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* too. Our Singaporean forefathers migrated to Singapore from China or India settling and building their families (About Singapore History, n.d.; Chew, n.d.). As such, the term "migrant" is important to Singapore's history and cultural heritage. Many of these early migrants contributed to the early Singapore economy as some of them worked as coolies and labourers. Although their needs were overlooked, *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* met the needs of the early male migrants who were lonely. Although some of them were married, their meagre wages meant they could not afford to bring their families to live with them (Warren, 2003). They became lonely and homesick, which motivated them to seek emotional and physical comfort from *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san*. Hence, I argue that *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* contributed significantly to building early Singapore's culture and economy and they should be considered as part of Singapore history's and cultural heritage.

As I have mentioned earlier, the history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* is absent from history lessons in schools, prompting a need to address their history. Moreover, cultural heritage should be translated and transferred from generation to generation for the purpose of understanding personal and national history. The historical theme on *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* was, therefore, appropriate and essential to reflect part of the cultural heritage of Singapore.

Research Methods to Translate the Text into Visual Images

In this section, I discuss the research method of content analysis that I used to examine Warren's book and develop and conceptualise an

artistic theme to create the artworks for the *Roots* exhibition.

"To become part of the community of disciplines," argue Baxter, Lopez, Serig and (2008),

fledgling fields such as art education had to show that research practices could be just as rigorous and clinical as the best social science. . . . Consequently many practitioners have infused the arts into research, or used the arts as a basis from which research can originate. (p. 5)

These authors highlight that in order to justify that artworks are appropriate as an educational tool in art exhibitions, it is necessary for visual artists to search for sound research methods to assist them in developing well-conceived art ideas. Hence, it was crucial that I develop a good understanding about *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san*, that I isolate key ideas I wanted to convey about them, and that I identify artistic means of conveying key ideas. In addition, it was important to consider what Baxter et al. identify as "the challenge" of "how the intrinsic knowledge structure and language of an art practitioner... is accepted as evidence and valid testimony of a research event for academic standards" (p. 8). In other words, throughout my process, it was important for me to make sure that my artworks were generated through rigorous research methods that met academic standards. These research methods ensured that I conducted a thorough analysis of Warren's book so that I would be able to translate some of his key understandings into artworks.

The contents of Warren's book can be examined and broken into various categories based on a method that is known as content analysis, searching for words, themes, events, and/or a names that occur in the text a number of times (Hodson, 1999). After examining the contents of the book, the following three common issues were identified: gender discrimination, abuse, and disillusion. A sample quotation extracted from Warren's book to describe gender discrimination is:

The birth of a girl was rarely a joyous occasion in rural China

and Japan, both countries being shackled by patriarchal traditions. Centuries-old prejudices against the birth of females are recorded in bitter proverbs, such as “one deformed son is worth a daughter as wise as the eighteen Lohans” or “a boy is worth ten girls.” (2003, pp. 29-30; italics added)

The following examples indicate the commonality of physical and emotional abuses that *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* suffered:

Why was the prostitute and brothel such a focal point of attraction and hatred for many of these young labourers? Assailants knew the easiest person to take their anger out on and vent their frustration was a prostitute because she was so vulnerable. (2003, p. 293; italics added)

Violence and harsh treatment by brothel-keepers against the prostitutes was most evident in lower-class brothels. Chinese and Japanese women found themselves pitted not only against the cruelty of clients, but also the beatings, punches, and kicks of keepers who held the women in bondage. (2003, pp. 313; italics added)

These were the factors that may have led the labourers to unfairly vent their frustration on people even less powerful than they were, such as the *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san*. The following quotations show the commonality of disillusion that *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* suffered.

The relationship between the passage of time and age, personality traits and life experience had a marked effect on the “well-being”-satisfaction and self-fulfilment-and “ill-being”-anxiety or depression-of a majority of the prostitutes. In terms of the ebb and flow of human life, the closing days of a prostitute’s career could be compared to “a revolving lantern painted with shifting scenes...while their soul resembles a drop of water that appears reddish on a maple-leaf and greenish on a laurel-leaf. (2003, p. 341; italics added)

Age and looks largely determined a prostitute’s place in the hierarchy, the type of customers she would serve, and how much money she could earn. With increasing age, and especially if she

was not careful about her body, face, and personality, her earning capacity, as a rapidly deteriorating piece of capital, slowly declined. *An ageing and fading beauty often tried in vain to recapture her youth, only to find that the artificiality of her profession had robbed her of her personality and appearance.* (2003, p. 341; italics added)

The *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* suffered because they were aware that they were deemed undesirable to their clients as they aged. Without other professional options, they became disillusioned.

The *Roots* exhibition was a group exhibition; each artist was advised to display a maximum of five artworks. I decided to display work that related the issues about gender discrimination, abuses, and disillusion for *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san*. Sullivan (2004) has argued that the artist plays an important role in making artworks that provoke viewers to see and understand things from new angles. The artist’s artmaking process is the time for him/her to embark on research to find new ways to create artworks that can help viewers to see things from new perspectives within their social and cultural contexts. Beyond this, Sullivan (2004) notes that,

The artwork carries its own status as a form of knowledge. Research of art subsequently communicates new insights into the ways that objects carry meaning about ideas, themes, and issues. As an object of study, an artwork is an individually and culturally constructed form that can be used to represent ideas and thus can be examined as a source of knowledge. (p. 803)

In other words, viewers are able to learn, perceive and discover new things from an artwork and, as such, artworks are a useful platform to educate viewers. Saldaña (2007) has translated the research of scholars into theatrical plays that make the research more broadly accessible to audiences outside academia, something I am doing in this series of paintings based on the work of Professor Warren.

