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William Christenberry, *Dream Building II*, 1981. For more information, please refer to article by Ruth Straus Gainer, Lydia Lewis, and Erich Keel in this issue.

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Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education

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Editorial Introduction

Elizabeth Garber
Senior Editor

Volume 31 of the *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education* reflects a call for articles on space, place, and (or) time in art and visual culture education. Additionally, it offers a selection of articles submitted to fit the journal's rich heritage of providing research on diversity and social and cultural issues that are relevant to the field.

My own interest in the themes of space, place, and (or) time began with some of the following questions and ideas. How does culture affect the way people feel and think about place, how they form attachments to home and nation? Is place security, something we are attached to, and space freedom, something we long for, as geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) suggests? How does culture affect a sense of time, and as DeCerteau (1984) posits, articulate itself on space? Geographer Doreen Massey (1994) argues that space and time are integrally intertwined, constructed out of social relations that are always in flux: how do these weave together in research on learning, practicing, and thinking through art? This dimension of space-time as a dynamic social relationship is particularly interesting for cultural studies and art/visual culture education: what do we as researchers working from a particular location, in a given time, or from a set of perspectives hold onto as professional or human truths? Within multi-cultural and diversity studies in our field, how are space, place, and time interrelated? What dynamics do they suggest for teaching art and visual culture in ways that promote cultural understanding and self-reflection?

How do the “unhomed geographies” proposed by visual culture theorist Irit Rogoff (2000) suggest a redefining of place, space, and time “away from concrete coercions of belonging and not belonging” (p. 4)—for ourselves and our students—and suggest how culture and social relations incline our ways of seeing? Rogoff defines space in terms of “inhabiting a location through subjectivity and

representation” and argues that “power produces a space which then gets materialized as place” (p. 22). A meaning of place (for example, a school or community center) is not, according to this, a description of how it looks or what goes on there (e.g., a sunny room where art is taught), but the subjectivities and signifying practices that are elicited (or masked) there. What do places and spaces signify in terms of power? subjectivity? representation? How do the spaces of teaching and learning reflect or conceal gender? How do students perform gender and other identity markers that they inhabit or those that they want to experience?

Meaning and agency are negotiated, proposed Roland Barthes, through a time lag that occurs in between the utterance of the text and the receiver's understanding, or its discursive eventuality. Within the space of the time lag, negotiations of meaning and agency are possible; transnational and translational is open to revision. Time is contingent (Barthes, 1973/1975). How do place and time influence meaning making across and within a culture's art or across cultures? Whereas Barthes focuses on text (visual or written), Homi Bhabha explores the time lag as a space of negotiation. “Is it possible,” he asks, “to conceive of historical agency in that disjunctive, indeterminate moment of discourse outside the sentence?” (1994, p. 262). He opens up the time lag as an intersubjective realm, a contested space that is open for complex cultural negotiations. How do we guide students and groups with whom we work to make meanings in and through art and visual culture that are contingent? How do we help them negotiate with other individuals and unfamiliar cultural ideas?

The theme of place, space, and (or) time drew in a broad range of perspectives and engagements, as the articles you are about to read will indicate (overviewed in an order somewhat different from the list in the Table of Contents). Laura Hetrick and Justin Sutters develop theorizations about time, space, and place in the changes preservice art teachers make as they move between their identities and locations as “student” and “teacher.” Hetrick focuses on the

Deleuzian concept of “becoming” in relation to the time of student teaching while Sutters, working with Massey’s concepts of space and place, develops an idea of “being” in connection to preservice teachers’ preconceptions and expectations of teaching, students, and schools. Also working with preservice teachers, Judith Briggs reflects on teaching elementary education teacher candidates about suburban spaces through building paper model communities and how she came to mentor the students to think in terms of community building and environment, rather than individualistically. Part of her revised approach to teaching involved in-depth discussions of suburbia as integral to the U.S. “American Dream.”

Three articles address youth and identity play. Courtne Wolfgang and Olga Ivashkevich worked with female adolescents in juvenile arbitration who experimented with performing identity through collaborative videos. Offering readers a different application of Deleuze’s theory of becoming than that engaged by Hetrick, they additionally develop their interpretations of the students’ work based on Butler’s conceptualization of gender as performance and Muñoz’s strategy of disidentification. Juan Carlos Castro’s research with youth on identity performance through an online social networking site picks up the thread of space in terms of both Butler’s and Juarrero’s theorizations of identity as a temporal performance influenced by context. He suggests the relationship of space and time in online sites contributed in different ways to the youths’ play with their identities. Also working with youth and film, Anna Ryoo, Ching-Chiu Lin, and Kit Grauer’s visual-textual essay offers a description of their work with an adolescent First Nations filmmaker who engaged issues of identity and belonging. They argue that filmmaking created for him a space of exploration.

In a second visual-textual essay, Natalie LeBlanc describes a practice-led research project in which she theorizes her own experiences in photographing abandoned schools. In a second phase of the project, she reflects on a site-specific installation of her photographs with community members. Ju-Chun Cheng theorizes her experiences with

installation art at the Mattress Factory Art Museum, reflecting on how the immersive nature of installation art engages sensorial, interactive, and exploratory experiences. She interprets these experiences through the lens of Lefebvre’s idea about place as facilitating connections to memories, objects, and people and de Certeau’s theorizations about place as holding elements that coexist in a location and space as “an ensemble of movements deployed within it” (1984, p. 117).

Two articles examine place in museum education. Melanie Buffington and Maral Bedoyan describe work with students at Mathaf Museum in Doha, Qatar, where students were invited to submit work for an exhibition on the theme of transformation, through which collaborating teachers helped students think about changes in their geographical region. Rounding out the mini-theme of this issue, the team of Ruth Straus Gainer, Lydia Lewis, and Erich Keel present a museum education unit they collaboratively developed and taught at the Kreeger Museum in Washington, DC, that engages students in thinking about geography through interpretation of artworks.

The issue is enhanced by Jeff Broome’s reflection on his early teaching of Mixtec arts with students in South Florida, in which he describes lessons he learned towards becoming a more culturally sensitive educator. His insights are particularly valuable to visual educators working across cultures. On another note, Kaihei Hase outlines three issues in teaching video production and media literacy in Japan that contribute to a less-than-ideal state for learning. These range from content, to instructors, to confusion about teaching objectives.

Volume 31 of the *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education* [*jCRAE*] is the result of a collaboration between numerous people. Thanks to authors for submitting their research to the journal and for work that carries on the scholarship of cultural research in art and visual culture education. The *jCRAE* Review Board has worked diligently to provide valuable insights to submitting authors; this issue is much stronger due to their work. Erica Richard, who has served as Managing Editor of *jCRAE* for the last two years and now moves on to a position as art teacher in a new school, has done the layout for this issue in addition

to her many other journal duties of keeping editor, reviewers, and authors on track. She was mentored generously in the layout by former University of Arizona graphic design professor Kelly Leslie. University of Arizona School of Art Director Dennis Jones provided crucial support for Erica's position. *jCRAE*'s parent board of USSEA, led by able and enthusiastic President Steve Willis, with the help of a deeply dedicated Board, has provided ongoing support of the journal and keeps USSEA alive and thriving. Finally, thanks to you, the readers, for your interest in this journal and your support of and critical reflections on the research and scholarship within. We hope you will consider submitting your research to a future issue of *jCRAE* and will join or renew your membership with USSEA. Please visit jcrae.org and ussea.net.

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Becoming (time) and/or Being (space) Art Teacher: A Spatio-temporal Look at the Culture of Student Teaching in Art Education

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ABSTRACT

Two university professors of art education approach the culture of art student teaching from two intimately-related and inseparable philosophical perspectives—that of time and space—though they do so as individual concepts from two disparate theoreticians’ conceptualizations. This article provides brief theoretical foundations of the Deleuzian-influenced concept of becoming-art-teacher as time (Hetrick, 2010) and the Masseyan-influenced concept of being-teacher as space (Sutters, 2012). The writing is not to be read solely through the lens of just Deleuze or just Massey, but should be considered as a way to expand and enlighten the micropolitical understandings of a seemingly innocuous event in the training of most U.S. certified/licensed art teachers. The authors see this collaborative paper as only the beginning of their journey of exploring space-time forces together. Their intention is not to resolve any of their differences, but to constantly keep them in tension and challenge each other’s thoughts and perspectives to further their understandings of the culture of art student teaching.

As two University professors of art education, we approach the culture of art student teaching from two intimately-related and inseparable philosophical perspectives—that of time and space—though we do so from two disparate theoreticians’ conceptualizations. The dimension of space-time as a dynamic social relationship is particularly interesting for exploring the culture of preservice training in art education, specifically the semester duration of student teaching when so many transitions are in play. While this article is based upon two empirical IRB-approved studies that explored art student teaching, due to time and size constraints, it will only provide

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brief theoretical foundations of the Deleuzian inspired concept of *becoming-art-teacher* as time (Hetrick, 2010) and the Masseyan concept of *being-teacher* as space (Sutters, 2012). The intent is not to set up a dichotomous hierarchical relationship between theoreticians, nor to be read solely through the lens of just Deleuze or just Massey, but rather to expand and enlighten the micropolitical understandings of a seemingly innocuous event in the training of most U.S. certified / licensed art teachers. In order to provide clarity for the reader, we will each address our concept individually in first person singular [I] and reconvene at the end to (re)consider the multiple relations in, between, and outside of time and space with respect to art student teachers.

First, the culture of art student teaching is described as the common site when/ where both doctoral studies were situated. Second, student teaching is considered as time within the Deleuze | Guattari (1987) concept of becoming. Student teachers are seen as *becoming-art-teacher*, the space or movement in between their event of being a university art education student and of being a classroom art teacher. Attempts are made to illuminate the chaos of the temporal, dynamic transition in between these two events, though notably it is not an end state of teacher that is actualized / employed in this conceptualization. Next, by viewing the interrelatedness and intersections of space and place through writings by Doreen Massey, *being-teacher* examines how pre-service teachers bring imagined expectations (space) into varied pedagogical contexts (place) and questions how their (un)knowing is (in)visible in subsequent representations. Attempts are made to understand the displacement and consequent spatial reconstruction of preconceptions through occupancy of a far-away place.

The Culture of Art Student Teaching

While there is no one set of beliefs, practices, or experiences that are essential to *art teacher*, the systematic formation of schools within the US provides certain conditions for shared commonalities in the university training of art student teachers. A student teacher

is a college, university, or graduate student who is teaching under the supervision of a certified cooperating school teacher in order to qualify for a degree in [art] education, usually resulting in the receipt of a state teaching license. The semester of student teaching is typically the final semester before graduation and involves assuming a cooperating teacher's classroom schedule, responsibilities, and workload in order to prepare student teachers for their future of teaching. Several expectations typically exist in this short duration of training, such as: taking four years or more of art education theory and translating it into classroom practice, as well as exhibiting a mastery of knowledge in art education theories, art making techniques, classroom management, discipline, pedagogy, and curriculum construction. Expectations may also include student teachers being told to be the responsible teacher in charge, yet still function as a student malleable to best practices, all while leaving behind the known 16+ years of schooling and a relatively supportive university community. In short, this time-space comprising the culture of student teaching is fluid and constantly being [re] constructed according to each individual passing through this event and often leads to anxieties, tensions, and transformations.

The Path to *Becoming*

Being a supervisor of art education student teachers for three years during graduate school, I [Laura] noticed that at roughly the same time each semester the student teachers with whom I was working would begin having emotional breakdowns and start expressing a lack of confidence in their abilities. Statements such as, "I feel so incredibly frustrated most of the time and I feel, like, again nothing is ever enough and nothing is ever good enough or big enough" (Jean²), were commonly shared with me in private meetings. At first I thought it was the particular conglomeration of students and their school placements I was working with that first year, though the same thing happened the second year with a completely different group of student teachers with still different schools and cooperating teachers.

2 All names in this paper have been changed.

I wanted to figure out why this was happening and if there was anything I could do to help alleviate this phenomenon. Reading the philosophies of Deleuze and Guattari (1983; 1987; 1989; 1990; 1994), I came across the concept of *becoming* which I will explain shortly. Overlaying that concept on the process of art student teaching gave me a new perspective on how to academically approach the emotional distress I was witnessing every semester and also how to verbally and empathically work through the chaos with art student teachers.

Becoming, within the context of this paper, means something different than the everyday usage of the term, which is typically understood as a state of turning into something else. In Deleuzian philosophical terms, becoming is “the pure movement evident in changes between particular events... [it is] not a phase between two states [rather], becoming is the very dynamism of change, situated between heterogeneous terms” (Stagoll, 2005, p. 21). Specifically, I am looking at the art student teacher’s transitional movement evident in the change between being a student in the preservice college classroom and being a teacher in his/her own art classroom. Becoming-art-teacher is not an end state that each student teacher is looking to achieve, but, rather it is an unfolding of subjectivity that is a continuous process. It can also be said that there is no one path that all those learning to teach art will follow, with the same experiences, the same dynamism of change, or the same chaotic moments. Similarly, there is no universal way preservice art students conceptualize the process or actuality of student teaching, including the various subjectivities they may employ as becoming art teachers. I provide two brief interview excerpts to illustrate the concept that no two transitional movements or unfolding of subjectivities are alike. One of the student participants noted,

One of my goals going into student teaching [was] that I was going to be the one that was always upbeat and that walked in with a smile on my face no matter how scared I was or how frustrated I was or how much sleep I had the last night. (Olivia)

Another participant, Marissa, shared a different view about who she envisioned she would be as a student teacher in the art classroom.

I expected to be someone that everyone liked. [laughs] I think that’s pretty much because that’s what I wanted. I wanted everyone to like me... I wanted to be a teacher, or I expected to be a teacher, that could pretty much do anything, so [laughs] you know that type... that do *any* project... I expected to kind of be invincible, but it would just be hard, but that I could still do it. (Marissa)

Whereas Olivia was concerned with how the students saw her personality—smiling and upbeat—Marissa was more concerned about being seen as knowledgeable, creative, and strong. No two transitional movements or unfolding of subjectivities are alike because *becoming* is not an end product, but rather an energy constituted by change.

Becoming Is Its Own Time

Deleuze (1994) focuses on the individuality of each person, thing, or event and how it is perceived and experienced at that moment, not assuming a pre-existing unity with other items of its ilk. “Being as difference is a virtually existent pure duration whose unfolding we can call becoming, but only on the understanding that the difference which becomes is not [a] specific something or set of somethings, but the chaos which produces all somethings” (May, 2003, p. 147). Becoming is not becoming the actual physical subject/ object, but the very dynamism of change (chaos) that continually occurs in the process of life, as the affirmation of being. In short, becoming is the antithesis to stability; it is instability and change and each becoming has its own duration. Becoming is its own time.

Time is a very important and complex concept in many of Deleuze’s theorizations and cannot possibly be thoroughly explained in detail in the small space of this writing. However, brief descriptions of two modalities of time, *Chronos* and *Aion*, will help with a basic

understanding of the importance of exploring a *kind* of temporality for thinking difference. For Deleuze (1990), “Chronos is the regulated movement of vast and profound presents³” (p. 163). Chronos is limited to the present, whereas Aion is unlimited to both extensions of the past and the future as far as they will go. Whereas Chronos is segmented and structured as the present, Aion seems to capture how the dynamism of student teaching might be conceived as an unhinging of time. This is because Aion infinitely and endlessly expands from the present and is not bound by structure; it is a time of pure becoming.

It [Aion] rather retreats and advances in two directions at once, being the perpetual object of a double question: what is going to happen? What has just happened? The agonizing aspect of the pure event is that it is always and at the same time something which has just happened and something about to happen; never something which is happening. (Deleuze, 1990, p. 63)

The art student teacher who has just graduated from preservice training but not yet begun teaching can be thought of as existing in a time that is always just past [schooling] and always almost there [teaching], and might therefore be understood as moving outside of time. Considering these nuances of temporality, with art student teachers functioning as unhinged time within a space of regulated time such as instructional blocks of the school day, it becomes evident what may be the impetus for the chaos and dynamism that is art student teaching.

To further illustrate the connectedness to my art student teacher research participants, I briefly consider the relationship between *becoming* and Deleuze | Guattari subjectivity. Deleuze “abandons the old image of the subject as a fixed substance or foundation stone... [t]he Deleuzian subject is an assemblage of heterogeneous elements whose source is not the interiority of the traditional image

of thought... subjectivity is not given” (Boundas, 2005, p. 268). In other words, subjectivity is not something that is pre-existing, nor recognized as an unchanging core, or a central being, rather it is something that is always under construction and influenced by external sources. So, for Deleuze, “the self is only a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 249). Because student teachers are at the very point where their subjectivities, or sense of self, may transform due to their transversal into new intensified roles, becoming, and specifically, becoming-art-teacher, aptly describes the culture and duration of art student teaching.