As a visual artist, my artworks revolve around the field of geometry. This is, in part, because I have been greatly inspired by the works

of particular Russian *avant garde* artists, especially El Lissitzky and Kazimir Malevich. These artists have used geometric shapes, a form of mathematical expression, and a linear language that can link art to science and technology to help forge a sense of identity and a sense of the past, as well as express the trajectory of a developing nation. This mathematical perspective is also ideal to represent the history and culture of Singapore in the new millennium, for Singapore is a nation of constant seekers in areas of mathematics, science, and technology.

For the *Roots* exhibition, I used geometric shapes to draw Chinese lattices and numerology as an artistic language to express my thoughts on the history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* and simultaneously to relate to cultural symbols in Singapore. I incorporated Chinese lattices (Dye, 1949) that are architectural design patterns found on doors, windows, handrails and railings in Singapore. Numerology is the study of numbers that reflects certain meanings in our lives. As Chinese lattices and numerology are elements that many Singaporeans are able to relate to, I integrated Chinese lattices and numerology to create symbols to depict the common issues concerning the history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san*. Details of the symbols to depict the women are as follows:

1. A female gender sign represents *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san*.
2. Numerology in regards to using numbers as in 1, 2, or 3, connotes the idea that the women were regarded as “digits” for economical purposes such as remitting money to their families and boosting the welfare of the male migrants working in Singapore. The connotation of “digit” associates with numerology. For example, number 14 depicts “death,” 10 depicts “balance,” 4 depicts “death” and 5 depicts “eroticism.”
3. Chinese lattices, which are ancient Chinese architectural patterns for windows, represent that these women looked out of their “windows” for better horizons and brighter futures.
4. Geometric shapes to construct Chinese lattices and gender signs emulate how these women “constructed” their lives as

daughters to their families and prostitutes to their clients. The intensity of the construction of these complex geometric shapes is to demonstrate the extremity of the roles of the women. In addition, the vibrant colours are to celebrate the women’s histories and their undervalued voices.

Baxter, Lopez, Serig & Sullivan (2008) argue that, “as a primary educational end is to excite others about the value of art, the message and the means needs [sic] to be expressed in ways that others understand and appreciate” (p. 16). According to these authors, the artist is responsible for ensuring that viewers are able to understand meanings in artworks. Additionally, the artist desires to exhibit artworks that arouse the interests of viewers.

I chose to display each piece of artwork accompanied by a selected quotation from the book *Ah Ku and Karayuki-san: Prostitution in Singapore 1870-1940* as well as a short synopsis to explain how I translated the quotations, and used them as my reference points to create symbolic artworks. An A4 size black folder was placed along with the exhibited artworks. This black folder contained a write-up to provide visitors with the rationale that the artist used to depict the history *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* as a cultural heritage theme. The write-up also included the rationales for the use of symbols to connote the history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* as well as the research undertaken to develop the theme into visual images. In what follows, you will see a reproduction of the artwork, the accompanying symbolic information, and relevant excerpts from Warren’s (2003) book.



Fig. 1 Kay Kok Chung Oi, *Hope*, 2012, acrylic and ink on canvas, 62cm x 62cm.

Quotation

In many cases an *Ah Ku* or *Karayuki-san* entered prostitution mainly to obtain much needed financial assistance for parents or kin. The appeal to an ill-fed daughter's filial devotion, by starving or irresponsible parents during periods of pestilence or famine, often resulted in her going abroad to take up a life of prostitution in a brothel in Singapore, under the compromise of debt. Ironically, in a case where either parents or relatives received money upon her entry into a brothel abroad, unselfish filial loyalty often compelled the young *Ah Ku* or *Karayuki-san* to honour the debt. Parents took full advantage of this ideology to raise money on the saleable value of their daughters as they would on any negotiable property. (Warren, 2003, p. 31)

Artist statement for *Hope*:

In this painting, there are fourteen female gender symbols. Three of these symbols are at the top and bottom of the vertical axis of the cross. Four are on the left and right of the horizontal axis of the cross. Two partial female gender symbols are on the left and right of the horizontal axis of the cross. The total number, 14, represents death in Chinese numerology. The lives of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* were filled with sorrows and hardship until the day they died. The cross represents hope because *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* brought hope for their families through their earnings as prostitutes. Although *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* gave hope to their families, they had also lost their own hopes to live a happy life. Therefore, the fourteen female gender symbols make up the cross

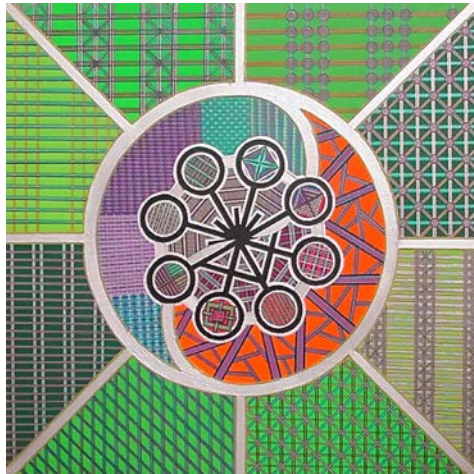


Fig. 2 Kay Kok Chung Oi, *Balance*, 2012, acrylic and ink on canvas, 62cm x 62cm.

depicting hope for their families as well as death of hope and happiness for *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san*.