Becoming-art-teacher

I posit that art student teachers are *becoming-art-teacher* or in a sense overcoming the face of student and his/her passive/receptive subjectivity of gathering knowledge, and transitioning to the active teacher subjectivity of one supposed to know. For me to consider student teachers as *becoming-art-teacher*, I need to look at the dynamism, or compelling forces, moving between two heterogeneous events—that of student and that of professional educator. “The subject-in-process [art student teacher], that is, as *becoming*, is always placed between two multiplicities, yet one term does not become the other; the becoming is something *between* the two” (Semetsky, 2006, p. 6). *Becoming-art-teacher* does not mean that a subject, in this case an art student teacher, becomes another person (art teacher) in actuality. These indissociable aspects of *becoming-art-teacher* must first be understood as a function of something else: not imitating or assuming the teacher form, but emitting particles that enter the relation of movement and rest, or the zone of proximity—where a student can no longer be distinguished from a teacher—of a micro-teacherness to produce in the student teachers a molecular teacher (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Emitting particles that enter the relation of movement and rest of a teacher could include utilizing teacher-speak, standing in front of the class looking back at the students, and/or holding one’s posture in an authoritative teacher pose, etc. In effect,

3 Present is to be understood as one dimension of time that fills time, “whereas past and future are two dimensions relative to the present in time,” (Deleuze, 1990, p 186).

becoming-art-teacher allows the art student teacher to see the world from a non-student standpoint, opening up new understandings and perspectives, new conceptualizations of the very movement and being of difference between her/his current event and another event. My participant Olivia exemplifies this change of perspective as she recalls her movement between her event of being an art education student and her event of being an art teacher.

I have a whole new respect for teachers for sure. The amount of work that it takes to develop a lesson and to write a plan and to cut paper and have materials and order materials and then when it comes down to it, you get ready to present the lesson. The kids are all over the place, you have to have the classroom management, you have to have the rules set and in place, I mean it is *a lot* to keep track of and I never knew that it was like that. You know I thought it would be a fun job; you go in and get to paint with kids or get to teach high school kids how to throw on the potter's wheel. But it's not that easy, it is not. And my perspective changed dramatically in the amount of work and preparation and organizational skills and leadership skills that it takes. I had no idea. None. (Olivia)

Whereas Olivia had a change of perspective of what the everyday school life of an art teacher might be, there are also opportunities for student teachers to have changes of theoretical perspectives [curriculum and pedagogical thoughts; philosophies of teaching; etc.] as well.

Unfolding the Chaos of *Becoming-art-teacher*

Becoming-art-teacher, as a continual process, is one that is constantly in flux and is affected by external sources or a variety of different influences and [un]expected encounters. The three art student teachers that participated in my doctoral study were all in the process of *becoming-art-teacher*. Though there may be similarities in their processes due to institutional structures, because of the foundational concept of difference-in-itself, which is the incomparability inherent

in the singularity of things and the instants of their origins and understandings, no two *becomings-art-teacher* were the same. To reiterate, Deleuze focused on the individuality of each person, thing, or event and how it is perceived and experienced at that moment, not assuming a pre-existing unity with other items of its ilk or with other persons in the same preservice art program. Rather, Deleuze's "conception of difference seeks to privilege the individual differences between them" (Stagoll, 2005, p. 73), and this is especially plausible in the context of the unique circumstances of a particular art student teacher's production of self as art teacher. I studied each participant's individual experience of the process of student teaching through their retreats and advances between the events of art student and art teacher. Now that I have provided this cursory explanation of how I used the Deleuze | Guattari concept of becoming to frame the chaotic process of art student teaching as a temporal unhinging or betweenness, Justin will discuss how Doreen Massey's use of space and place provides yet another means of understanding how art student teachers can negotiate the culture of student teaching.

Being-teacher: What—or Who—Takes Place in the Art Room?

I [Justin] have occupied the space of various identities during my career in art education, many simultaneously. As such, I am sensitive to the omnipresent temporal structures inherent in each but I am specifically interested in the culture of student teaching in art education, its various intersections of space and time, and how (un)knowing⁴ is visually represented in field practices. Undergraduate students are subject to an academic calendar and rigid timelines imposed on them in order to graduate and receive state certification

4 In conjunction with knowing, (un)knowing is used in this text in relation to visual (mis)representation. As an act of volition, participants choose what to include in their digital maps. Of equal interest is what is absent, or not included. This can be either a conscious omission or evidence of an observational lack. The term is also employed in terms of misrepresentation in that regardless of their experiences and interpretations, some participants still adopt erroneous or troublesome stances. This will be further explicated through discourse pertaining to Critical Cartography.

before a particular date. They have to continually adjust their teaching to account for things such as daily bell schedules, weekly rotations, and marking periods. Factor in external demands, and for undergraduate art education students, time—as Chronos—*becomes* oppressive.

Another observed phenomenon in teacher education is how undergraduate students desire to teach in a context similar to one in which they were raised. Why do undergraduate students resist *being placed* somewhere far, both literally and figuratively? As one who student taught and then was eventually hired in an inner-city school district, I empathize with their resistance since I was raised and educated in a homogenous, suburban school district. One explanation might be that now, more than ever, the period for student teaching is short and the stakes are high, resulting in little to no space for mistakes during student teaching. Candidates often opt for a “safe place” similar to what they already know.

Spatio-temporal Relations

[T]hinking of time and space together does not mean they are identical, rather it means that the imagination of one will have repercussions for the imagination of the other and that space and time are implicated in each other. (Massey, 2005, p. 18)

I am not suggesting by any means that temporal factors should or could ever be removed from the equation of student teaching. However, I am concerned that if “space is seen as *being* and time as *becoming*” (Massey, 2005, p. 29), a focus on *becoming* art teacher has advanced a temporal epistemology. I suggest that a shift to a spatial paradigm with an ontological emphasis would encourage art student teachers to more aptly embrace *being* art teacher.

While Laura has described *becoming* as the change situated between two events, I advance an ethnographic approach to field practices that investigates *being* as informed occupancy of place. I challenge art student teachers to view field observations not as visitations, which

emphasizes the temporal, but to engage in reflexive practices that investigate how the place they are coming from, and the distance traveled in between, informs their understanding therein. The eventual representation—in the forms of visual imagery, narratives, and additional ethnographic data⁵—of their occupancy reveals the visual data collected while in a distant place, which can then be analyzed in relation to what was previously known and/or imagined about the site.

Zygmunt Bauman (1998), a Polish sociologist concerned with modernity and postmodern consumerism, positions near and far as discordant spaces in that one is rarely at a loss at home whereas being in a “far-away space is an unnerving experience; venturing far away means being beyond one’s ken, out of place and out of one’s element, inviting trouble and fearing harm” (p. 13). Enacting Bauman’s distinction, I theorize art student teachers’ homes—the spaces they were raised in—as *near* and the disparate⁶ school placement as *far*, in terms of both distance and difference, which I position as *foreign*. By conceiving of them not as separate, dichotomous durations but as geographical positions, the travels to and fro illustrate the physical area traversed in between points and also the interrelated, spatial construction of both. As one place is contested, it has immediate and direct implications for the other.

Doreen Massey (2005) echoes a similar conceptual framework when explaining what happens when one returns from what could be considered far by stating that “the truth is that you can never simply ‘go back’, to home or to anywhere else. When you get ‘there’ the place

5 In both my dissertation and current field practices, students enact a mapping methodology of representing their trajectory to their field placement through handheld media and the Open Source Software (OSS) Google Maps, which allows the end user to overlay multiple visual modalities of visual data through *place-markers*, such as photos and videos, while also collecting spatio-temporal data such as GPS coordinates and timestamps (Sutters, 2012).

6 My dissertation study intentionally placed student teachers in urban/inner city school districts, which furthers the distinction between near and far and gives credence to the subsequent use of “foreign”.

will have moved on just as you yourself will have changed... You can't go back in space-time" (pp. 124–125).

Laura suggests that subjectivity is always under construction and influenced by external sources. Similarly, the process of knowing self is consistent with how one comes to know a place. Both are not static but rather constitutive and to a degree cartographic. All observers visiting a classroom perform actions during their occupancy. Observation is not passive. Therefore, the data collected provides visual evidence of what is both appropriated through representation and often more subtly, that which is left out through *omission*, either intentionally or unintentionally. Jeremy Crampton (2010) and others in the field of Critical Cartography deftly inquire into how power is ascribed, represented, and maintained through mapping, a critical practice that I have implemented with art student teachers. For those who are trained in artistic modalities of learning, it is vital that future art educators are aware of how space and place are visually represented. Similar to education, cartography is a political act (Crampton, 2010; Freire, 1993) in that a shared, public space is created where contemporary issues are (in)visible. I seek these visual manifestations, or absences, in the academic space as it allows for the articulation of experience, an opportunity to make sense of what it means to *be* an art teacher. Massey (2005) furthers this sentiment when claiming that the exploration of these representations "has reverberations for thinking about politics and the spatial" (p. 18).

Drawing from Massey's problematizing of the spatial and the resulting emergence of related socio-political issues, I suggest that a synthesis of Bauman's distinction between near and far with art education site observations during fieldwork opens a space to collect and analyze the visual narratives collected while traveling to the site from home (near) and while in the physical place of the art classroom (far). The spatial imaginations of both places coalesce through the continual layering of contested, unnerving experiences in the digital interface. The temporal becomes minimized since the events are not viewed nor understood in a linear fashion. Rather, the resulting visual

representation is atemporal since it presents their being based on the entirety of their experiences.

A distinction therefore needs to be adopted between place and space. While some theorists have attempted to rectify this convoluted debate stemming back to ancient Grecian philosophy (Casey, 1998), Doreen Massey (2005) differentiates between the two by suggesting that *place* "can be seen as a particular, unique point of [an] intersection ... a meeting place" and that places should "be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings" (p. 7). Massey (2005) later describes space as a product of interrelations that is always under construction, that is, the process of being made (p. 9). By adopting Massey's distinction between space and place and what happens when the two meet, I suggest that when art student teachers enter a "meeting place," some pre-conceived aspect of space will be disrupted and ultimately *dis-placed*. In *The Fate of Place*, Edward Casey (1998) evokes Descartes who suggested that "[e]veryone imagines in space—even imaginary or empty space—various parts of determinate size and shape, some of which can be transferred in imagination to the place of others, but no two of which can be conceived as copenetrating each other at the same time in one and the same place, since it is contradictory for this to happen without any piece of space being removed" (p. 152). I question the effect a subject—or art student teacher—has on both space and place while entering, occupying, and then leaving a classroom.

While Laura explores the function of *emitting* particles to produce a molecular teacher, I draw attention to how imagined preconceptions are displaced through *consuming*. I do so by positioning student teachers as consumers in order to illuminate intentions and take stock of what is taken from a classroom. What effect does an art student teacher enact on a classroom (place) and what voids (space) are created through unidirectional, consumerist practices such as *observing* behaviors, *collecting* narratives, *getting* experience, *taking* pictures, and *gaining* confidence? If the aforementioned Cartesian stance is accepted that prior knowledge cannot copenetrates with

disjunctive lived experiences, then an ensuing spatial transaction must occur. Either the newfound understanding is rejected, thus reifying previous (un)knowing, or it discredits a prior assumption and therefore dis-places it.

The art student teacher must actively choose what to represent in his/her spatial construction of the place and what is discounted, similar to cartography. Art student teachers, by physically traveling to a distant place, bring an imagined space—of both near and far—with them. Quite often, these imagined notions of what they see as foreign schools are accumulations of heard narratives and media representations. The process of spatial (re)construction requires clearance as a means to disrupt previous misconceptions, or flawed knowing. Likewise, experience and subsequent reflection is continually filling a void, or lack in knowing. I question what is *dis-placed* when art student teachers are positioned within a physical place, as well as what is disrupted and/or affirmed in their imagined (un)knowing of the space. I argue that spatial understanding—as opposed to temporal—is fluid, nonlinear, and transitory and is carried *into* place and subsequently changed or altered by it, just as place is effected by the subsequent disembarkation of the subject. The ensuing visual modality of representation clears space for the socio-political to manifest; inquiries about who we are and how we teach in an increasingly diverse world can be raised, and hopefully addressed.

Mary: Narrating Space

I conducted an initial focus group with my undergraduate student participants, which was followed by regular individual interviews and group training sessions throughout the semester. The methodological commonality during the training sessions was Google Maps. I employed this Open Source Software (OSS) as the primary modality for investigating the trajectory from their homes to their placements because it is free, intuitive, and one that many undergraduate students are already familiar with through related GPS software programs. I later showed them how to upload collected

data into Google Maps and attach visual signifiers through *place-markers*, a feature available in Google Maps consisting of various icons that can be selected and applied on the mapping plane. As students *marked-place*, their visual representations became a bricolage of temporal incidents superimposed onto one interface. A paradigmatic shift towards the ontological occurred as the imagery allowed multiple spatial factors to simultaneously emerge, thus mapping a “coherent closed system ... that is instantaneously interconnected” (Massey, 2005, p. 106).

After the three training sessions, each participant took rather divergent routes. I will share one particular participant’s narrative that most clearly places a focus on being in a discordant place. Mary described herself as a typical middle-class girl from an affluent suburb of Columbus, the “type of person that you can say, ‘Mary, don’t jump off that cliff’ and I am going to do it because I have to figure it out myself” (Mary).

After numerous site observations, Mary shared the Google Map with her sister. To her amazement, Mary’s sister stated that her field placement is in the neighborhood where their father was raised. Mary’s father did not talk much about his childhood and intentionally did not take his children to see where he lived out of fear of the current condition of the neighborhood. Mary called her father to ask about it and he said he would tell her more if she promised not to venture out into the neighborhood by herself. Indicative of her personality, she did otherwise.

Then it was after I talked to my dad, I was like, Oh, I got to go back out again. So I like made a special trip and I was really excited about it. I couldn’t find anybody to go with me so I was still like “I don’t care, I’m going.” I need to put a picture with these stories. (Mary)

In a later interview, Mary divulged a rather poignant realization:

I should probably have listened to him because he doesn’t even

go back to the area any more but no, so I go there with you know my little North Face coat on, and my Cannon camera, my iPhone, and I am like “Oh my gosh, this is not safe right now.” And I just felt so *out of place*. Like everybody was looking at me. Like every single person was like stopping and like turning their heads and seeing what I was *taking* a picture of and why. It was like I was *invading their space* and judging them because I was out photographing their lifestyle. (Mary, italics added)

By entering a neighborhood foreign to her, she immediately felt “out of place.” Flipping the fieldwork construct, Mary became the object of inquiry, the observer being observed. Her invasion was consumerist in nature as she “took” pictures and suffered the cost associated with their purchase. Interestingly, this practice does not differ much from standard observation practices enacted inside the physical school building so it brings into question why the participant responded so differently when positioned in a different context. This particular experience as well as the entire field placement challenged Mary’s preconceived notion of urban schools, called for critical examination of her upbringing, and ultimately informed her pedagogy through the design and implementation of site-specific art lessons informed by her newfound knowledge of the surrounding neighborhood.

Implications for Becoming/Being-Art Student Teacher

When we set out to collaborate on theorizing about the culture of student teaching from two individual spatio-temporal perspectives, we knew that space and time must be thought of together, but we also knew we had very different approaches. Here we address, in a more conversational manner, some implications for utilizing a spatio-temporal approach to understanding the culture of student teaching in art education.

Laura: I think it is important to remember that becoming is not becoming the actual physical subject of teacher, but the very dynamism of change (chaos) that continually occurs in the process of life. Becoming is instability and change and each becoming has

its own duration. This is important for art teacher educators to understand as they facilitate each student’s negotiation through student teaching. No two becomings-art-teacher will be alike, so we must make allowances for each and every student to unfold in his/her own time. Some students will be quick to comprehend and implement our suggestions and some will be slow, and this is to be an expected part of growth, not a way to legitimate a label of being *behind* expectations.

Justin: While I understand what Laura is saying, I suggest that an advancement of a spatial paradigm in undergraduate education could feasibly mitigate problematic issues related to time. If art student teachers were increasingly attuned to the places they occupy, it is quite possible they might handle an unexpected encounter differently. If Massey’s (2005) assertion is correct that feelings of fear and anxiety are tied to time, furthering a spatial way of knowing could mitigate this tension and encourage prospective educators to venture further from home, both geographically and metaphorically.