Quotation

The intensity of the male demand for women who were sexually able and willing was great enough to justify the existence of the *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* in the eyes of the colonial government. British officials could not neatly resolve the paradox of the indispensable links between prostitution, immigration, and urban-economic development to give these migrant-labourers a more "normal" life. The unresolved dilemma and issues surrounding this gender imbalance were repeatedly mentioned in the Legislative Council and in the annual reports of the Chinese Protectorate. (Warren, 2003, p. 34)

Artist statement for *Balance*:

There are five male gender symbols and five female gender symbols in the painting. The two gender symbols along the titled axis that divides the male and female gender symbols represents both male and female. The ten symbols are congregated at the center of the Yin and Yang symbol to connote balance in Chinese numerology. *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* offered sexual services to fulfil the sexual needs of male migrants' workers in order for them to lead a balanced life.



Fig. 3 Kay Kok Chung Oi, *Spark*, 2012, acrylic and ink on canvas, 62cm x 62cm.

Quotation

There was little furniture or atmosphere in the brothels and the sex was convenient, quick, and cheap. These inexpensive brothels were locally referred to as *pau chai*, while the numerous customers - poor coolies, sailors, soldiers, and drunkards who patronized these brothels were known as *ta pau*. The *Ah Ku* in these *pau chai* were called *pau po*. Pau means firecracker, suggesting the sexual service in these lower grade brothels was as quick as burning a string of firecrackers. (Warren, 2003, p. 50)

Artist statement for *Spark*:

Five male gender symbols form a star symbol to represent spark, suggesting that *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* offered quick sexual services to the male migrant workers in Singapore and that these prostitutes were treated like sexual machines, without sufficient rest and at the risk of contracting sexual diseases.

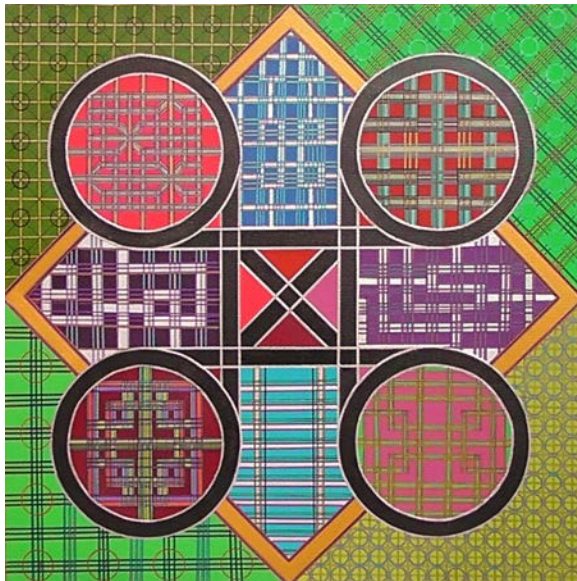


Fig. 4 Kay Kok Chung Oi, *Immortality*, 2012, acrylic and ink on canvas, 62cm x 62cm.

Quotation

Chinese and Japanese prostitutes were generally hard-working, poverty-stricken women who lived a bleak joyless existence. (Warren, 2003, p. 290)

Artist statement for *Immortality*:

The four female gender symbols in this painting represent death in Chinese numerology suggesting how *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* were caught up in a cycle of death in the light of their overwork, exhaustion, poverty, and the bleakness of their lives. In this painting, the artist wishes to resurrect their voices in order to remind people of the hardship and pain they undertook. Their voices are immortalised by joining four female gender symbols without a beginning or an end.

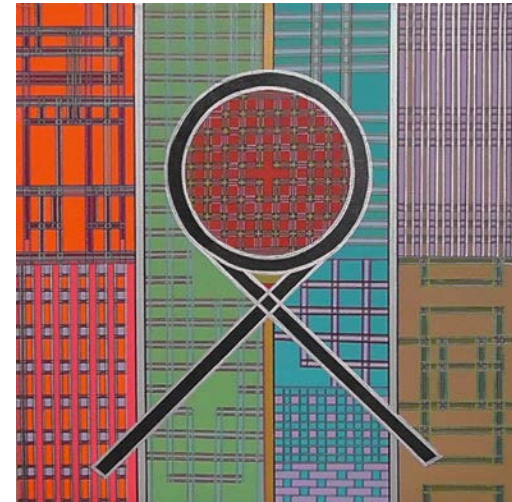


Fig. 5 Kay Kok Chung Oi, *Awareness*, 2012, acrylic and ink on canvas, 62cm x 62cm.

Quotation

Because *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* lacked basic rights-in-persons they were also subjected to emotional and physical violence by *mamasan* and *okasan* [the brothel-keepers]....They were “weak beings” at the bottom of an already low heap, almost totally lacking in power and autonomy. *Violence and harsh treatment by brothel-keepers against the prostitutes was most evident in lower-class brothels.* Chinese and Japanese women found themselves pitted not only against the cruelty of clients, but also the beatings, punches, and kicks of keepers expected to earn a daily income. (Warren, 2003, p. 290)

Artist statement for *Awareness*:

The symbol of the ribbon suggests awareness in understanding what and how *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* were physically and emotionally abused in their lives.

Conclusion

Using content analysis research method enabled me to examine and search for common themes from Warren's book. Three common themes—abuses, gender discrimination and disillusion—were identified. I used these common themes to develop five artworks that related to these themes. My first objective in creating this series of artworks was to include the *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* as part of Singapore history and cultural heritage, as these prostitutes were migrants in early Singapore. My second objective was to use geometric shapes, numerology, and Chinese lattices to create symbols to relate to the history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san* to help viewers see how these individual cultural elements could represent Singapore history. It was also to give viewers a fresh perspective in appreciating art. My third objective was to show viewers how I translated Warren's book into five artworks. This was demonstrated by displaying each artwork with a selected quotation from Warren's book and my own statement as the artist, explaining the relationship between the artwork and the selected quotation. It brought academic research to a demographic that would not normally be exposed to this scholarship, and translated it into visual means that emphasized cultural symbols and visual understanding.

The above three objectives were used as a basis to approach informal art education. Through the artworks, viewers were able to see how geometric shapes could be used to integrate numerology and Chinese lattices in expressing the history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san*. Displaying a thorough synopsis and artist explanation helped viewers to relate to the quotations that were extracted from Warren's book. McCollister (2000) argues that,

many uncommon and unknown art educators have been brought to our attention, good people who have done good work. They have created new understandings, attended to needs, noticed potential, and been resourceful (p. 149)

As a form of education through art I capitalized on the potential of *Roots* exhibition that was organized to promote Singapore history and heritage for the people of Singapore to enable them to learn about

Ah Ku and *Karayuki-san*. I received many positive comments from viewers based on organizer's feedback. Many viewers felt that it was refreshing to see how I translated Warren's book into the paintings by using Chinese numerology, Chinese lattices, and geometric shapes to depict the history of *Ah Ku* and *Karayuki-san*. According to the organizer's feedback, viewers felt that they learned a new way to appreciate and understand Singapore history through an art form that helped them to relate the artist's statement for each painting with a quotation from Warren's book. This suggests the potential of art-based research in making academic research accessible to audiences outside the academy.

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A Special Mountain Place and Sunrise Ceremony for Apache Students

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ABSTRACT

In this case study I document several visits to the San Carlos Reservation in Arizona, but describe/interpret in detail one special class when we asked the children to draw and share their “Special Mountain Home.” I analyzed their artwork according to the emerging categories of subject matter, themes, scenes, and symbols that I discovered in my previous study of Apache children (Stokrocki & Buckpitt, 2002). Dominant findings in this new study were that participants’ drawings included their sacred mountain, animals, and the Sunrise Ceremony that included traditional dancers, dwellings, female regalia, and part of a young maiden’s “coming of age” ritual. Apache girls tend to draw feminine content of social experiences, care and concern, and domestic life. Boys depict male thunder god dancers for protection, and fishing and hunting scenes. No symbols of violence were noted. Apache cultural symbols seem to be slowly changing, indicated by the inclusion of graffiti in the community, a school painting of Jesus dressed as a Mescalero Apache, and a pickup truck, drawn by a female.

Introduction

In this study, the researcher aims to inquire about what it might be like to live on the Apache Reservation from the perspective of a child. I spent a day with the children at the St. Charles Mission School in Arizona and they drew their “special mountain place” and wrote rich descriptions of their drawings. Drawing results included their gorgeous mountain setting and Sunrise Ceremony. Their teachers further elaborated on the meaning of the children’s drawings. So what specifically did they want to share? What can art education teachers and researchers learn from such experiences about the culture and the children’s artworks and ideas? Finally, what can visitors learn about cultural mergence?

I have been doing research with several of the Native tribes in Arizona, especially the Navajo (Stokrocki, 1995). My work with the

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Apache began in 2000. One of my former published articles involved teaching computer animation daily for three weeks to the neighboring White Mountain Apache (Stokrocki & Buckpitt, 2002). I met art teacher Marcia Buckpitt at our state art education meeting and she invited me to do research with her. Later, through the Catholic Church outreach program, the nuns at the St. Charles Mission School invited me to teach an art lesson with the San Carlos children.² In this article, I present the understandings I gleaned from several visits to the San Carlos Reservation but describe and interpret in detail one special class in which we asked the children to draw and share their “Special Mountain Home.”

Methodology

This case study is a systematic recording of daily events over time. It implies that the researcher is learning from people and not just studying them (Stokrocki, 1991, 1997). Such research can embody a major power struggle between the indigenous people observed and the researcher’s biases (Smith, 2012; Staikidis, 2014). In this article I asked the children to tell me more about their life and traditions. I analyzed their artwork according to the categories of subject matter (objects), themes, scenes, and symbols. These categories emerged from my former research with White Mountain Apache children and computer animation (Stokrocki & Buckpitt, 2002). My biases and the teachers’ interpretations limit the study findings because a visitor cannot really know the experience of living with Indigenous people in this mountain place³ (Staikidis, 2014).

Contexts

The Physical Context

The two and a half hour drive east of Phoenix, Arizona, to the San

² None of the nuns were Apache.

³ Since the visit was in the winter/spring the weather was mild. As the summer is very hot, dry, and uncomfortable, many San Carlos people migrate to a cooler area. Poor folks seek shaded sites in the mountain area.

Carlos Reservation, 1.8 million acres of rolling high desert that is larger than the state of Delaware, is quite picturesque. The road winds around the mountains through the mining towns of Superior and Globe and arrives in the upland area called the Mogollan Rim. To the north are great pine forests and to the south are scrub forests of pinion, mesquite and cacti, agave and yucca plants that grow along valley streams. Several Apache groups, including the Cibecue, San Carlos, and White Mountain people, live in this Arizona region (San Carlos Apache Culture Center, 2013). This article, however, is focused on drawings made by children of the San Carlos Apache.