Laura: Likewise, while I understand what Justin is saying about space, I think we really need to consider the nuances of temporality that I outlined above. With art student teachers functioning as unhinged time (Aion), within a space of regulated time such as instructional blocks of the school day (Chronos), it becomes evident what may be the impetus for the chaos and dynamism that is art student teaching. Therefore, I suggest that teacher education programs address different modalities of time and allow students to unfold their teacher subjectivities in their own time. This is not to say that student teaching needs to be longer than a semester duration. This is to posit that we do not set strict deadlines for when certain highly valued teacher-attributes should be recognizable by specific times (such as midterm) and consequently label the student as making ‘unsatisfactory progress’ when she doesn’t meet our arbitrary structuring of acceptable timeliness.

Justin: Conversely, I believe teacher education programs should design and implement field placements that intentionally position

future teachers in locales consistent with potential employment contexts (far) and avoid sheltering undergraduate students through replication of normative ideologies in education (near). Avoidance of issues related to geographic location is disingenuous and therefore a dis-service to pre-service students. As art student teachers navigate the spatial dimension of being-teacher while occupying field placements, academia is proximally situated to come alongside future art educators during the critical incidents that emerge while in varied school settings so as to make visible and potentially reconstruct misconceptions of not only a foreign place (far), but also their notion of home (near).

Laura: I agree with Justin in that we as teacher educators should not avoid issues related to space or location, just as we cannot avoid issues related to an unhinging of time. As the experts in academia, we are in the position of power to make the necessary changes that will foster a deeper and more empathic understanding of the culture of student teaching. Instead of blaming/guiltying student teachers for not being timely and efficient or for not being fearless in encountering foreign teaching sites, let's reconsider what we are asking our student teachers to endure. We're telling them to adhere to structured and regulated time while they are operating as an unhinging of time, all while we are positioning them in foreign spaces. Though we as teacher educators cannot possibly alleviate all the anxieties and tensions associated with student teaching, we can reframe how we consider each student's spatio-temporal passing through this event. And in so doing, we can help them unfold their teacher subjectivities in their own times and spaces.

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Constructing, Performing, and Perceiving Identity(ies) in the Place of Online Art Education

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ABSTRACT

How young people construct, perform, play with, and perceive their own and others' identity online influences their participation and engagement in online art education. Art educators have argued that identity performance in the art classroom, both online and offline, is an important aspect to creating critical dialog and resistance to cultural and gender stereotypes. As a result, considering the fluid, dynamic, and contextual qualities of identity(ies) online is a necessary aspect of online art education. To explore this, I present the outcome of imposed anonymity in a research study involving a group of teens and their teachers in an online art social network. Participants were required to perform new identities, which enabled or disabled them from participating in the online art curriculum.

Playing with how one's identity is presented online is a relatively recent form of identity performance that has important implications for art education (Garoian & Gaudelius, 2004). As the spatial boundaries of art classrooms expand through the use of social media there is the potential to perform and explore new networked identities (Sweeney, 2009). Experimentation and performance of identity are important aspects to how young people navigate, interact, and resist normative cultural and gender stereotypes online. As art educators embrace online spaces for the teaching of art (e.g. Buffington, 2008; Carpenter & Cifuentes, 2011; Han, 2011; Liao, 2008; Tillander, 2011), a reconsideration of youth cultural practices becomes necessary, which includes how they construct, perform, and perceive identity online.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the question of how identity construction, performance, and perception online can enable and disable creative production and participation in online art educational settings. In the first part of this paper, I will consider how identity performance online is a continual process that involves the

construction, appropriation, and presentation of digital artifacts to represent aspects of self. Further, this performance of the self is done in relation to a specific time and space, which is also in constant flux. Engaging with identity performance in art education is crucial to resisting the stereotypes of gender, race, and class (Garoian, 2002). In the second part of this paper, I will use the serendipitous outcome of imposed anonymity in the study of a designed online social network and art curriculum to illustrate how some of the participants played with the presentation of their online identity. In this example, I present how two young women performed new identities online to enable their participation in the online curriculum. I then contrast their performance with the case of one young man who was dissuaded from participating because he could not link his already developed identity online into the social network used for the study. This illustration raises important questions about the role of identity construction, performance, and perception in the art classroom both online and offline.

Online Identity(ies)

When Sherry Turkle (1984/2005) first wrote "computers change the way people think—especially about themselves" (p. 152), she observed that the personal computer was changing the way youth understood and performed their identity. Later, she developed these observations as youth began to interact with each other online and found that there was pleasure in performing different identities in different online contexts (Turkle, 1995). Technology, especially online interaction, disrupts traditional notions of identity as fixed, unified, and whole (Slack & Wise, 2005). The use of digital technologies and online communication are neither inert actors nor the cause of social action. Instead, as David Buckingham (2008) argued, digital media has particular affordances that shape social behavior and are shaped by it. For youth, online identity performance is a significant activity through the posting of images, videos, and texts. Youth use these and various other digital artifacts to curate an identity across many different websites (Jenkins, Purushotma, Weigel, Clinton, &

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Robison, 2009). They curate specific identities for specific contexts, whether they are social or interest-driven online communities (Ito et al., 2008). The curation and performance of these varied identities reflect individual youth agency while also reflecting cultural values and practices. What is important to remember about these practices is they are identities-in-action (Weber & Mitchell, 2008). That is to say they are always evolving, becoming, and in relation to others and the technological platforms used.

All activity online is recorded and becomes what Matthew Fuller (2005) termed “flecks of identity.” Online identities are interpretations of patterned activity that generates flecks of identities: images posted, profile pictures, pseudonyms, links bookmarked, sites visited, comments posted, videos watched, and so on. An individual can consciously and deliberately construct these flecks, and an observer can interpret them using various frameworks such as search queries and filtering. Both an individual’s actions construct his or her own identity and the observer’s interpretation of that pattern of activity construct an identity. In all of our online activity we create a record that is traceable. When aggregated, the flecks of identity that we create through our online activity could be interpreted as an identity. Every time one goes online s/he is creating a patterned identity through the act of looking and posting of images, texts, and videos. A whole web of associations is drawn and subject to interpretation when distinctions are made about what makes one identity different from another.

Alicia Juarrero (2002) characterized identity as a complex system, something that looks “more like bramble bushes in a thicket than like stones” (p. 103). Complex dynamic systems are not concrete, fixed objects. They are irreducible to their component parts. A complex dynamic system is defined or identified through its recursively elaborative patterns of activity. Juarrero used the concept of invariance, or robustness, to describe how complex dynamic systems operate with a meta-level stability. In patterns of activity, such meta-level stability is far from stable; in fact, it is always moving

away from equilibrium. Juarrero deploys this idea of invariance to counter the Platonic ideal form, to dislodge the idea that any one component is a meta-level controller of identity. For example, the popular misconception that DNA is the sole determinant of disease, health, and physiology can be attributed to the linear, deterministic understandings of causality (Juarrero, 1999). No one event or object represents or even determines the totality of an identity; rather, Juarrero argues, it is the coordinated relations between other agents, participants, cells, and so on that make an identity one thing and not another. In other words, identity is not fixed, nor can it be isolated. This resembles what Judith Butler (2004) articulated: identity is a temporal performance within a scene of constraints. The scene of identity performance subsequently is interconnected within the time and space of relationships.

Teaching and learning online involves a qualitatively different interpretation of time and space. The asynchronous nature of communication online creates new conditions for identity perception, construction, and performance. It is important here to distinguish between space and place. Space and place are often conceptualized in terms of three dimensions: height, length, and width. Traditionally, the difference in the definitions of the two terms is that space is an area that is unoccupied, empty, or available, while place is defined as an area that is a point in space, usually occupied or identified with a defined boundary. Defining space and place as presence and absence in this way is inherently problematic because of the exclusion of time (Massey, 1994). Space, that which is empty, is often presumed to be static or fixed, and like space, place is similarly tied to a fixed identity or impermeable boundary. Space, then, can only be experienced and subsequently observed through time. Further, place is more than just an occupied point in space or defined by boundaries, rather it is fluid and patterned intersection of links, movements, relations. In other words, place is made and remade continually through the interaction of people and materials through time and space.

Doreen Massey (1994) stated “within this dynamic simultaneity

which is space, phenomena may be placed in relationship to one another in such a way that new social effects are provoked" (p. 4). Massey's assertion that place is fluid and dynamic because of the social interactions of individuals makes her insights particularly applicable to the place of online interaction. The flecks of identity carefully constructed and performed online are an important part of the cultural practices and places inhabited by youth. Given that many of these flecks are visual, art educators are situated in a unique role to critically consider their impact on teaching and learning.

Online Identity(ies) and Art Education

For many art educators, identity has played an important role in teaching about art and their students' artistic production. Much of what has been advocated recently concerns culturally inclusive strategies that allow for individuals, students, and teachers alike to consider, share, interpret, and critically engage with their own experiences, values, and practices (Keifer-Boyd et al., 2003; López, 2009; Sakatani & Pistolesi, 2009; Song, 2009). Similarly, art educators recognize the symbiotic relationship between youth identities and visual culture (Ballengee-Morris & Stuhr, 2001; Freedman, 1994; Freedman & Stuhr, 2004) and as such advocate for a critical consideration of this relationship in art educational practice. A similar approach needs to be taken for online youth cultural practices, which include the construction, performance, and perception of (an) identity(ies) online.

Presenting a singular definition of online youth cultural practice as it relates to identity is problematic as it has been taken to mean a vast range of things to many different fields of study. Mary Bucholtz (2002) argued that a productive approach to the problem of understanding youth cultural practice is the understanding that "youth negotiate cultural identities in a variety of contexts, both material and semiotic, both leisure-based and at home, school, work, and in the political sphere" (p. 544). This is similar to Charles Garoian's (2002) suggestion that youth produce and perform identity as determined by the

context, whether the context values or erases the differences brought by each student in the art classroom. Garoian and Gaudelius (2004) further elaborated that the space of technology acts as a pedagogical space in which teachers and students can resist cultural and commercial norms of identity and perform re-imagined relationships to technology. The quality of this relationship is one where s/he can perform an identity to explore new understandings of self in relation to others.

Further, Robert Sweeney (2008) suggested that these new performances form networked identities that have potent creative potential for art educators. Like Garoian and Gaudelius (2004), he proposed that, through identity performances and conversations in online environments like Second Life, teachers and students can explore, critically examine, and resist the normative roles and affects of representation of self in popular culture. Though there have been a number of claims that youth are performing and exploring new identities online (e.g., Baym, 1998), recent research suggests that the gender stereotypes for both young women and men are being predominantly performed and amplified through social media (Kapdizic & Herring, 2011). This is perhaps attributed to the fact that most social media services (e.g. Facebook) want users to use their legal identity to better target advertising to their demographic and that there is little taught in schools on how to better critically question and resist these normative forces online. In the next part of this paper, I present an example of how identity construction, performance, and perception play a role in online art education.

An Illustration of Identity(ies) Performance in an Online Social Network

The following illustration arose serendipitously from a larger study investigating the shifts in teaching and learning art through social media (Castro, 2012). In this study I worked as both the researcher and teacher in a password-protected, invitation-only, custom social networking site with four art teachers and 15 students. The teachers

were participants with their students in all aspects of the study in order to gain insights into the efficacy of the curriculum and technology used with their students. Each teacher had their own motives for joining the study, however each expressed an interest in learning how to use social media in their classrooms. The 15 students came from Grades 9 through 12. In consultation with the teacher participants, it was decided that this should be an extra-curricular project advertised through the art department to the entire school. The study was open to any student who was interested. The teachers and I advertised the study in all of the art classes and in the after-school art club.

To investigate the shifts in teaching and learning, the study used an emergent art curriculum (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2008) that increasingly used the participants' knowledge (images and textual dialogs) uploaded to the site as a source for future inquiry. The general shape of the curriculum had three phases. The first phase focused primarily on creating a space for reshaping relations between participants' ideas about happiness in our culture and their personal lives, through context-sensitive constraints. Those constraints would be embodied in the weekly questions of inquiry, or prompts. The second phase shifted towards the collective knowledge that was being enacted by participants. Drawing from the understandings in complexity thinking (Davis & Sumara, 2006), I intended the second phase to be about generating a self-organizing complex system by using the history of ideas, as represented in the images, as a source for new inquiry through art. The third phase emphasized an extended individual inquiry in relation to the experience of inquiring with and through a collective of artists. This iterative process of inquiry was part of the design-based research (DBR) methodology used in this study.

Design-based research is an interventionist methodology similar to action research in that both seek to collaborate with participants in the research act. DBR differs from action research in that it focuses on the designed intervention such as a curriculum innovation, technological

interface, or pedagogical strategy. Whereas action research calls for the researcher to work with participants identifying local problems and issues requiring inquiry, DBR works with participants to refine educational innovations (Wang & Hannafin, 2005). The researcher in DBR collaborates with participants in an iterative cycle to develop the design innovation and also develop new understandings of learning (Design-Based Research Collective, 2003; Joseph, 2004; Sandoval & Bell, 2004). In this study, the educational innovation was the emergent curriculum while also attending to the larger questions of teaching and learning online.

The study took place over the course of one school term from recruitment to final interviews. A number of data collection techniques were used. For this study I collected data from individual participant interviews at the beginning, mid-point, and end of the study, both offline and online; from my own observations of online and offline activity kept in a daily journal; and from images and texts posted by participants. The social network interface also enabled the collection of numerical data, such as the date and time an image was posted, number of images posted, and the number of times an image was viewed.

One of the major reasons for using a DBR methodology was the opportunity to design a curriculum, participate in its unfolding, and then iteratively respond. From week to week, each iterative step analyzed and interpreted participant responses, interaction, and inquiry. Each week, as a researcher, educator, and co-participant, I adapted the curriculum and my pedagogy in response to the themes I interpreted in participant dialogues and images, and when possible, from formal and informal interviews.

One of the unexpected understandings to emerge from this study was the role that identity construction, performance, and perception had on participant participation. In qualitative research there are oftentimes serendipitous discoveries that researchers had not anticipated initially yet yield important insights (Becker, 1996; Deegan & Fine, 1996). The question of identity and its impact on learning

were not parts of the original research question or design. Rather it emerged from specific conditions imposed on the study outlined below.

Imposed Anonymity

Institutional Review Boards (IRB) present challenges to research design, oftentimes shaping the research outcomes in unexpected ways (Sanders & Ballengee-Morris, 2008). In order to receive human research approval for this study I was required to preserve the confidentiality of all participants. This stemmed from a general apprehension that participants had the potential to reveal each other's identity on the open waters of the Internet by copying identifying images and texts and posting them outside of the closed social network site. In response to these concerns, one of the conditions of participation was that students could not post images that would identify themselves, others, or their school.

In this study, I held a privileged position in that I knew all of the participants' online and offline identities. Outside of my own role as participant in the study, the other participants—teachers and students—did not know who the other participants were. Early on I noticed two of the student participants were carefully constructing and performing identities while another was vocally resistant to participating due to the confidentiality requirements. It was then that I decided to collect additional data with each iteration of the study, which included asking questions that addressed how and why participants constructed their identities, performed them, and perceived others in the study.

Haine Walker, Gaelan Knoll, and John Freeman

In this illustration, I will focus on three of the 15 student participants: Haine Walker, Gaelan Knoll, and John Freeman because of the way that that Haine and Gaelan performed new identities to engage with the curriculum, while John named the imposed anonymity as the reason for his disengagement. Haine Walker was the only Grade 10

student participating in the study. Although she self-identified an offline identity of a female, she presented her online identity as male. I will refer to Haine Walker as "he (she)" throughout this paper. Haine Walker was active in his (her) Grade 10 art class, and self-identified as a student who puts effort into everything he (she) does in art.

Gaelan Knoll, a Grade 11 student, was a very active art student at the time of this study. Like Haine Walker, Gaelan Knoll self-identified as female offline, while online identified as a male. I will refer, as I do with Haine Walker, to Gaelan Knoll as "he (she)." John Freeman, a Grade 12 art student, whose offline and online identities were male, was one of the first participants to sign up for the study. During initial interviews, he expressed excitement to participate. I inferred from interviews that John Freeman was one of the most technologically experienced, in terms of social media, of all the participants. After one blog post expressing his excitement for the project, John Freeman stopped participating altogether.

Enabling Participation through Constructing Flecks of Identity

Participants had a number of modes available to represent themselves, without revealing a physical identity. They are organized as follows: pseudonyms and profile images, language, images, and gender. Participants were required to choose pseudonyms that could not be linked to their physical/legal identities. Their profile images were not to represent themselves directly, however, they were encouraged to create a visual metaphor of themselves. Some participants, both students and teachers, described how they controlled their language to present a particular identity. Images were also considered important to participants who were concerned with keeping themselves completely anonymous, by controlling what could identify them in the images. Haine Walker and Gaelan Knoll performed gender to conceal their physical identities or because it was an already common online practice for them.