As I approach the reservation, I see the Apache Gold Casino, now run by the Apache tribe. Further down the road is an abandoned lumber mill, at which we turn left and travel several miles into town. Some of the men have started working for the copper mines that recently reopened. The business district consists of buildings such as the police station, the tribal headquarters, Teen Center wall murals, some graffiti, and a supermarket. Homes are simple frame structures or ramshackle trailers sitting on sand or clay arroyos. People shop or run errands and women watch young children playing in their front yards. Down the street I parked in front of St. Charles Catholic Church.

Contemporary Context of Apache Culture and Art

Historically, art about Apaches made by non-Apaches contained realistically depicted warriors. For example, Frederic Remington became famous for his Apache ambush oil paintings. Yet paintings created by Apache Native Americans usually told a story of their Indian experience. For example, around 1900, Naiche (Chiricahua Apache) painted buckskin hide depicting the Apache girl’s puberty ceremony (Wikipedia, 2015). They adorned clothes in spiritual designs to protect the wearer from enemies and to bring good luck (Native American Art, n.d.).

Apache art today is often concerned with maintaining cultural traditions and some elders have shared their current lived experiences, including the arts surrounding their Sunrise Dance (Reid & Henle,

2012).⁴ “I want these kids to know where they come from . . . It keeps the tribe united . . . that’s why these dances are important. It’s an event that requires the help of each and every relative,” according to Alexis Jada Pike’s Grandma Reid, 2012, n.p.).

San Carlos Mission School

To the right side of St. Charles Catholic Church was the St. Charles Apache Mission School, a small brick building with a low hanging roof (see Figure 1).

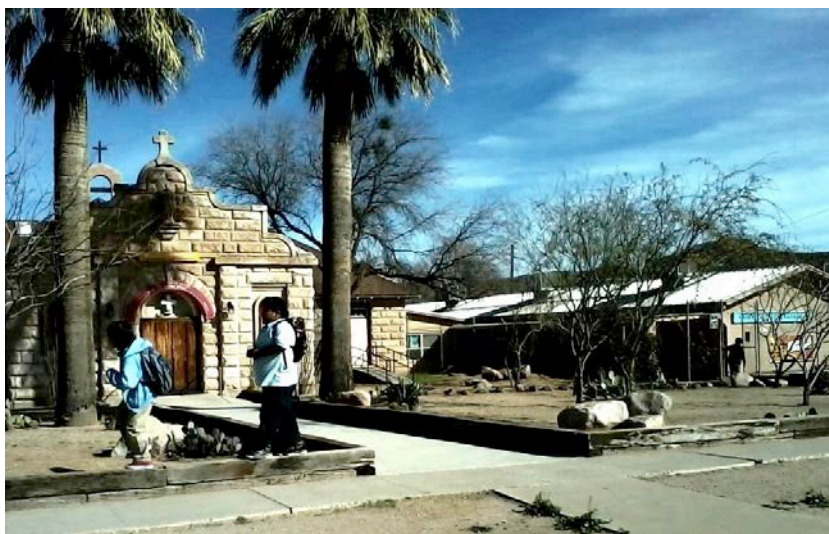


Fig. 1 St. Charles Catholic Church is on the left and gray Mission School is to the right and mountains, hidden here, are in the back. Un- like his predecessors, Father Gino Piccoli, the Franciscan pastor of the St. Charles Church, is committed to helping restore and nurture the Apache culture by incorporating it into the fabric of parish life. Father Piccoli explained:

We meant well, but we goofed, and we said, “Leave your—leave your Apache culture and spirituality and become like us Euro-
4 To learn more about the ceremony, view a YouTube video, Apache Sunrise Ceremony September 2012 Kisha Harvey, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16G4j6suxo>.

pean Catholics or American Catholics.” And so I said, “I’m not going to do that. I’m going to do everything I can to see what is beautiful about your spirituality and your culture, and whatever is beautiful is of God.” (Eight/KAET Arizona State University, n.d., n.p.).

In addition to efforts within the church, the parish school is also very much involved in keeping the Apache traditions alive in San Carlos. This is in sharp contrast to the government practice a century earlier of sending Native American children away from home to boarding schools to be educated in the ways of White society.

The St. Charles School mission is to combine parts of Apache ceremonies with Catholic rituals (Triscinda Miller, personal correspondence, Feb. 18, 2015). Evidence of this new attitude was a painted figure of Jesus dressed in Mescalero Apache clothes that greeted us on the front bulletin board as we entered the school. Dressed as an Apache warrior, he had long black hair, a headband, weathered skin, buckskin shirt, boots, and a breechcloth (Garza, 2011). The basket at his feet held an eagle feather, a grass brush, a bag of tobacco, and cattail pollen—items used in the changing woman ceremony (see Figure 2). Jesus is holding a sacred rattle to the left and a painted sun symbol on his hand to the right. The mergence symbolic meanings reflect tolerance for cultural and religious differences.



Fig. 2 The inscription in the painting of Jesus dressed in Mescalero Apache clothes reads, “Giver of Life.” These images reveal a merging of cultural icons.

An initial interview with Principal Sister Georgia revealed that the small school had several classrooms, a computer lab with 20 computers, and 150 children in attendance. For lunch, children walked over to the neighboring unified district public school building. The Catholic school is poor and receives various private and public subsidies (St. Charles Apache Mission School, 2015). The sixth grade teacher added, "This year was the most stable for having both parents in the home. There is little work on the reservation, so parents must travel to jobs in nearby cities. The school cannot afford an art teacher, so the Sisters teach art and music" (Personal interview with Sister Anne, January 3, 2003). The Apache families primarily teach about their culture. The school has an Apache culture teacher now and the teachers reinforce Apache cultural instruction. The teachers also incorporate Apache culture and language in their teaching, since English is the students' dominant language now, according to Juanita Kenton (Eight/KAET Arizona State University, n.d.).

Sister Greene elaborated on other aspects of the school's attention to teaching Apache culture:

One of the things we're very proud of and feel we've been very successful with is our after-school program, and for the girls it means designing and actually making their own camp dress, their own jewelry, all of the things we associate with the Apache people. For the boys, it's learning their traditional sacred dances through what we call the *Ga'ans* or more commonly known as the Crown Dancers. And it's a wonderful experience. What we [sisters] have discovered through the culture clubs and the Apache Curriculum is that our children have better self-esteem. They have a better sense of themselves. (Eight/KAET Arizona State University, n.d., n.p.).

The Art Class and Drawing Project

The classroom was large with windows along one side, blackboard to the front, and bulletin boards on the opposite side. Students sat at their own desks facing the front of the room. The observed fifth and

sixth grade combined class consisted of 11 girls and 8 boys.

The teachers invited me at the end of the school year because of their busy program, mandatory state standards, and cultural and remedial work with children. I asked if the students would draw "what they like to do," but Sister Anne thought that we would get mostly basketball pictures. She suggested that children draw "a special place to the Apache people." She passed out the 8" x 11" paper, colored pencils, and crayons that I brought for children to keep. I accepted the theme because I hoped to learn more about Apache perspectives through the eyes of the children. In the next few paragraphs, I will describe the children's drawings.

Mountain Scenes

Half of the drawings depicted mountains. Children started with triangle shapes for mountains. Several children called them the Triplet Mountains that are sacred and served as a lookout to see if the U.S. Calvary was coming during earlier times (see Figure 3). The mountains attract thunderstorms in the summer during the monsoon season. One student's drawing featured a dark colored sky with strokes in different directions and a brown colored mountain with a lightning bolt topping it. She called the drawing *Thunder Mountain*. Even though the drawing was too dark to duplicate, it communicated the wild wind and brilliant lightning that occurs during the late summer.

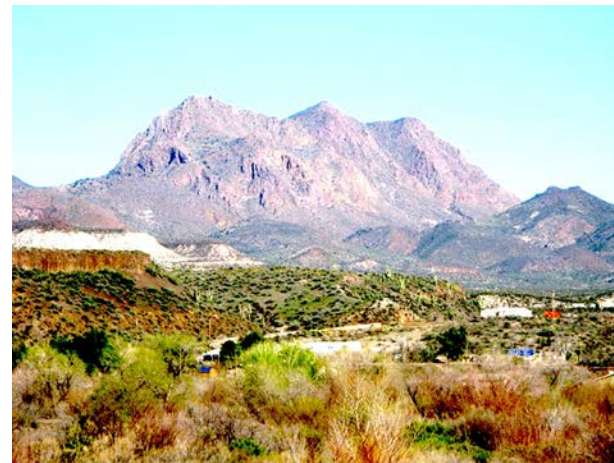


Fig. 3 The Triplet Mountain on the San Carlos Reservation in Peridot, Arizona.

Nalin,⁵ a young girl, drew the three-peaked Triplet Mountain in the background with a sunrise. Behind her are two blooming saguaro cacti and several yucca plants that supply reeds to make the San Carlos Apaches' famous burden basket. The tiny metal bells featured at the end of its strings symbolize rain (see Figure 4). She called her picture *Big Mountain, and It Is Good*, explaining that the mountain spirits protect her people.

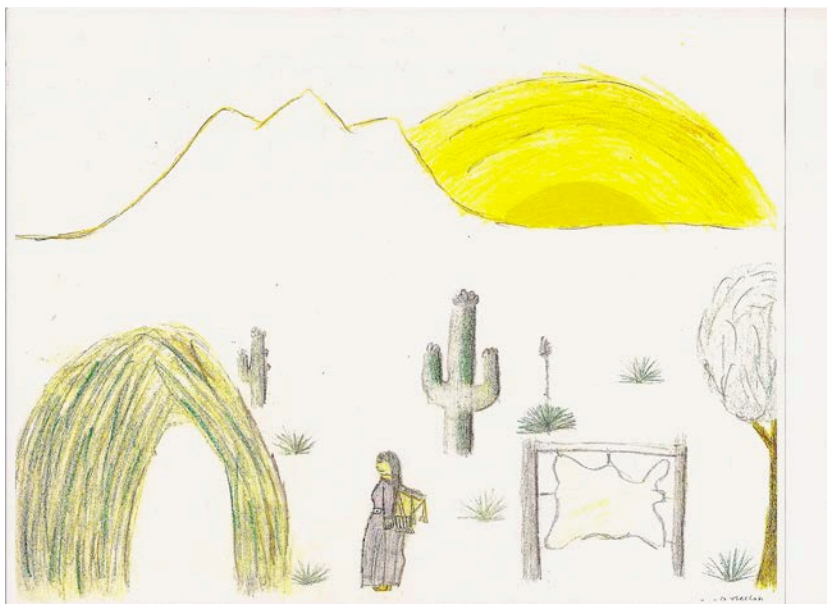


Fig. 4 A young girl, Nalin, drew the three-peaked Triplet Mountain in the background with a sunrise. In the foreground, from left to right, she depicted a wickiup (a traditional Apache shelter), a maiden carrying her burden basket on her back, a frame to support drying buckskin that she will make into a dress, and a tree as well as various desert plants in the background..