Pseudonyms and Profile Images

The motivations for choosing pseudonyms and profile images can be described as two-fold: first, as a way to represent an idea of self visually through personal affinities and second, as a way to conceal offline identity. Haine Otomiya is a female character from the manga *The Gentleman's Alliance* written and illustrated by Arina Tanemura and Allan Walker is a male character from the manga *D.Gray-Man* by Katsura Hoshino. Both plots center on these two main characters that are both fifteen years old, the same age as Haine Walker. In Haine Walker's use of language and online posting of gender, he (she) tried to project a self-described male identity. Haine Walker chose characters from popular culture and mashed up two of them to create a new identity of his (her) own. The online identity of Haine Walker became an intersection of his (her) relations to the site and popular culture. Like Haine Walker, Gaelan Knoll mashed up two identities: Gaelan, a favourite manga character of his (hers), and Knoll, who came from Thomas Knoll, the lead author of Adobe Photoshop. In choosing the name Knoll, Gaelan described that he (she) got it from the About/Startup screen while waiting for Photoshop to boot up. His (her) pseudonym was unique to this social network. Gaelan reported in interviews that he (she) had a number of specific pseudonyms each tailored to the online community in which he (she) was a participant.



Figure 1: Gaelan Knoll's self portrait and profile image. Gaelan Knoll's self portrait and profile image.

A number of the participants chose an object to represent themselves, yet did not feel it was necessary to stay with the same image throughout the study. To them, profile images were fluid, temporary, and suitable to the moment. There were no commitments to sticking with a profile image over time. Gaelan Knoll chose an image that was going to conceal his (her) physical identity yet represent himself (herself) in the relation to the social network (Figure 1). He (she), as did many others, chose a profile image in relation to his (her) own perceived role and relation to the site and study. It is here we see that teens implicitly, if not explicitly, understand the interdependency of identity and place in online activity. Perceiving and understanding the social conditions of an online place, teens are quite capable of constructing and performing identity to their advantage through the selection of carefully chosen images and text (boyd, 2014). Because places are constructed through social and material interactions, they create the scene of constraints (Butler, 2004) in which identity is performed.

Language

Participants also considered controlling and selecting the language they used, from textual descriptions of images to comments on someone's wall, as a representation of their identity. Haine Walker especially was sensitive to how language constructs an identity online; this was evident in his (her) ability to identify Stormy as one of the teachers. Many of the participants used emoticons — textual representations of facial expressions and shorthand (e.g., LOL, meaning Laugh Out Loud) — in their writing. The student participants assumed that teachers and adults do not use these sorts of writing conventions.

Images

Participants like Haine, who wanted to keep their physical/legal identities from being linked to their online ones, commented on how they had considered all of the associations with objects, places, and people that could be used to make those links. Gaelan discusses how

she used his (her) mother's mobile phone instead of his (her) own, in one of his (her) posted images (Figure 2) stating:

It's her phone. I pretended it was mine. Because everybody knows what my phone looks like too. My friends were talking about it, saying that can't be Gaelan that's not her phone.



Figure 2: Gaelan Knoll's mobile phone image.

Gender

Gaelan Knoll also took some pleasure in the challenge of remaining anonymous through considering everything from language to the objects depicted in photographs. Only two of the participants, Haine Walker and Gaelan Knoll, deliberately presented themselves online as not their biological gender. In this paper I have presented them as male (female) because it was how they wanted to be perceived online. In the school, their physical, biological, and social identities were self-identified as female. They had similar reasons for presenting themselves as males to conceal their identities, through choosing to represent themselves as far from their school identities as possible. On the one hand, Gaelan Knoll indicated that he (she) had often performed a male identity online, previous to participation on this

site. When asked why he (she) performed as a male online, and specifically if it had anything to do with being treated differently, Gaelan stated,

I don't know... I just have an inclination to do it. Like I know some people on deviantART do the same thing. They pretend that they are guys. I don't know, you feel stronger... yeah, stronger.

Haine Walker, on the other hand, described the decision to perform as a male just another layer of masking his (her) identity. Performing a different gender online is not a common practice (Kapdizic & Herring, 2011). When it does occur it is part of a pattern of posting misinformation to mislead those who do not know the person's physical identity (boyd, 2008). For Gaelan Knoll, it was a bit more complex than just posting misinformation as Haine Walker did. It was part of a pattern of activity in online places. Gaelan Knoll, as interpreted from interviews and his (her) behaviour online, was savvy in constructing and presenting online identities. On sites like deviantART, Gaelan initially presented himself (herself) as a male because it made him (her) feel more confident, but as Gaelan became more confident, he (she) felt the need to begin presenting a more aligned online/offline identity for a possible future career in art. The performance and construction of identities are contingent on the spatiality of place and the intersection of perceptions, interpretations, and descriptions of social relations and identities.

Reshaping Social Relations

Student participants like Haine Walker and Gaelan Knoll were enthusiastic that the perceived social relations that come with being in school were being reshaped through new online identities. However, none of the participants named teachers' judgment of their art as part of their anxieties around production and display. I interpreted from the interviews that these anxieties stemmed from social relationships with other students. When I asked if being anonymous gave Haine the confidence to post over 300 images, he (she) responded,

If we actually knew who we were, would we actually talk to each other? Because in high school there is, like, a social status and grade difference. And no one really talks to everyone unless we were friends with them. I heard that lots of different people are doing this. So, I was thinking “wow” if we actually knew the people doing this we would probably stick to the people we would know.

Haine Walker’s intuitions about participants sticking with already established relationships were partially true in the case of this study. Early on, it was observed that initial interactions occurred between those who shared their identities with each other. These exclusive relationships and resulting interactions, however, did, as participants interacted, expand to include those relations in the social network site. Haine Walker’s desire for an egalitarian community was tempered by the realization that a social hierarchy could develop within the online community. Responding to interview questions about the requirement of anonymity on our social network, two other student participants confirmed that being anonymous removed the perceived judgments that come from being positioned in certain social relations at school—especially if one is not in a position of power afforded by social status.

Gaelan Knoll was able to distinguish how he (she) judged the work that was posted by participants she knew in light of her perceptions of their offline identities, and as a result tried to not link online and offline identities. Gaelan Knoll described how it was the removal of the fear of being judged in the offline world that enabled and attracted him (her) to being anonymous in this project. He (she) stated,

Some of my friends I know who they are on the site and I sort of find myself judging them.... so I don’t want them judging me the same way. Basically, I guess I feel nervous having my art looked at, but I suppose since it’s online it’s a bit less scary. I feel like when people look at my art they won’t be judging me, but my art.

Being anonymous in this place provided the occasion for new identities to be constructed; it was, as Gaelan Knoll suggests, not removed from offline experiences, but provided a place to speak, act, and inquire through art without the perceived judgment of their position in social relations at school. The student participants on our social network like Gaelan and Haine described a perception of being judged on the merits of their artwork and not on where they were positioned in the social relations of school.

Disabling Participation

In initial interviews, John Freeman described himself and his friends as being active online, posting digital video and photography much more than was indicated by any of the other participants. John described his activity online, especially posting content, as being strongly linked to his social relations with his close group of friends in school. They would often perform, produce, and edit digital videos and photographs together, posting them online under each other’s online user names on a rotating basis. When asked about the possibility of having a social network site as part of classroom content, John responded positively.

In addition to having course content posted on a social network, John Freeman was attracted to the opportunity to interact with a group of peers on a school-related social network site. After posting his first and only blog post, he invited a number of his friends to join our social networking site. After John Freeman’s first blog post, he stopped participating on the site altogether. When asked at the end of the study about the issue of anonymity, he expressed frustration at not being able to know who people were on the site. He stated,

I think it’s frustrating. Cause you don’t know who everyone is, and if you ever get a friend invite, randomly it is really weird, because you don’t know why he or she did and you don’t know who they are and they know who you are.

In John Freeman's response, I interpreted a need to link online and offline identities. In the first interview with him, when I asked about his Internet activity he described that working and interacting with his friends, who were from school, made up most of his time and activity online. Regardless of why his friends never signed up to participate in the study, it was a significant issue in why he did not participate beyond his one blog post. It seems that the characteristics of anonymity that elicited a positive response from Haine and Gaelan were the same characteristics that dissuaded John Freeman. For him, having established social relations was important in his online activities. When asked later in the interview at the end of the study about recommendations for using social networking in schools, John suggested that this should be done with people who were already close, such as a whole class. In this study, however, participants came from a number of different grades and courses as an extra-curricular project. The suggestion that a group should be able to link each other's online and offline identities indicates that, for John, social networking in schools should be an extension of social relations—whereas for participants like Gaelan and Haine, the online reshaping of the social relations in school enabled their participation. I conclude this article by considering the role of identity(ies) performance on student engagement in art education.

Considering Identity(ies) in the Art Classroom

Teacher participants described the quality of art, inquiry, and ideas produced and posted to the social network as reshaping their expectations. Their expectations were so reshaped that it resulted in identity confusion. At one point, Stormy (teacher pseudonym) suggested that I had created fictional identities of student participants because of the conceptual sophistication of images and ideas being produced and posted. She stated,

I find Gaelan Knoll has this real... I am convinced it is another teacher. But I don't know... [laughs] I am not sure. I don't know what other teachers there are. At first I thought it might have

been James [the pseudonym I used as a participant-teacher]... No, there's sophistication in the work that's coming out of this artist.

The day after the following interview, Stormy suggested that I was Gaelan Knoll. This had been something she was convinced of until the end of the project, and until the site was taken offline. In fact, Gaelan was one of Stormy's most active students, staying after school and working alongside her on most afternoons.

Expectations of art students' capabilities are a tangled knot of intersecting beliefs and social and cultural practices that are entrenched throughout the spatiality of places of schooling. The social relations that teens perceive as being present in schools and their position in these relations can disable a whole range of possible engagements and participation. Those same relations were just as important for the engagement and participation for students in this project. What Haine, Gaelan, and John's narratives suggest is that identity does play an important role in students' participation and engagement in online art education. Further, students' perception of their own social relations can be shifted and reshaped through the performance of new identities online. Due to the content constraints requiring anonymity on our social network, the place occasioned a reshaping of social relations, where new patterns of activity and flecks of identity were able to be performed and constructed. For some participants like Haine and Gaelan, the performance of their new identities gave them a new confidence to contribute images and comments that exceeded the expectations of their art teacher. While this was enabling for some, it was also disabling for those, such as John, who either felt constrained by the content requirements or relied on having a familiar network of relations already in place.

Before making recommendations to institute a place in schools for identity play, performance, and construction so that those who perceive themselves as marginalized have a place in which they can participate confidently, we also need to consider who could become newly marginalized. What this paper has articulated is that to discuss

places of learning, especially online, identity has to be considered. Identity is not a fixed or static object; instead, it is a place where overlapping, intersecting, and sometimes conflicting descriptions and interpretations result from social relations.

This illustration raises difficult questions about how identity play should be taken up and engaged with in online art education. For example, should identity play, performance, and construction be a structured activity in online art education? What role do students' perceptions of social relations play in confidence, participation, and engagement in the art classroom? And, why was it that some of the teacher participants mistook their students for what they equated with a professional practicing artist? Before rushing to judgment of the teacher participants and their expectations of students, we should consider more closely the tangled knot of social relations between teens, student perceptions of self, art curricula, cultural expectations of student art, teacher education, and art educational research. It is a convergence of factors that constructs an identity of what a student should think and produce. Even though we have shrugged off the notion of fixed stages of development in art (Kindler & Darras, 1998), there still remain the traces of what school art is and should be (Efland, 1976). The learning possibilities of social media are that it can become a third space (Wilson, 2008) where both teachers and students can resist these entrenched identities and the expectations that go with them, where they may perform new identities.

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In/Visibility of the Abandoned School: Beyond Representations of School Closure

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ABSTRACT

In/Visibility of The Abandoned School is a practice-led form of visual inquiry that investigates school closure in two ways: first, through a photographic practice that documents my experience in and with schools as they stand closed on the periphery of society, boarded up and locked off from the public; and second, through a site-specific installation performed with a closed school located in British Columbia, Canada, in which a temporal site of exchange took place. This research contributes to arts-based research by attending to the roles that photography and installation, as conceptual art practices, can play in a practice-led research project and it responds to a call made by arts-based researchers to investigate ways that art practice can be conceptualized as a mode of research (O Donoghue, 2009; 2011; Sullivan, 2004; 2006; 2010; 2011).

Key words: school closures, photography, practice-led research, visual inquiry

Description of the Project

In/Visibility of the Abandoned School is a practice-led form of visual inquiry whereby knowledge is generated from a closed school because it is a de-institutionalized, de-commissioned, and empty place that has not yet been legally re-zoned, re-sold, or repurposed. The objective of this research is to emphasize the evocative and ambiguous character that a closed school embodies while in a temporal state and to examine its pedagogical possibility. To complete this research I spent four years doing fieldwork photographing closed and abandoned schools in cities across Canada and interviewing principals, students, board directors, faculty, and community members about their experiences with school closure. For the final stage of my inquiry, I projected images of the inside of a decommissioned school onto the outside's physical structure and I invited the community that had experienced the closure of their

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school to take part in an immersive experience with the intention that they could project their own stories and imaginations onto the artwork. Participants were encouraged to share their responses of the work so that further examinations could be made. Data was acquired in two phases: first, in the production of the work, where I produced a photographic archive on closed schools in their liminal state and second, in the encounter with the artwork, in which a site-specific installation comprised of selections made from my photographic archive were projected onto a closed school located on Vancouver Island, a rural community in British Columbia.

Context

School Closure is not a new phenomenon. In the second half of the 20th century, many Canadian provinces witnessed school closure due to urbanization that forced small community schools to amalgamate into larger schools (Chambers, 2007). Today, Canadian schools are closing for a different reason, namely neoliberalism, a political ideology grounded in the belief that market principles led by private enterprise and consumer choice applied to the public sector contributes to greater efficiency and economic prosperity (Poole, 2007). Ross & Vinson (2013) argue that school closure in British Columbia is a visible example of the financial cuts being made to the public education system as a result of a neoliberal agenda based on educational reform. The government's decisions and policies are designed to maximize profits rather than serve the community's needs (Ross & Gibson, 2007; Ross & Vinson, 2013). Since 2002, the province has witnessed the closure of over two hundred schools that has displaced more than twenty-seven thousand students (BCTF, 2014). The de-commissioned school selected for this study closed in June 2013 just short of its one hundredth anniversary. The decision to close the school came along with five other schools in the district to save a \$3.7 million deficit.

Situations like that in British Columbia are happening on a global scale. In the United States, school closure has become a frequent

response to underperforming schools since the advent of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in which high stakes testing and accountability are penalizing public schools with closure when they fail to meet uniform standards (Kirshner & Pozzoboni, 2011). Districts in New York, Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC, have recently witnessed manifold closures where "failing schools" have had their funds revoked and their schools shut down (see Aggarwal, Mayorga, & Nevel, 2012; Ayala & Galetta, 2012; Hursh, 2007; Jack & Sludden, 2013; Kretchmar, 2011; Lipman & Person, 2007). School closings are also occurring in the United Kingdom, Europe, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand (see Blackmore, 2004; Cheng, 2009; Cheng & Walker, 2008; Egelund & Laustsen, 2006; Haiming, et al. 2013; Holloway & Pimlott-Wilson, 2012; Kearns, et al. 2009; & Walker, 2010).

Tightly woven into neoliberal educational reform are many social, economic, cultural, and political inequalities. Kirshner & Pozzoboni (2011) reveal that closures in the United States are "disproportionately falling on schools with high percentages of poor and working class students of color" (p. 1635). Case studies performed in Chicago (Lipman & Haines, 2007), New Orleans (Buras, 2014), and most recently, Philadelphia (Jack & Sludden, 2013) support this argument further, revealing that school closure is a broader effort to gentrify low income African American neighborhoods (Aggarwal, Mayorga, & Nevel, 2012). Public schools are closing only to re-open as private, for-profit, competitive, market-based schools such as charter schools and schools of choice (Buras, 2014). In British Columbia, rural schools have been particularly hard-hit by closures because they are located in areas with a lower density population that makes them more vulnerable to the government's per-pupil funding allocation formula. Pupil-led funding is regulated by the number of pupils in attendance, forcing schools to compete for pupils with neighboring schools and putting pressure on parents to become astute consumers (Walker, 2010).

School closure raises many issues and questions intersecting with

and relating to social justice, citizenship, and human rights. It is a representation of a cultural struggle over race, ethnicity, and power (Lipman, 2007). Schools are not closing silently nor are they closing without conflict. The community that is the focus of this study took action; they demonstrated civic participation and attempted to challenge the policy collectively. They organized protests, wrote letters, and attended public hearings to voice their opinions pertaining to reasons why they thought their school should stay open. The decision to close the school revealed that the school trustee, who held legal responsibility for the school, also held substantial power to close the five schools when the decision fulfilled the character of their own closure policies and ministry regulations. Undermining procedural fairness,² a decision was reached to eliminate middle schools in favor of kindergarten to grade seven elementary schools and grade eight to twelve secondary schools.