Similarly, nearly all students from the White Mountain Apache area in a former study (Stokrocki & Buckpitt, 2002) made landscapes, including mountains, trees, or cacti, with either sun or moon. In fact, one third-grader made a computer graphic of the famous Thunder Mountain. The mountains indeed are important to the Apache people who pray for rain for their crops and to placate the summer forest fires. Because it is so hot in the lowlands during the summer, most families

⁵ Pseudonyms are used for the children's names.

still travel to the higher mountains for coolness. As they seasonally migrate from lowland to highland environment, they develop keen observation skills.

The Sunrise Ceremony and Spirit Dancers

Several drawings showed important rituals in the lives of Apache people. The annual Apache Sunrise Ceremony is hosted in the mountains nearby; the ceremony is a four-day, coming-of-age ritual for young maidens (for more information, view TheLonelyBearCub, n.d.). One female student, Jacali, portrayed an Apache maiden in traditional white buckskin dress with fringes who is carrying a ceremonial cane to insure her long life (see Figure 5).



Fig. 5 Jacali drew an Apache maiden standing with her godmother for her coming-of-age ritual, known as the Sunrise Ceremony. They wait under a framed tent, representing her future home, that consists of willows with feathers suspended about her head.

The maiden wears an abalone shell tied on her forehead and an eagle feather attached to her hair in back of her head. This represents her “as a whole” (personal correspondence with Herb Stevens, Manager of the San Carlos Apache Culture Center, 7/20/2000). She waits under a framed tent that consists of willows. The maiden is portrayed here with her godmother, a virtuous woman whom the family admires and whose virtues—strength, endurance, and forbearance—they wish their daughter might emulate. Participants wish the young girl the following values: long life, health, food, and wealth (condensed from Basso, 1970).

Jacali colored a gradating sunrise in the background along with a saguaro, a yucca, and a *wickiup*, a dome-shaped dwelling whose frame is made of light pliable poles of either willow or cottonwood and covered with brush that is tied over the frame in parts. An opening at the top of the structure allows the pit fire smoke to escape. Here the young maiden will live when she first marries; however they will later move into a trailer or modular house. The juxtaposition of the pick-up truck is also a part of Apache life. Jacali included such important necessities that are part of indigenous contemporary life in this artwork and a continuation of their Legend of Changing Woman.

In the Sunrise Ceremony, the young girl assumes the role of “Changing Woman” and reenacts a creation legend. In the legend, Changing Woman hides in an abalone shell during the great flood that destroyed the earth. She is impregnated and bares the son of the sun and the son of the water. She is blessed with corn pollen in her hair for protection and fertility. The pollen is carried in a prayer basket made of willow or yucca. She wears woven strands of multiple beads in a rope, shawl, or T-shaped necklace. The young maiden portrayed kneels and then runs around with her cane at different distances and towards the eastern sun to commemorate this ancient story (Macerale, 1984). Earlier, Apache women used seeds to denote fertility and later traded the seeds for the colorful Venetian glass beads, introduced around 1540 by the Coronado Expedition. She also inserted metal disks, mirrors, or beads in her hair.

A young male student, Tarak, mentioned that during the ceremony male dancers, called *Ga’an*, appear to bless and protect the young girl and to ward off illness and evil (San Carlos Apache Cultural Center, 2015). See Figure 6. The *Ga’an* represent the four sacred directions and colors. In Figure 6, the crowned figures wear the east color of yellow. They also wear large fan-shaped wooden headdresses painted with sacred symbols. They paint their bodies in black and white images that evoke lightning, mountain designs, and animal motifs that represent the mountain spirits. The children drew a few clan markings, such as the sun, eagle, and bear claws. On the *Ga’ans’* arms are tied parts of forest greens. The male dancers also dance early Sunday morning under and around the young maiden’s willow frame that symbolically provides her stability. The fifth spirit is “the gray one or clown” who represents “the unpredictable.” The *Ga’an* provide balance to a young maiden’s world. During the final stage of the ceremony, the godfather paints the young girl’s face with earth colors and she becomes “White Painted Lady” (Reid & Henle, 2012). The *Ga’an* escort her in a procession as she journeys around the earth. All participants gather around the bonfire’s wood ashes and the young girl’s problems are symbolically thrown on the ashes. She runs around the ashes to denote her passage into maturity (Goodwin, 1994).



Fig. 6 Tarak drew three ceremonial crowned figures. Known as the *Ga’an* or mountain spirits, they dance with wands around a spectacular bonfire to provide strength and protection for the maiden.

Animal Subject Matter

Animals portrayed in several drawings included deer, horses, coyote, and birds. Elan, a young boy at the school, informed us that he learned to sketch from his father. He first drew the deer's outline in profile and added horns, ears, and eyes (see Figure 7). He then shaded under the deer's stomach with the side of his pencil. He depicted the deer as moving because their legs are slanted and form upside-down V-shapes. Elan seemed to emphasize the forward thrust of the front legs by outlining them again with brown color and darkening the rear legs. Later he colored the deer and trees brown and highlighted leaves in yellow-green colors. For ground foliage, he used pencil lines in haphazard X-shaped strokes and overlapped them in mustard yellow. For the Apache, the deer is an endangered animal as well as a spiritual one that represents fertility and protection and is the source of traditional buckskin Apache clothing.



Fig. 7 One boy drew two forest deer, a fertility and protection symbol, as well as the source of the traditional buckskin Apache clothing.

The other students admired his drawing technique and realistic rendering and shading ability. In fact, most of the students formed full human figures from front or side views. Sister Georgia informed me that local Apache artists taught the children how to draw the Apache warrior and woman figure. In addition, Apache adults regularly draw some of these themes and so children have learned to imitate motifs from adult art.

Gender Differences

Apache girls tend to draw feminine content of social experience, care and concern, and domestic life similar to the drawings of mainstream Anglo children ages 7-12, as Tuman (1999) suggested. In my former study Apache girls depicted more human figures and feminine clothes in computer animation Kid Pix programs than boys did (Stokrocki & Buckpitt, 2002). An important consideration, however, is that the Apache consider such subjects and themes as important for young girls to learn as part of their rites of passage (TheLonelyBear-Cub. 2012).

In this study, the boys tended to draw thunder dancers and hunting scenes with deer, fish, rabbits, and birds, but no violent images. When watching the boys draw, I observed no evidence of mainstream masculine content such as danger, power, aggression, violence, heroism, or sports. There is little violence in community life because the Apache are basically peaceful people in spite of the negative versions of them portrayed as horse thieves and as aggressive fighters (Nicholson, 1999-2015). The boys play basketball, however, and will draw related images. Our project directions were to draw their special place, which perhaps is the main reason for a lack of these other themes. When freely drawing, Apache girls tend to draw hearts, flowers and landscapes and to include more human figures and feminine clothes than boys (Stokrocki & Buckpitt, 2002).

While Apache gender roles are changing somewhat because more women are working outside of the home, the Apache still value their traditional symbolic rites and symbols. This is in contrast to Tuman's (1999) study, in which she argues the need for young people (not specifically of Native American backgrounds) to "break out of the

gendered stereotypes that currently inform their drawings” (p. 57). Such an approach would discard the valued traditions of the Apache. I believe that the emphasis should be on extending expressive images and themes in teaching Native American children, not on discarding them. My college students at Arizona State particularly enjoyed the “purple pickup truck,” drawn by a young girl (see Figure 5), indicating that the Apache are extending their traditional ceremonies and roles with modern conveniences.

The Apache still mostly celebrate the Sunrise Ceremony. “In the last twenty years, the Sunrise Ceremony has been elaborated, with expensive gift exchanges” (AAANativeArts.com, 1999-2008). Invited guests often attend certain portions of a Sunrise Ceremony and the Apache perform ceremonial parts for the public each year at the Hon Dah Casino in the White Mountains of Arizona. The Sunrise Ceremony is expensive to host and preparations take months. Other parts of the ceremony and preparations are sacred and secret. The persistence of such themes in the children’s drawings suggests a continuance of Apache cultural beliefs and a living relationship with Mother Earth (Schlessinger, 1993). “The Apache will fight to maintain their land, especially the mountains, which they believe are sacred,” according to Herb Stevens, Manager of San Carlos Cultural Center (personal communication, December 29, 2014).

Reflections

The research question guiding this study was, what is it like living on the Apache Reservation looking through the eyes of the children? The children revealed cultural connections between their home, community, and school environment. Noteworthy were their drawings of mountains, clothing, houses, and animals, and the children’s descriptions of the meanings of each. The importance of male thunder dancing and the young girl’s puberty rites were described in particular.

A second area of focus in this study was, what can art educators and researchers learn from such experiences about the culture and the children’s artworks and ideas? Since the school has few guests and

no art teacher, I assumed that the children valued my visit and the art materials that I left with them. As an outsider and a professor, the nuns may have limited what the children shared. They may have highlighted realistic drawing, such as the deer, because Euro-American culture values this kind of depiction. Yet I was surprised that the children seriously interpreted their land and I wasn’t expecting the elaborate drawings of the Sunrise Ceremony because sharing this sacred tradition might not be allowed. In a former visit with members of a non-Native local township’s art council, children only drew their favorite commercial place, such as a visit to Wal-Mart or a hamburger joint. I visited St. Charles Mission School again in March of 2015 and motivated the combined fifth and sixth grade Apache students to share their “Favorite Place”.⁶ All students drew the same mountains and similar animals. Two girls drew the same traditional buckskin regalia, and one boy depicted the outdoor basketball court.

I am pleased that I asked for so much elaboration because I learned much about the details of the children’s lives, as I encouraged them to teach me. In some ways, encouraging the children to talk about their drawings was a form of storytelling. In Apache tradition, translating meaning and gaining trust takes time (Basso, 1970). From their history of negative experiences with white people, Native people are hesitant to share their ideas (Schlessinger, 1993). Therefore, this study became a researcher’s learning experience over several years with Apache students and it was not just a show and tell event.

What can visitors learn about cultural mergence? They gain a deeper understanding of Apache life beyond the “heroes and holidays” type of multiculturalism (Eldridge, in press). They can relate to the symbolic richness of the Apache “coming of age” ceremony as it relates to the mountains and weather. Finally, they can gain an understanding of the importance of humans maintaining respect for nature and the merging of cultural symbols and meanings that reflect tolerance for cultural and religious differences.

⁶ I work with The Gold Canyon Arts Council, who motivate students each year to appreciate the arts by hosting musical concerts, speakers, and art exhibits. With two other retired art teacher colleagues, we continue to visit the children in San Carlos every year.

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