Unlike an event or action that is immediate or instantaneous, school closure is “a slow violence” that occurs gradually and out of sight (Aggarwal, Mayorga, & Nevel, 2012, p. 162). The process is not easy for the community involved; it forces people to make difficult changes that affect their everyday lives and it causes them to experience a loss that can bring forth feelings of anger, sadness, fear, depression, and confusion (Oncescu & Giles, 2012). The term “abandonment” has been intentionally selected and applied to this study because it portrays a picture of loss, rejection, and emptiness (Dewar & Manning Thomas, 2013). The community that is forced to surrender the place that once played such a pivotal role in housing their social and educational encounters witnesses their school become stripped of its name and its identity and pushed to the margins of society. The fate of the building and the surrounding lot becomes unknown. Will it be sold? Will it remain vacant for a number of years? Will it be transformed into something else? Will it simply be left to the perils of nature, becoming

an eyesore that the community has to live with? My interest resides in the closed school because it is a place that has been abandoned for its educational possibility. Although the closed school ceases to exist as it once did, and is no longer utilized as it once was, *can it still be a place for learning?*

Methodology

The project involved a multi-method research design. In one sense, it is a technology-based, performative, and participatory form of research that combines the visual and the narrative to build an understanding of a community’s subjective experience of school closure through an artistic intervention performed with a closed school. In another more accurate sense, it is a visual arts-based form of inquiry in which the image plays a crucial, yet changing role during the research process. In the first phase, the photograph is a researcher-produced form of visual data that acts both as document and as art. In the second phase, the installation demonstrates how the visual can be used as a situational provocation allowing for new perceptions pertaining to school closure to come forth. During the second phase, the visual opens up multiple meanings determined not only by myself as the artist/researcher, but by the viewer, and by the context of the viewing experience.

Inspired by the recent work done by arts-based researcher Dónal O Donoghue (2011), I emphasize emerging theories and philosophies of contemporary art while drawing attention to how meaning is made in the production of the artwork and in the encounter with the artwork. Rather than trying to find ways to use artistic practices and processes in educational research, I engage in a practice-based approach that allows art practice to *lead* the inquiry. As such, I am less concerned with answering predetermined questions than I am with “generating new insights that are not easily available through verbal modes” (O Donoghue, 2011, p. 640). I am also contributing to ways in which art practice can be conceptualized as a form of research that makes use of “inventive forms whose uniqueness is best seen as connected to, but

2 In British Columbia, procedural fairness is stated to include three components: “timely access to relevant information, sufficient time to develop, and present a viewpoint and access to an open-minded board” (Chambers, 2007, p. 17).

distinct from, traditional systems of inquiry” (Sullivan, 2011, p. 100).³

Phase One: The Production of the Archive

Motivated by a recent surge of school closures in my neighborhood, I began to research their social, political, economic, and cultural significance. I read newspaper and journal articles, websites, news reports, and various provincial and state school board / district archives. I actively searched for and compiled information on school closure. This process led to a series of phone calls, emails, and correspondence with secretary treasurers, school board assistants, and former principals, seeking permission to enter the off-limit buildings. Once the bureaucratic red tape had been cut, I would travel to the closed school, camera in hand. During these visits, I found myself on a journey led by curiosity and discovery. I opened drawers, cupboards, and closets; I read paperwork and writing left on chalkboards, walls, and corners. I inspected objects left in classrooms, halls, and offices. I searched for traces and remnants of things that had been removed. I imagined how the school might have looked in its open state; I contemplated reasons for why things had been taken away and alternately, why things had been left behind. Similar to an urban explorer, the experience placed emphasis on my individual sense of freedom. It called for movement much different from the horizontal, vertical, linear, or rigid paths that I normally take in and through architecture. It called for crouching down low, stepping over things, and weaving around through darkness. It demanded for a slower, more careful, and more intimate engagement than is normally required in an everyday space. It asked that I utilize multiple senses and pay attention to the unexpected that, in turn, guided my trajectory. As such, my movements operated on chance, coincidence, and speculation.



Figure 1. *The Closed School as Void*. Photo: Natalie LeBlanc

There was something extraordinary about being alone in the closed school. Having been boarded up for some time, the air was stale, and the atmosphere damp. Sections had become musty and moldy. There was a heaviness and deadness in the place as if it had been transformed into a museum (Newbegin, n.d.). It disarmed memories and electrified my imagination (Trigg, 2012), while my camera helped me take possession of it (Sontag, 1977). I photographed objects as I encountered them, as if they were evidence in a crime scene. I discovered how their configurations told a story and how that story would change depending on how it was framed and from what vantage point it was framed. I played with these narratives; I cropped objects; I used extreme close-ups; I flattened the depth of field; and I emphasized various formal elements that were easily found in the modernist characteristics of the building. I accentuated the mysterious relationships that these objects formed as if their spatial configurations testified to an independent agency while being confined within the closed school. Tim Edensor (2005) explains this phenomenon as “the happenstance montages of ruined space” (p. 77) for which the arbitrary relationships and the juxtapositions between

³ For more information on art practice as research, see Sullivan, 2004; 2006; 2010, and 2011.

different forms, shapes, textures, and materialities create assemblages that defamiliarize a common place, thus celebrating the unfamiliar and producing alternate narratives. These stories often played with the utilitarian value of the object and how new formations made new meanings depending on how objects were placed in context with other objects. I documented these arrangements; I captured them on scene as if the school was a stage and the event of closure their fate.



Figure 2. Natalie LeBlanc, *The Closed School in Ruins*. Digital photograph.

The Disintegration of an Ordered World

Charlotte Cotton (2009), author of *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*, refers to the form of documentary practice I used as a “counter-photojournalistic approach” (p. 9). Rather than trying to capture an event in a more traditional photo-journalistic way, the wake of these events are depicted by that which has been left behind. Such an approach is evident in the photographic work of Sophie Ristelhueber, Willie Doherty, and Zarina Bhimji where the scars of tragedy, war, and economic, social, and political upheaval in Kuwait, Ireland, and Uganda are revealed through allegory.⁴ This genre of photography

⁴ Allegory in visual art refers to how the figures or objects in the image stand for an idea and thus suggest a deeper or parallel meaning. Deriving from

shares a similar form in which absence of the human body emits a powerful human presence. Ristelhueber reveals the residue of combat through abandoned clothing and piles of spent explosive shells. Doherty reveals the turbulence of Northern Ireland through framing corroded areas of derelict city streets. Bhimji produces images reminiscent of still lifes, acting as evocative narratives for cultural elimination and erasure. These photographers play with what is seen and what is not seen in the visual composition; what is presented before the viewer and what the viewer brings to the photograph becomes a method of visualizing the void of human loss and the complexity involved in conflict. The viewer is left imagining the economic, social, cultural, and political forces that have motivated such acts and is left to construct stories that are open-ended and unresolved (Cotton, 2009). A counter-photojournalistic approach advocates how the photograph is more than it represents. It offers a possible state of encounter between the image and the viewer that involves participation in order for an interpretation and/or an experience to occur. In this sense, the viewer is not a passive spectator, but rather, an active participant who has to piece together clues, both found and made in order to construct a bigger picture of the event depicted.

In a similar mode of representation to the artists previously described, the photographs of the closed school document the aftermath of closure through objects that have been left behind in the de-commissioned building. Contrasting to the seamlessness, to the smoothness, and to the regulated space that a school regularly embodies, the photographs included in this text present a tension between order and disorder, and between what is seen and not seen. Figure 2 depicts how the school’s materiality is no longer neatly organized, categorized, segregated, or “in place” (Edensor, 2005, p. 66). It produces a disruption to the order that is normally presented in a functioning school. Figures 1, 3, 4, and 5, on the other hand,

the Greek words “other” and “to speak in public,” allegory is commonly communicated through symbolic figures or symbols that, when combined in the mind of the viewer, function beyond their literal representation (wiseGEEK, n.d.).

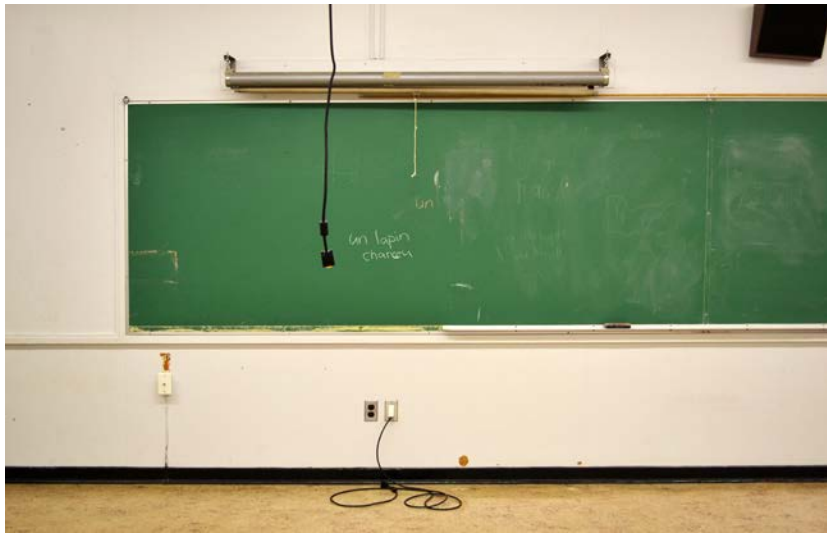


Figure 3. Natalie LeBlanc, *Un lapin chanceu(x)*. Digital photograph.

present an uncluttered complexity, which has become my preferred mode of representation. I prefer to use the Derridean term “signature” (Richter, 2010, p. 18) to make reference to the style that is employed in staging what I have come to call “uncluttered complexity.” It reveals how haphazard objects (such as a power cord, a desk, a telephone, or tiny pieces of shredded paper) serve as the residue of schooling while evoking an ambiguous sense of longing and loss. In the context of the abandoned school, these objects change from “anything-whatever” (Barthes, 1981, p. 34) into a contemplation of what remains in and of the closed school. As objects that have been left inside (and left behind), they can be interpreted as dead objects, objects of the dead, or what Freud (1917) referred to as “lost” objects and objects that are “forsaken” (p. 249). The objects speak to the emotional affect they have in their ambiguity and how, in relation to the absence of the human figure, they are the little that is known or the scant that has survived the event of school closure. In the context of abandonment, the objects photographed may be interpreted as being melancholic—as the sad, morose, or wistful residues of schooling. These objects may even come to replace the community who has been made absent in the building as a result of the closure of the school, and thus can

even take on anthropomorphic qualities that mirror the human form. Susan Sontag (1977) once declared that the photograph itself is a “melancholic object” (p. 49) as did Roland Barthes (1981), who stated that the photograph’s appeal is its “melancholy” (p. 90).



Figure 4. Natalie LeBlanc, *Principal’s Office*. Digital photograph.

Both authors make reference to the photographic capability of recording a moment in time, and turning that moment into something that can be kept and looked at over and over again. A careful reading of the manner in which these objects are represented, however, reveals that the negative space plays an equivalent, if not leading role over the objects in the frame. Absence, in this regard, reveals that the actual object of attention lies in what is not there, what is no longer there, or what has been taken away from there. In the presence of this absence, the photograph creates a void that produces a disturbance—a tension in the performance of reading the image. The image suggests a narrative, but it is incomplete, asking viewers to complete the story in the frame. The void takes on an important role, hinging on the viewers’ projections to think, fantasize, and assemble what cannot be seen, transforming what is not visible into a polyvocal way of seeing. Thus, absence does not necessarily represent

loss, rejection, or emptiness as it could initially be perceived; absence creates a rupture that disrupts a narrative of melancholia by leaving it open to possibility, making possible alternate readings and responses based on creative or even emotive receptions, where the lost object can become “something new” and “something different” (Min, 2003, p. 231).

Contents Erased: A Case Study

In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes (1981) establishes two different modes of appearance in a photograph that work heterogeneously. The first mode, the *studium*, presents an average affect; it allows the viewer to “get” the photographer’s intentions, to approve or disapprove, but always to understand. Barthes (1981) further describes the *studium* as an education, a production of knowledge, “a civility,” and a certain “politeness” (p. 28). Although the *studium* allows the viewer to participate in the figures, faces, gestures, settings, or actions depicted by the photograph, it does not cause delight or pain, whereas the second mode of appearance, the *punctum*, breaks the *studium* and rises from the scene to “pierce” the viewer (p. 26). Barthes (1981) describes the *punctum* as a sensitive point, a “sting,” a “speck,” a “cut,” or a “little hole” that is “cast out like a dice” (p. 27). It is an accident with the uncanny ability to “prick” (p. 47) the viewer and also to “bruise” (p. 27). After visiting 16 schools and acquiring 2,487 photographs, I spent hours reviewing, analyzing, and sorting through them. To a certain extent, I had an interest in all of them as they each revealed something unique about the school or about my experience inside of it. There were only a few photographs, however, that presented me with *something* unexpected; *something* that pulled me in and provoked me, like “a tiny shock” which in turn caused me to notice, to observe, and to think (p. 49).

Contents Erased (figure 5) was one such image. It depicts the particular school’s institutional colors and its compartmentalized sections but it also represents the seriality and the sameness that became a pattern in all of the closed schools that I visited. The structure, the

spatial organization, and the arrangement is documented in a certain deadpan aesthetic.⁵ Like Bernd and Hilla Becher who documented disappearing German industrial architecture, I prefer to capture scenes so that the formal frontality amplifies the static temperament of the school, capturing characteristics that Paulo Friere (1971) once labeled as “lifeless” and “petrified” (p. 71), and that Maxine Geene (1977) infamously called “anaesthetic” (p. 284). The mode in which school characteristics are presented grants them a structured clarity, allowing the small (sometimes partial) detail to become the focal point. Framing a vestibule, the photograph displays a shelving unit with a row of coat hooks that, at one time, must have been a center of order within the school (protecting it from disorder).



Figure 5. Natalie LeBlanc, *Contents Erased*. Digital photograph.

Its contents are empty except for a semi-transparent container located near the upper right hand corner and a chalkboard eraser located

⁵ Charlotte Cotton (2009) refers to the deadpan aesthetic as “a cool, detached and keenly sharp type of photography” (p. 81) where there is a seemingly emotional detachment and a neutrality on the part of the photographer who remains concerned for depicting highly specific descriptions of the subject without allowing sentimentality to guide the image’s connotations.

below on the lower shelf. The formation of the image is a geometric pattern that presents a frame within a frame, a box within a box, and a grid within a grid.⁶ The rectangular bricks echo the rectangular shelving unit, which echo the rectangular blocks of color, which echo the rectangular air vent, which echoes the rectangular room, which echoes the rectangular school. Like a Matryoshka doll that decreases in size to nest smaller versions of itself neatly inside, the image produces a *mise-en-abyme*⁷ that leads the eye to recognize how, like a topological map, or a bird's eye view, or a Piet Mondrian painting—only called “red, blue and *green*”—the entire structure presents a container within a container. Embodying a hollow form, it suggests to us that its purpose is to hold a physical object or a substance. The vestibule's empty contents play with the idea that it is empty of school as if school were a substance that once filled it. The vestibule becomes a microcosm, a fragment caught within a larger macrocosm that one can only imagine bleeds outside of the frame into the rest of the abandoned school.

The image is not as fixed as it appears at first glance but is composed of numerous associations represented by two opposing forces: the dynamic and the static. The thin white line of dust lying to the right of the chalk eraser takes on a presence. Suggesting that contents of the school have just been erased, it evokes thoughts pertaining to what or who has been erased through the closure of the school. Lying delicately on the surface of the laminate shelf, it is uncertain whether the line is headed towards the eraser or away from it. This suggests that the things that have been left here also risk erasure, along with the history of the place and the memories inside the building. Thinking, fantasizing, and imagining what has been made absent in the wake of the dust, my gaze moves on to the coat hooks, lined

up like little toy soldiers or birds on a wire that produce a figurative contrast to the geometric shapes in the composition. Allowing my eyes to follow each hook in sequence, from left to right, and then from right to left, I witness them transform into a school teacher's stern finger protruding from the wall that begins to move like a Muybridge stop motion photographic series telling me where to go and what to do. Tired, my eyes rest on the blue splatter caught inside a white brick on the left hand side of the photograph, located outside of the vestibule altogether. I can't stop looking at this spot. It is the only thing that seems out of place. I want to erase it. I want to contain it. Its presence begins to haunt me. *Why can't I stop looking at it?*

The Refusal (of Erasure)

In terms of digital technology, photographic software and even in-camera features afford me with various quick and easy ways to manipulate the image. I am aware that I can delete this mark so that it can appear as though it were never here. In contemplating this option, I refuse to erase the mark. *I need to keep looking at it.* This blue splatter, slightly lighter and brighter than the blue below it and in the vestibule draws my attention to other marks, splotches that are slightly lighter on the radiator and areas where the laminate has torn off the shelves. These marks force me to look back at the chalk eraser on the bottom shelf, causing each mark to be read with the connotation that it will soon be erased along with all the other objects in the composition. They simultaneously become a sign of resistance (defying a system that is endeavoring to control and contain them), and the markings of failure (a rhetoric for the school's internal collapse). With the knowledge that this de-commissioned school has since been re-purposed into a nursing home, I am presented with what Barthes (1981) refers to as the “defeat of time” (p. 96). In other words, I am confounded with the school as it *will disappear*, while having the knowledge that it has *already disappeared*. The photograph does not simply become a privileged, honored, or powerful moment in the past that can be kept and looked at after the school is gone, it actually works to collapse time by falling into the liminal in-between of “this-

6 The art critic and art theorist Rosalind E. Krauss (1979) argued, “by virtue of the grid, the given work of art is presented as a mere fragment, a tiny piece arbitrarily cropped from an infinitely larger fabric. Thus the grid operates from the work of art outward, compelling our acknowledgement of a world beyond the frame” (p. 60).

7 Craig Owens (1978) defined “*mise-en-abyme*” as “any fragment of a text that reproduces in miniature the structure of the text in its entirety” (p. 75).

has-been” and “this-will-be” (p. 96). These objects—the shelves, the container, the coat hooks, the peeling laminate, the ventilator, the blue and white bricks, the chalk eraser, and the arbitrary markings on the walls—appear as though they are suspended in time, as if the school will forever be closed, awaiting its fate and preparing for its death. This is the *punctum* that “pricks” me as if I’ve been pierced with a sharp point. It is no longer a form, but an “intensity” (p. 96). I begin to think critically about the processes for which I am coming to see my role as an artist/researcher concerned with and for the closed school. I realize that photographing the closed school has become a form of documentation; an historical task; an act of remembering, collecting, recalling, archiving, and even mourning. This blue mark, finding its way outside the structure trying to contain it, asks me to think how my work does the same. I begin to think, to reflect, and to wonder about the enormity and complexity of the issue at hand. Although the photograph acts to remember the past, it also asks that I consider the future. Returning to the idea that the vestibule is a topological map, or better yet and more fitting with the spatiotemporal architecture of the building, a modernist grid, the flattened, ordered, and geometricized formation appears as a world of its own, abstract and independent from the natural world. Rosalind Krauss (1979) once described the grid in modern art as being “autotelic” (p. 52), meaning it only has an end, or purpose, in and not apart from itself. I question whether this is true for the photograph: *is this why it appears constrained by a trope of loss and remembrance, creating a perpetual cycle of melancholia?* The irony here resides in the idea that, like an empty cabinet of curiosity, or a *Wunderkammer*,⁸ the unfilled compartments and barren shelves await the answers where new thoughts, new questions, and new relations have plenty of space to form. This brings me to phase two of the research project, where, through a close reading of encounters with the photographs projected onto the closed school, the community helped put in context the archives created in phase one.

8 A cabinet of wonder, also called wonder rooms, in which collections of objects await definition. For Suderburg (2000), the *Wunderkammer*, in conjunction with happenings and minimalism, was a precursor of site-specific art.

Phase Two: Encounters with the Archive

The second phase of the research was comprised of a site-specific installation in which photographs taken inside of a de-commissioned school⁹ were projected onto its outside physical structure (refer to figures 6 & 7). There were certain challenges in implementing this project. First, the design had to abide by certain conditions set forth by the school district that granted me permission to utilize the building. Second, the rural location, positioned in a remote and isolated area, made several visits not only time consuming, but difficult to maneuver (especially in the dark). Third, since the building was already cut off from the electrical grid, a generator was essential to power the projections, demanding a careful integration into the project’s design (tucked neatly behind the building). The installation was comprised of multiple layers, involving the site, the images, and the community participants. The physical place was the closed school and its environment (including the dark evening; the adjacent forest and surrounding field; the long rural road with no visible neighbors). The projected images, juxtaposed in series of four, were programmed to change every twenty seconds, which looped in its entirety every ten minutes. The building’s flat white walls were selected for the projections and worked very well for this purpose. The community who experienced the closure of the school ten months earlier were invited to come and see the projections and to take part in the event which lasted for two hours. People ages 10 to 80 were in attendance and various forms of dialogue took place. The types of responses ranged from observations and conversations, to response cards that asked a series of open-ended questions. Anecdotal responses sparked many impromptu dialogue sessions, including conversations between viewers and between the viewers and myself.

9 The name of the school is being withheld in order to protect the participants’ identities.

Findings & Analyses

Art historian and critic Miwon Kwon (2000) describes site specific art as an object or event that is not only placed in an actual, or real, location (i.e. outside an institution such as a gallery or museum), but is directed and determined by the “site” that it is placed with/in. In other words, the location is not coincidental; it is not an afterthought, nor is it simply *where* the work of art is exhibited. Rather, the location is the primary element of the artwork’s composition that takes “the fabric of the time and place” as its starting point for a critical intervention into how it is historically located and/or culturally determined (p. 54). *In/Visibility of the Abandoned School* follows in the tradition of site specific art beginning in the 1960s and 1970s with Fluxus happenings, Situationism, Minimalism, and Dadaism in producing a “situation” (Doherty, 2009, p.13) that adopted a performative, relational, and process-based approach that remained concerned with the facilitation of dialogue and exchange (Bishop, 2006; Bourriaud, 2002, Kester, 2004). Findings and analyses are organized into four different themes: 1) window’s looking “in,” 2) disrupting narratives, 3) politics of the space between, and 4) the abandoned school as place for learning. Each of these will be explored below.



Figure 6. Natalie LeBlanc, *In/Visibility of the Abandoned School*, 2014. Site-specific installation with four digital slide-projected images.

Windows Looking “In”

I feel like I can walk into the school,

but then I remember that it’s closed and I can’t. (Participant)

One of the most defining features of a closed school in British Columbia is the manner in which the windows are boarded up (meticulously) in order to protect the unoccupied site from thieves and vandals. The photographic interiors projected onto the outside walls evoked large, oversized windows that disrupted the static building by creating openings into new spaces, new thoughts, and new worlds. The projected photographs intentionally addressed the binary of outside/inside, linking the two disparate physical spaces together by bringing the viewer “in” through a virtual space. The projected interior, with its larger-than-life objects and empty rooms, became more dreamlike than actual. It fired imagination and reflection by asking viewers to engage with the closed school by putting their own fantasies, memories, and experiences into play.

Taking into consideration the dimensions of the actual site, the projections were situated between the intersecting lines of the architecture that echoed the formal structure of the building. The projected interiors appeared as though they were actually located inside the dark school, behind the flat walls that not only acted as a surface for the projections, but as gatekeepers that physically blocked the public from actually seeing in. The projections created an illusion that changed viewers’ perceptions of the materiality of the closed school by granting them access to enter “inside” the building through the virtual. As the quotation at the beginning of this theme reveals, juxtapositions between the real and the virtual, the tangible and the intangible, the light and the dark, the positive and negative, the open and the closed, the seen and the unseen created tension in the viewing experience. The closed school, inhabiting the participants more than the participants could inhabit the building, disrupted the habitual ways that the community had previously moved about the space. It provoked thoughts pertaining to how the closed school was situated

in the present as an inaccessible, impassable, and unattainable space. The virtual school surged forward to penetrate the viewers' thoughts and emotions while the actual building, comparatively, appeared firmly rooted to the ground. A public discourse centered on what could *not* be seen in the installation quickly emerged. One viewer commented "I don't see any people in these photographs. There are no books. There are no signs of activity." Another person commented on how the photographs were "missing children." "I wish I could go inside and see how the interior has changed since I was a pupil in the 1950s," stated one participant. And another wanted "to see the music room" because it was her "favorite place in the school."

Disrupting Narrative(s)

Not only did the projections provoke memories, they brought forth questions and recollections of people and places that had been forgotten, while demonstrating how the same projection could have a different effect and/or affect on different viewers. One sequence of images, consisting of a long row of coat-hooks that were individually labeled with student names, caused an older participant to think back to her children's youth. She recalled, "Both my children brought home lice! The lice jumped from coat to coat along those coat-hooks" (Colleen). A little girl, quite engaged with the names labeled under each hook, excitedly called out names of her (past) classmates, "There's Sarah, and Kylie, and Michael, and Galen ... but I don't know what happened to Eric - he doesn't go to my new school" (Avery).

When the projections changed to a large mural made by the school children, one viewer, a retired teacher from another school in the area, stated, "Oh, yes. We had a mural like that in my school. It reminds me of so many previous schools that I have been in or worked at" (Connie). At the same time, a ten-year-old girl squealed, "That one's mine! That's my self-portrait! You found it! You found it in the school! I'm amazed that it's still there!" (Samantha). Running to the building, standing beside her projected portrait, she asked me to take her photograph so that it could help her "remember it."

The event enabled unlikely creative and intellectual associations, and it elicited a diversity of expressions and performances from the viewers. The personal memories, cultural histories, and subjective experiences that viewers brought to the work became the content of the work. They took the form of action (movement or dialogue) and reflections (looking, reading, hearing oneself and/or other voices). The spatiotemporal organization not only asked viewers to engage in a physical interaction between the land, the building façade-turned screen, the projector(s), and each other, it invited them into relation with these components, and each other, as equally contributing components of the work that, in return, produced new relations and new connections. The event was not only a perceptual experience, it was an immersive one that demanded for participation and for a multi-sensorial engagement, forming a new social context altogether. Rather than a closed system, detached from nature and cut off from society as it had been made to appear within the process of school closure, the abandoned school created new formations that opened it up to possibility. It also created a space for adventure, cultivation, acquisition, and creativity by bringing something new into existence.

One participant, curious as to why I chose not to have the oldest part of the school play a pivotal role in the site specific installation, observed,

It's interesting that you chose not to include the oldest part of the school — the old school house that was built in 1914. I was told that the community is going to keep [the old building] as part of the historical society of [the area]. The other two sections, added sometime in the 1950s and 1970s, will most likely be turned into something else, removed, or torn down altogether. It's ok—as long as they keep the old school. That's where the history is. (Elaine)

This comment captivated my imagination. My thoughts were quickly carried to the places in which history is found, located, or in this case, overlooked. I thought of the materials that I encountered while inside the closed school, "materials of the 1950s and 1970s"—the wood,

concrete, steel, copper, aluminum, laminate, linoleum, marmoleum, glass, plastic, plaster, paper, masking tape, cinder blocks, bricks, mortar, tar, carpet, lead-based paint, and all of the asbestos-filled components and equipment. I was reminded of the materials that people are quick to forget, or to erase—things that are not perceived as national heritage objects, things that are rarely preserved for their historical or cultural significance, things that are not/or cannot be maintained in order to benefit current or future generations, and things that are perceived as having little or no value. Although these materials may become justifications for why a school building should be torn down, *do they not speak to the significance of the place just as much as the old section that was built in 1914? Do they not also define the school? evoke a certain nostalgia, and situate it within a particular time in history?*

Elaine's response drew other participants' curiosity to "where the history is" located in the closed school. Her reflection not only disrupted other participants' observations, it challenged them to think about *where* the contents, the substance, and the value of the closed school resided. Was it inside the closed school? in certain areas of the closed school? in the participants' thoughts, memories, and personal lived experiences, that, similar to the installation, remained outside, projected onto the closed school?

The installation, in its limited materials and relatively simple construction, reconfigured space, place, and time by provoking movement, dialogue, and thought. Resisting a traditional narrative structure comprised of a beginning, middle, and end, it produced multiple beginnings and manifold middles while resisting closure altogether. Utilizing what Garoian & Gaudelius (2008) refer to as "a collage narrative" (p. 36), it radically juxtaposed images, ideas, objects, and actions, bringing new associations and new questions to the fore. Instead of becoming a totalized entity, these disparate elements produced various in-between spaces where meaning could be re-examined, re-made and re-negotiated (Ellsworth, 2005, Garoian & Gaudelius, 2008).



Figure 7. Natalie LeBlanc, *In/Visibility of the Abandoned School*, 2014. Detail of site-specific installation.

Politics of the Space Between

I can't get used to the silence. I miss the sounds of the children at play and running in the fields. It's a loss in our community—a loss of history to the area. (Participant)

The temporal, shifting, and (re)negotiated meanings formed and re-formed in/on site revealed a complex and interwoven field of emergent issues relating to memory, history, place, identity, authority, and power. Similar to the work of Krzysztof Wodiczko, the Polish-American artist who enables public discourses on cultural oppression through the use of new technology, installation, and performance, *In/Visibility of the Abandoned School* allowed participants to speak to, and engage with, a place that had been cast into the shadows—forcibly taken from them ten months prior to the event. The site-specific installation commemorated one hundred years that the building had occupied the site and had actively been a part of the rural town, partially forming and informing its identity. Participants were given an opportunity to voice their memories, opinions, beliefs, fears, concerns, and hopes regarding the closed school, and the influence that it had in the past and continued to have in the present on

their personal and collective identity. During the event, they were presented with an opportunity to discuss some of the social, political, cultural, and economic constraints of school closure by publicly addressing some of the hidden discourses that were brought in its wake, including the difficulty of loss, the uncertainty of change, and the unsettling phenomenon of historical and cultural erasure.

For Wodiczko (1999), architecture establishes an absent-minded and passive relation. Daily, we move around and through it with unconscious, “ritualistic” (p. 46) movements based on a belief that it is meant to be stationary, static and “rooted permanently to the ground” (p. 46). A building (whether public or private) is not only one of the most valuable and expensive investments in our environments, for Wodiczko (1999), buildings are the most secretive and protected, the most disciplined and disciplining, and also the most controlled and controlling environments. In the discourse of power and authority, school, as an institution, is a systemic structure put in place (either by the government or by private corporations) to house education, which is, by law, a compulsory event. Intended first and foremost as a political educational facility, schools also provide opportunities for creating social and political linkages in the community, which can help foster a strong civil society (Basu, 2004). When a school is taken away—that is, when a school is closed, boarded up, demolished, or transformed into something else—it does not simply create a historical, cultural or social void, it creates a psychological one as well. Wodiczko (1999) explains,

We feel a desire to identify with or become part of the building. We recognize the familiarity of the building, like that of our own body. We feel a drive to “complete” the building as we desire to be “completed” by it. We sense that there is something about us which is incomplete, and which can only be completed by a full integration with the building. (p. 45)

The site-specific installation performed with the closed school revealed the community’s psychological attachment to the building. Voicing a desire to re-enter the closed school and to re-visit places

that viewers recalled from their memory, the liminal state of the de-commissioned building created significant anxiety, apprehension, and sadness. Many participants felt as though school closure were a monumental authoritative scheme that eminently disregarded the psychological, social, and even economic impact it would have on the community’s past, present, and future. The projections succeeded in bringing the ideological framework of school closure to the fore and it also illuminated the closed school as a neglected social and political body that, like the community, had also become a victim of the rash of school closures. In the context of a neoliberal regime that is currently in the process of drastically eliminating social services and programs and leading to unstable situations such as school closure, events that allow inhabitants to project their own critical thoughts and reflections are becoming sparse. Reminding us of the importance of such events, Wodiczko (1999) argues, “not to speak through city monuments is to abandon them and to abandon ourselves, losing both a sense of history and the present” (p. 63).

Examining Wodiczko’s performative installations through Winnicott’s notion of transitional space, Elizabeth Ellsworth (2005) considers such events as forms of civic pedagogy, opportunities that can interrelate, yet separate participants at the same time in order to produce a third space, or a space between self and other (and self and world) that produces a place she recalls “is neither self nor other but the reality of relation” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 31). *In/Visibility of the Abandoned School* produced relations between the singular and the plural, the individual and the collective, the past and the present, and the present and the future by opening the closed school up to public discourse and thought. The participants, taking up the event’s beginnings, helped to (re)configure the closed school as a network of relations that connected with a broader physical and social landscape. This revealed the multiple character of the place and the plurality of meanings that the school held due to the social and political processes that helped to shape and re-shape it. In a conscious attempt at saving it from being a representation of nostalgic historicism (Kwon, 2000) and a work of mourning (O’Sullivan, 2006), the site-specific installation was not

only a form of remembrance revealing the repressed memories and histories of a group of individuals, it put practices of remembering and forgetting into a context of power relations (Foucault, 2003) and it drew attention to the architecture of the closed school as a repository of memories (both individual and collective) that had been locked and boarded up from the community in which it existed. The installation provided participants with a means to reassert a certain control over the closed school's image and history because it asked them to acknowledge that within the closed school resided a possibility to re-construct and re-present stories of the past with their own existing narratives.

The Abandoned School as a Place of Learning

The three previous themes demonstrate how the projections were seen in relation to the participants, which was the central requirement of phase two. This fourth and final theme brings the previous three together through a portrayal of my experience as the artist/researcher who was engaged in an experimental journey into unmapped territory. Sullivan (2010) argues that, "one of the tasks involved in promoting art practice as research is to reconsider what it is that artists do" (p. 76). For Sullivan, the practices and processes of art require an examination of the production from the perspective(s) of the individual(s) making the art. Sullivan further attests that the artist, taking on various roles such as theorist, philosopher, researcher, curator, and art writer, should refrain from being "a silent participant" who leaves the relevance of their art for others to interpret (p. 76). During this project, I played many roles specified by Sullivan in addition to three more that will be explored here in order to demonstrate how the abandoned school became a place of learning.

First, *Windows Looking "In"* makes reference to my role as photographer, who, beginning as a stranger, started from a position of an outsider looking in on the closed school. Like a voyeur, I chose to be submerged into a foreign place "inhabited" by unfamiliar people. This is not a negative perspective, rather it is part of the allure of such

practice. In the book *Architecture from the Outside*, Elizabeth Grosz (2001) brings together philosophy and architecture through the space of the outside. She argues that the outside provides an ability "to see what cannot be seen from the inside" (p. xv). Exploring school closure from the outside allows me to document the disappearing schools while imagining, considering, and wondering about the people who are excluded from the frame of the photograph and who, situated beyond its edges, are made absent from its operations.

Second, *Disrupting Narratives* makes reference to my role as a catalyst working within the context of the everyday (Loftus, 2009). The site specific installation required many organizational and administrative skills, but more importantly, it required that I trust the situation and relinquish control so that the event, and thus the artwork, could unfold at its own pace and on its own accord—in time and space—through the participants' active involvement. In adopting the role of context provider as opposed to content provider (Kester, 2004), I assumed a performative commitment that provoked a plurality of responses.

Third, *Politics of the Space Between* calls attention to my ethical and political encounters as the photographer-turned-performer-turned-interventionist. Living in the intersection between artist and researcher required that I proceed in a critical yet socially responsive manner. Urban exploration, guerilla activism, interventionist, and other anti-authoritative practices that break the law present a challenge to researchers working within the academy. Seeking permission to utilize the closed schools required that I subject myself to rejection; I often had to change my course of action, beginning anew. These restrictions challenged my artistic conceptualizations and demanded on-going revisions. Seeking city permits, special event liability insurance, and ethical consent for engaging with human subjects, however, did not cause the project to lose its appeal, rather, it made the not-quite-private/not-quite-public site more alluring. The process, although at times difficult, presented me with opportunities to re-think issues regarding privilege and power, power relationships,

and competing values. O Donoghue (2008) writes:

it is often in these in-between spaces that power is played out, contested, and takes form; where identities are formed, reformed, and transformed; where an othering takes place; where boundaries are imagined, articulated, and lived. Located in the in-between denotes living within and between boundaries. (p. 120)

This position asked that I adopt a stance of “epistemological humility” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 128); that I take into consideration the partial, multiple, and local counter-narratives (and counter-histories); that I become ethically responsive to the fragile, porous, fluid, and even conflicting perspectives that emerged; and that I resist representing them in an oversimplified and systematic manner. Living in this shifting and mutable role placed me in relation to my participants, allowing me to recognize how the event comprised what we brought to it from our own internal realities (Ellsworth, 2005). Transformed from a more conventional relationship between artist, artwork and audience, the project generated an exchange between artistic practice, social engagement, and knowledge production by revealing how art can create community, allow for an exploration of critical social issues through creative processes, and develop understanding through shared experiences.

Engaging in roles of photographer, catalyst, and arts-based researcher demanded that I work in ways that were not always familiar and comfortable for me. Working in the space between artist and researcher pointed to a knowledge that was in the making as opposed to knowledge that was already made (Ellsworth, 2005). It produced a space of emergence—a location for the new, the unthought, and the unrealized (Ellsworth, 2005; Grosz, 2001).

Concluding Reflections

Photographs taken inside of the closed schools in combination with the site specific installation performed with a closed school challenged me to address ideas and assumptions that I had about art, visual research, and myself. It produced, in the words of O’Sullivan (2006), “a new way of looking at the world and of positioning my own practices within that world” (p. 2).

In phase one, I demonstrated how photographic practice, guided by a counter-photo-journalistic approach, remains devoted to capturing the aftermath of an event through lost object(s) and the absence of the human figure. In a performative reading of the photograph *Contents Erased*, I revealed how absence hinges on the viewers’ projections to think, fantasize, and assemble what cannot be seen into a polyvocal way of seeing. Associations made in the viewing experience provoked me to see and think about the closed school differently. It asked that I not only pay attention to the past, but in directing my curiosity and imagination to the people who were excluded from the photographic frame, it asked that I think critically about the processes through which I was coming to see my role as an artist/researcher concerned with and for the closed school and that I consider its future.

In phase two, photographs of the interior of a closed school projected onto the building’s façade created a situational provocation in which the community that had experienced the closure of their school not only witnessed, but participated, in an event in which art took over the site and brought something new into existence. By “recontextualizing” the familiar (and even the mundane) so that aspects of the world could take on a new significance (Eisner, 1995, p. 2), it heightened awareness of previously unseen qualities of the closed school in order to help the community, including myself, to notice what we had learned not to see. Generating multiple perspectives, the installation disrupted the dominant, static, privileged, and authoritative narrative of school closure by creating a more open-ended and evocative way of dealing with

the representation of history and with the neoliberal regime that is directly affecting communities.

In/Visibility of the Abandoned School operates beyond representation because it produces an encounter—a rupture that “obliges us to think otherwise” (O’Sullivan, 2006, p. 1). This rupture is the imaginative “substance” that gets created and re-created through the plurality of memories and stories that are projected onto the closed school in the advent of its closure. It becomes something that is neither inside the closed school nor outside the closed school, but something that exceeds, multiplies, and moves beyond the closed school through its very potential.

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The Mattress Factory Art Museum: A Personal and Theoretical Interpretation of Spatial Practices Related to Installation Art

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the exhibition spaces of the Mattress Factory Art Museum (MF) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania through my personal and theoretical interpretations. Included are an introduction to the museum and its history and a narrative of my first visit. I examine the MF's use of space and my sensorial experience of it, applying Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre's spatial theories. Further, I view the MF as one large installation including its connected exhibition spaces and its *archi-texture* (Lefebvre, 1974/1991), which is comprised of its buildings' multiple historical functions and its immediate urban neighborhood surroundings. The MF's spatial practices in which its artists use room-size installations with unusual forms, sounds, and lighting effects in their work immerse visitors in a multi-sensorial, interactive, often exploratory experience in which they "engage" the artworks by their perceptions and responses, and their cultural background and experience.

Keywords: Installation art, spatial practices, archi-texture, museum education

On my first casual visit to the Mattress Factory Art Museum (MF) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with two friends in July 2011—before it became the subject of my formal research study of its spatial practices related to museum education—I expected the museum to be in the downtown area among high-rise buildings. So I was surprised to find it in an old residential district, called the North Side, of the city (see figure 1). I had visited the MF's website (<http://www.mattress.org>) searching for contemporary museums to visit in Pittsburgh on this trip, but when I arrived at 500 Sampsonia Way by a narrow street and found the sign for the main building partially hidden in its neighborhood of brick apartment buildings and townhouses, I realized that I would not be visiting a typical contemporary art museum such as the Guggenheim in New York City, or even the

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Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts in my native Taiwan. My conception of a contemporary art museum and definitions of space would be expanded by this and my subsequent visits to the MF. I had not expected it to be in an old neighborhood in an old factory building and its annex in a former corner grocery store.



Figure 1. The Mattress Factory Art Museum (MF). On the left are views of the exterior of the MF's main building adjacent to Sampsonia Way. At top right is the main entrance to the MF's main building and its parking lot facing Jacksonia Street and at bottom right is the MF's main entryway. Photography by Ju-Chun Cheng.

Once I had crossed the Andy Warhol Bridge, I was not only in a much different part of Pittsburgh than I had expected to be, but was also about to cross a conceptual bridge between my previous experiences of a contemporary art museum and my experience of the unique, interactive spatial practices of the Mattress Factory Art Museum, which is housed in a former mattress warehouse. I would also cross the bridge from my ordinary understanding of the use of museum spaces to a different conceptualization of spatial practice in an art museum, because I soon found that the MF was an entirely different kind of contemporary museum, dedicated primarily to installation art.

The Mattress Factory Art Museum has evolved over its 35 years since its first building on the north side of Pittsburgh was acquired in 1974 by now co-director Barbara Luderowski. In her words, the MF “came out of the energy of the art” (Luderowski, 2013, #22) as they had not set out to create a museum. What was once a factory warehouse was later re-conceptualized and redesigned to serve as a space for working artists and the exhibition of contemporary artworks. Eventually it did officially become a museum, and one of the few dedicated to installation art, hosting artists from around the world since 1982. It now houses a permanent collection as well as changing art installations in three buildings and a garden installation that features cut-away archeological remains that reveal the museum's century-old history. According to the museum's website, the MF's aim is to exhibit room-sized installations created on-site by artists-in-residence from “across the country and around the world . . . unique exhibitions [that] feature a variety of media that engage all of the senses” (*Mattress Factory*, 2013a). Since 1977, the museum has hosted more than 600 artists to explore their ideas and create new works with unusual freedom of expression. Each year, the museum provides full support for artists to travel to Pittsburgh and live on site-to create installation artworks in the museum.

From my initial visit to the MF, and follow-up visits over three years to arrange and conduct my dissertation research study, I focused on how artists of diverse cultural backgrounds use this space and what its theoretical implications related to museum education are in regard to places becoming spaces, especially in regard to visitors' responses to the spaces that evoke their sensory responses and engage their participation. Mainly I use my own observations and responses to the MF installations to illustrate how the MF and its resident artists use its exhibition space and their implications for museum education. But, first, I briefly define “space” and “place” as conceived theoretically.

How Place Becomes Space: Defining the Difference

In *The Production of Space*, philosopher Henri Lefebvre (1991) asserts that when we think of space we mean “what occupies that space and how it does so” (p. 12), which suggests that a space not only denotes a physical place but a connection to the places we used to inhabit and the memories, objects, people, or histories in relation to those places. For example, I responded to the installations at the MF from my previous experiences, especially in relation to what I understood to be the usual function of a “conventional” art museum. The MF was so much different. While other museums may display installation art, the MF is solely dedicated to installation art.

An explicit distinction between place and space is made by philosopher Michel de Certeau (1984) in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. He writes that a place is “the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence” (p. 117). The rules of place are that “the elements taken into consideration are beside one another, each situated in its own ‘proper’ and distinct location, a location it defines” (p. 117). Thus, we can infer that a place is defined by its physical location, which is comprised of such elements as its building, furnishings, and artworks. The Mattress Factory Art Museum is thus defined as a particular “place” by its renovated historic buildings in a dense residential neighborhood in the Mexican War Streets section of the North Side of Pittsburgh.

Conversely, in de Certeau’s view, “a space” is not a concrete material or object that a person can hold; rather it is an abstract concept. He says, “A space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables . . . It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it” (p. 117). Thus, a space is conceived when people act according to their habits and recognition of a place such as a museum. Hence, a “space is a practiced place” (de Certeau, p. 117). Therefore, it is the MF visitors’ responses to the installation artworks that make it a “space,” just as I did with each visit to the museum.

By comparison, understanding a museum as a space is much more complex than seeing it as a place in which to collect and display artworks, as it *becomes* a “space” when people respond to its whole environment and artworks according to their personal habits and cultural perspectives. As I discovered from my various experiences during my multiple visits to the Mattress Factory Art Museum, it is defined as a place by its physical location in a historic, multicultural neighborhood and by the unique artworks installed in its buildings, but it becomes a conceptual “space” according to how visitors respond to its physical components from their personal, educational, and cultural backgrounds. How I made the MF a “space” related to my shift from my ordinary conception of a museum to what possibilities the MF provided its artists, and from my background as a visual artist and art educator from Taiwan.

My First Experience of the Mattress Factory Art Museum as a Place and Space

On entering the MF for the first time, my initial indication of its unusual use of space was when the attendant at the entrance desk warned my companions and me that the second floor was in complete darkness, but that we would find the permanent collection of artworks by James Turrell there; Yayoi Kusama’s and Greer Lankton’s on the third floor, and Rolf Julius’ in the basement.

Rather than start by viewing art in the dark, we took the elevator to the basement, where I felt as if I were entering a cave because of the dim lighting and irregular stone walls. Two iron doors open next to the elevator were rough with rust when I touched them. When my friends disappeared briefly, I walked through a rough hole in a wall, which I realized was the entrance to a gallery when I saw *Red* by German-born Rolf Julius.² It was comprised of two stereo speakers suspended from the ceiling that were coated with red pigment and vibrating like a heart beating, which made me anxious. On recovering, I saw one of my friends silhouetted in a darkened room

2 See Rolf Julius’s installation *Red* at <http://www.mattress.org/index.cf?m?event=ShowArtist&eid=45&id=222&c=>

next to a work entitled *Radical Love* by Dublin artist Glenn Loughran, which was lighted from its top and looked like a stone mill.

On entering the brightest room in the basement, my friends wondered if it was the museum staff lounge, as we saw lockers, benches, four televisions, and each was placed in one corner of the room with different videos (see figure 2). A spotlight on a curtain at one end of the room drew them to pretend they were performing on a stage. Later we learned that this room and its objects were an installation called *City Council Wrestling*³ by Dawn Weleski, a Pittsburgh artist.



Figure 2. *City Council Wrestling* by Dawn Weleski, 2011, an installation at the MF, Pittsburgh. Interacting with the installation. Photography by Ju-Chun Cheng.

3 Although we experienced *City Council Wrestling* as an installation art work, according to the artist, the installation was “a solicitation to participate and be audience to” the final artwork, “a participatory performance that took place a few months after the [group exhibition titled *Neighbo(u)rhood*] opened with underground pro-am wrestlers, city council members, and citizens of Pittsburgh. Each member of the tag team trio personified their political interests and figuratively and literally fought them out in the wrestling ring during a regular monthly wrestling match, with Pittsburgh citizens. Flyers [sic] that were available on the benches in the installation, the text on the chalk board, and the videos . . . invit[ed] people to come to the wrestling match or participate themselves” (personal communication, July 24, 2014). See more details about the project at <http://www.mattress.org/index.cfm?event=ShowArtist&eid=104&id=518&c=Pa st>

Then we took the elevator to the second floor, where we could barely see any light when the elevator door opened. Although we had been warned, I didn’t expect this floor to be so dark. While we were deciding where to go, I heard a woman I had seen a few minutes before walk toward one of the galleries and describe the exhibit as “stupid.” Still uncertain about how to “see” the second floor exhibits, we decided to visit the other floors first, and return to the second floor later. Obviously we were still anxious about visiting the exhibitions in the dark, so we went to the third floor instead. On stepping out of the elevator, I saw the installation *Origami Fireworks*⁴ comprised of multi-colored origami like those designed by Yumi Yamauchi, which had been made by MF visitors at a Neighborhood ART Lab.⁵ Personally, the many bright, colorful papers folded like lotus flowers scattered on the floor in this room bothered me, because in Taiwan, paper money is folded like lotus flowers and burned for the dead to use in the nether world to ensure their spiritual transcendence to Buddhahood. Thus my previous cultural experience changed this installation into an uncomfortable “space” for me.

The museum was hot, not air conditioned even in July, so, next, one of my friends slowly opened the door to a small room,⁶ wondering if there was an air conditioner inside. Instead we were greeted by mirrors forming the ceiling and floor, which were covered with many colored fluorescent dots and projected multiple images of ourselves. Soon I struggled with whether I should leave the room because of the extreme heat, since my friends were still enjoying the effect of their myriad reflections in Japanese artist Kusama’s installation (*Infinity Mirrored Room*). The other door in this room opened to another room containing three white female mannequins covered with red dots, also reflected by mirrors, also by Kusama. As we walked around

4 These origami were created by MF visitors and staff during a Neighborhood ART Lab (workshop) in response to the Tsunami of Mar 11, 2011. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/lugerla/5744777918/in/pool-mattressfactory|lugerla>

5 Art Lab, a variety of workshops for visitors of all ages including art-making and other creative activities at the museum.

6 See Yayoi Kusama’s installation room *Infinity Dots Mirrored Room* at <http://www.mattress.org/index.cfm?event=ShowArtist&eid=45&id=221&c=>

and between the mannequins, one of my friends murmured that the figures looked fearsome while I only paid attention to the hot, windless air of the room.

An installation in one of the galleries on the third floor resembled an apartment, which the late US artist Greer Lankton⁷ had filled with photos, dolls, and other personal objects, and titled *It's All About ME Not You*. The room suggested a strong personal narrative, so that gazing at the room felt like an invasion of the artist's privacy. Similarly, walking through the installation *Metamorphosis Chat* (*Metamorfoz Muhabbet*) by Turkish artist Ferhat Özgür (see figure 3), on seeing an arrangement of comfortable chairs, a television, and the wooden floor I felt as if I were in his house. It felt more like a home than a museum space, which is a public space. A common element between many of the spaces and works in the galleries at the MF is that they do not have clear lines or boundaries separating them. At times, one merges with another, which suggested to me at one point that the MF is one large installation.

On returning to the second floor, we first entered the darkened gallery to the left of the elevator. This long gallery seemed to have a framed, lavender blue rectangular screen on the wall. However, as I got close to it, I realized that what appeared to be a flat screen was an opening into a small room saturated with ultraviolet light and that I could put my hand into what looked like a two-dimensional space, but was not. I felt as if I were wandering between real and unreal space after viewing what turned out to be an illusion. This installation I learned later was James Turrell's *Danaë*.⁸

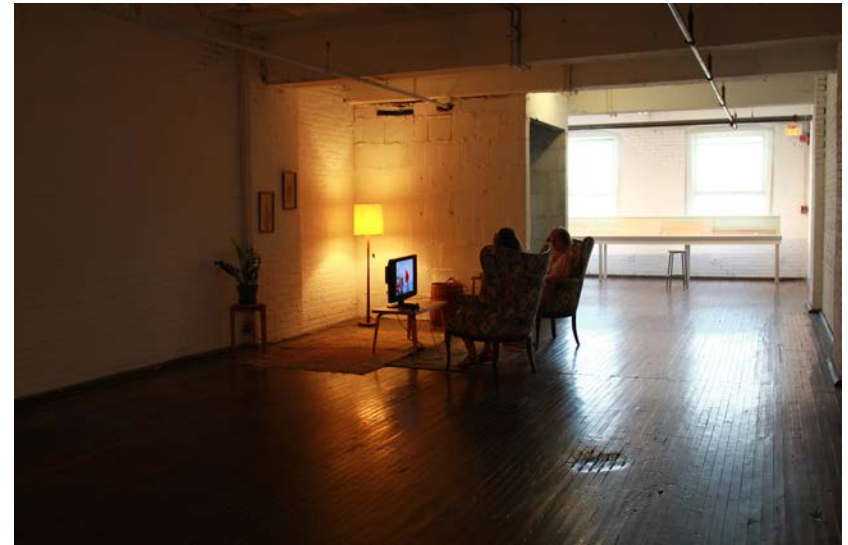


Figure 3. *Metamorphosis Chat / Metamorfoz Muhabbet* by Ferhat Özgür, 2011, an installation at the MF, Pittsburgh. Photography by Ju-Chun Cheng.

Walking into the next gallery, which was also almost entirely dark, I thought I saw a three-dimensional red cube mounted on the wall, its red light shimmering in the dark. But when I got closer I realized that it was not a solid object but just a red light projected onto the wall. This was Turrell's *Catso, Red*.⁹ My friends and I had entered the MF's installations without any prior knowledge of their content, which made our visit such a surprising sensory and exploratory experience.

Finally, we returned to the museum lobby where somehow I felt I was back to the "real world," after having some of my perceptions challenged by certain installations. In fact, one of my friends had joked that "visiting here is like visiting a haunted house." My other friend asked why it was called the Mattress Factory Art Museum and what was the connection between mattresses and the museum. But for me, personally, walking through the MF altered my experience and pre-conceived understanding of what a contemporary art museum is "supposed to be like."

7 See Greer Lankton's installation room *It's all about ME, Not You* at <http://www.mattress.org/index.cfm?event=ShowArtist&eid=45&id=462&c=>

8 See James Turrell's installation room *Danaë* at <http://www.mattress.org/index.cfm?event=ShowArtist&eid=45&id=216&c=>

9 See James Turrell's installation room *Catso, Red* at <http://www.mattress.org/index.cfm?event=ShowArtist&eid=45&id=216&c=>

In my mind, each room in the MF was transformed by the artist and me from a place to a space, in the way that de Certeau (1984) suggests that space subjectively and abstractly occurs in our minds when we consider our directions, movements, and behaviors in a museum (a place). His notion that place becomes space reflects my experience during my first visit to the MF, especially because we did not follow the sequence of the floor plan. Rather, we initially skipped the second floor because the dark exhibition spaces put us off, making us hesitate to walk into those galleries as we were accustomed to lighted exhibition spaces. Later, we accepted the challenge by exploring Turrell's installation in the dark, whereby we transformed this MF gallery from a place into a different kind of space by our surprised responses to his projections. My friends and I were afraid to enter the exhibitions on the second floor of the MF, not knowing what we would "see" or experience in the dark. According to how de Certeau might view it, the MF was designed architecturally in such a way that its places (installations with tangible objects) are transformed into distinct spaces (abstract concepts and impressions of the mind) by the responses of individuals from their previous experiences.

Interpreting the MF Art Museum's Spaces Theoretically and Personally

Following my first visit to the MF, I searched the literature to explore theoretical frameworks that could help me interpret the museum and its installation art, the concepts and uses of its space, and my sensorial experiences of it.

Viewers' Participation in Installation Art at the MF

The MF is a prime example of artist-focused exhibitions of installation art, that is, having artists-in-residence create, develop, and install their art primarily for this purpose. According to Claire Bishop (2005) in *Installation Art: A Critical History*, installation art "is a term that loosely refers to the type of art which the viewer physically enters, and which is often described as 'theatrical,' 'immersive' or 'experiential'" (p. 6). Unlike such media as painting, photography, and video

which position the viewer at a certain distance from the artwork, installation art addresses "the viewer directly as a literal presence in the space" (p. 6), or as an integral part of the artwork. The space for installation art has to be large enough for a visitor to enter because it presupposes that it will appeal to their senses of touch, smell, sound, and sight by presenting different textures, spaces, sounds, and lighting effects directly, notes Bishop. Hence, the installation artist anticipates visitors' sensorial responses to and physical presence in their installations as a means of interactive participation in their artwork, often designing it accordingly. Especially during my first visit to the MF, I was very aware of my sensory responses and of being immersed in each room-size installation and becoming part of it at the time. Sometimes certain installations such as Turrell's *Danaë* or *Catso, Red* changed my sense of reality and the space I was occupying, especially when I discovered that some of the "objects" weren't what they appeared to be. As Bishop suggests, I was "immersed" in visual effects that changed my reality. This I had rarely if ever experienced in the conventional contemporary art museums I had visited.

As to the characteristics of installation art, curators Nicolas De Oliveira, Nicola Oxley, and Michael Petry (2003) consider it a form that is not defined by any traditional medium but that "conveys [a message] by whatever means" (p. 14). Installation art is a creative process whereby artists work with materials and methods as well as their relationship with their audience, with both being linked to a "theatrical space" (p. 17). By this relationship De Oliveira et al. suggest that the museum visitor participates or performs in the artwork itself, which was very much my experience at the MF. In fact, many of the installations were performative sites, as defined by Charles Garoian in "Performing the Museum" (2001) in explaining the term "enfleshment":

Within the museum, enfleshment suggests the experience of artifacts as an ontological investigation, one in which the body is intertwined with the architecture of the museum, the artifacts on exhibit, and other individuals who are encountered in the galleries. (p. 244)

My response to the installation *Para-Site*¹⁰ by Spanish artist Pablo Valbuena in another visit I made to the MF in November 2011 illustrates a visitor's role in "engaging" an installation. Initially when I entered a darkened gallery on the fourth floor and saw lines moving on the wall and gradually shaping an architectural pattern, I thought it was just an animated projection. However, as the room gradually became lighter, I became aware of the physical features of the room itself because I began to sense the depth of the walls and windows as they emerged from their video-projected forms.

Gradually, in Valbuena's installation, the virtual projection of the room gave way to the actual features of the room when the light became bright enough for me to see them, and as the projected outlines emerged as windows and walls. When the projections of the "windows" began and what appeared to be windows started to take shape, my recognition of virtual and actual space was disrupted. Since I could not distinguish between the virtual windows and actual windows, I walked close to the walls to confirm what I saw. Hence, as the artist may have intended, as a viewer I became an active player in the installation itself, especially in my confusion as to which windows were "actual" and which were projections. Possibly I was experiencing the artist's conception of the work by my perception and response to it.

Thus, installation art creates an explorative space that engages the viewer's bodily and sensory responses at a particular site, and challenges the viewer's perception of objects in that space. That is, Valbuena's installation challenged my ability to differentiate between an actual architectural feature of the room and a virtual projection of it, illustrating how a physical place becomes a conceptual space.

10 See Pablo Valbuena's installation *Para-Site* at <http://www.mattress.org/index.cfm?event=ShowArtist&eid=105&id=532&c=Past>

The MF and Spatial Practice: Visitors' Active Engagement

In *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre (1974/1991) defines spaces as a set of social relationships that embody a means of social control and social actions. He classifies social relations in three ways: spatial practice, a representation of space, and representational spaces. *Spatial practice* "embrace[s] production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each member of a given society's relationship to that space" (p. 33). People situate and recognize a perceived space through a network that is connected to the places related to their daily routine or work and their private life. It is a space where people observe social relations, whereas the *representation of a space* is a conceived space that is predetermined by planners "who identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived" (p. 38). Thus, it is "the dominated space" (p. 39) where function is designed for certain purposes by planners. Conversely, *representational space* refers to people's lived experience or the "space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'" (p. 39). It is more of a private space where users have more freedom to define how they want to use the materials and the expression of the spaces.

To better explain how spaces are produced or reproduced, Lefebvre (1974/1991) says that it is helpful to consider the body within the space. Space is not only an exterior space with certain materials but also includes the body as an interior space that reflects the ideology of the exterior spaces. As he suggests, the way our body responds to a space reflects the function and definition of that planned space that we perceive.

To illustrate Lefebvre's concept, let's imagine that when visitors enter a conventional art museum and see works hanging on a wall in a certain arrangement and lines on the floor to stay within, as well as security guards to enforce them, they will naturally keep a certain prescribed distance from the artworks. This is a representation of space where the spatial practices in its gallery spaces have been historically conceptualized by their curators to keep viewers at a

distance so that they only contemplate the works from a permissible distance. Conversely, in the MF's gallery spaces, I was not only using my sight to explore the artworks but my senses of touch and hearing as well when interacting with them. Each of the galleries I visited at the MF had been transformed into a representational space because its invited artists had installed diverse materials and cultural artifacts in order to immerse us in explorative space, and engage our imagination and senses.

For instance, Pennsylvania-born installation artist Dee Briggs, in *Art You Can Get Into If You Have \$12*,¹¹ took it upon herself to encourage the neighbors in the surrounding multicultural community and other passersby to see part of the MF's contents when she put up an installation of red duct pipes on an outside wall of the annex building, which functioned like periscopes (see figure 4). Through them passersby could see and hear some of the activity going on inside the building, which could entice them to enter and view the artwork directly. After being shocked at the price of entry to a MF opening—which may have discouraged low-income residents from visiting the MF's previous exhibition—Briggs, in a video, indicated that she was taking her theme (“Art you can get into . . . if you have \$12”) literally when invited to install at the museum in 2012. This was one artist's attempt to create the opportunity for the local community to learn about the contents of the Mattress Factory Art Museum in its midst, and, conversely, to encourage the MF to be more inclusive of the community. This installation created an opportunity for local individuals or other passersby from various cultural backgrounds to “see inside” the museum. Briggs tried to break down what she perceived to be a social barrier (exclusion by a high entrance fee) by erecting her installation on the exterior of the annex. In the video Briggs indicated her surprise at the cost when she and her friend's children had come to a previous opening (Saks & Float Pictures, 2012). Some invited artists of the exhibition *Gestures: Intimate Friction* at the

MF address the social relations between the museum and its visitors, or between the visitors and their artworks.

On one of my visits, another companion and I conversed with a passerby who could hear us talking inside the annex by using one of the duct pipes, which illustrated the connection Briggs was trying to make between the museum and potential visitors.



Figure 4. *Art You Can Get Into...if you have \$12* by Dee Briggs, 2012, an installation at the MF, Pittsburgh. Briggs' installation of duct pipes on the outside of the MF's 1414 Annex enabled people on the outside to see part of the installations inside. The bottom left frame shows how the ducts were connected to the galleries inside. Courtesy of the Museum. Photography by Tom Little.

Briggs' installation illustrates how installation artists create opportunities to invite visitors' active engagement in art through multi-sensory means. During each of my visits, the room-size installations in the MF immersed me in experiential spaces to explore the relationship between myself and the artworks through my multiple senses and perceptions. Hence, a visitor to the MF's exhibitions can have more intimate experiences within these representational spaces than in many conventional galleries' representations of spaces, which often determine that most art *should* be viewed at a prescribed distance.

11 For more visitors' responses to Briggs' installation in the exhibition *Gestures: Intimate Friction* at the MF, please use this video link below. <http://vimeo.com/42585270>

The Archi-textures of the MF: More Than Just a Building

The relationship of the art installations of the Mattress Factory Art Museum to the building's interior and exterior features as a former warehouse and macaroni-producing factory that is more than a century old, and to its dense, urban neighborhood surroundings comprises its *archi-textures* as described and defined by Lefebvre (1974/1991), who suggests that a building does not stand in isolation. He suggests that we "think of 'architectures as archi-textures', and to treat each monument or building, viewed in its surroundings and context . . . and associated networks in which it is set down, as part of a particular production of space" (p. 118). The term archi-textures, according to Lefebvre, implies that each building, with its architectural features and objects, has its own textures and spatial characteristics, which are comprised of the building's surroundings, historical context, and adjacent community and the location in which it is situated. Hence, as Lefebvre suggests, archi-textures is a complex set of relations that constitute the *milieu* of a site, and is more than just a building.

Additionally, the changing historical functions of the MF's main buildings inform the archi-textures of the museum site.¹² Next to the MF's parking lot are the remains of the four-story brick building that had been erected in the 1890s for the Italo-French Macaroni Company, and the six-story building, which had been used for drying the macaroni, which is now the museum's main building. Vacant during the Depression in the 1930s, the two buildings were used to sort and salvage clothing and materials damaged by the St. Patrick's Day Flood in 1936. From the 1930s until 1963, the Gorman Candy Company occupied the six-story building and the Stewart Paper Company the four-story building, which burnt down in 1963 ("History of Sampsonia Way," n.d). After the candy company vacated the main building, a furniture company occupied it for several years and then the Sterns and Foster Factory Warehouse until Barbara Luderowski bought the

building in 1974.¹³ Currently, the MF is comprised of four buildings.¹⁴ It began to provide space for installation art in 1982 when artists Michael Olijnyk, Athena Tacha, and Diane Samuels exhibited installations in the original building entitled *Factory Installed* (Giannini, 2001).

Not only are the spaces inside the MF used for art installations, but so are some of the outside areas, which are part of its archi-texture. For instance, sculptor Winifred Lutz's complex *Garden Installation*¹⁵ (see figure 5), a permanent installation covering three-quarters of an acre outside the MF's main entrance, incorporates the original architectural elements of the foundation and basement of the former paper manufacturing company building that burned down. Using these remains, Lutz captured the historical and physical context of the museum site (*Mattress Factory, 2013b*), using stone and rock, making a water trough, and landscaping with native plants and flowers to create an urban garden. She called it a "vignette of past times" similar to archeological sites in Jerusalem or Rome. Thus, her installation as an extension of the MF helps comprise its archi-texture (*Mattress Factory 2013b*).

13 According to the timeline on page 174 of *The Installations: Mattress Factory, 1990-1999*, Barbara Luderowski bought the main building of the MF, formerly a Sterns and Foster mattress warehouse, in 1974.

14 According to the MF's map in its pamphlet, the museum's current four buildings are the main building of the Mattress Factory, the 516 Annex located on Sampsonia Way, the 1414 Annex on Monterey Street, and the Artists Residence on North Taylor Avenue.

15 Winifred Lutz was interested in revealing the physical memory of the MF museum site. According to her description in the brochure *The Mattress Factory Garden*, the materials in her *Garden Installation* came from the "architectural remains" of the site such as the debris from a burned down factory building, the concrete foundation slab, and a brick retaining wall.

12 For more information about the history of the museum site, please visit <http://www.mattress.org/index.cfm?event=Generalinfo>

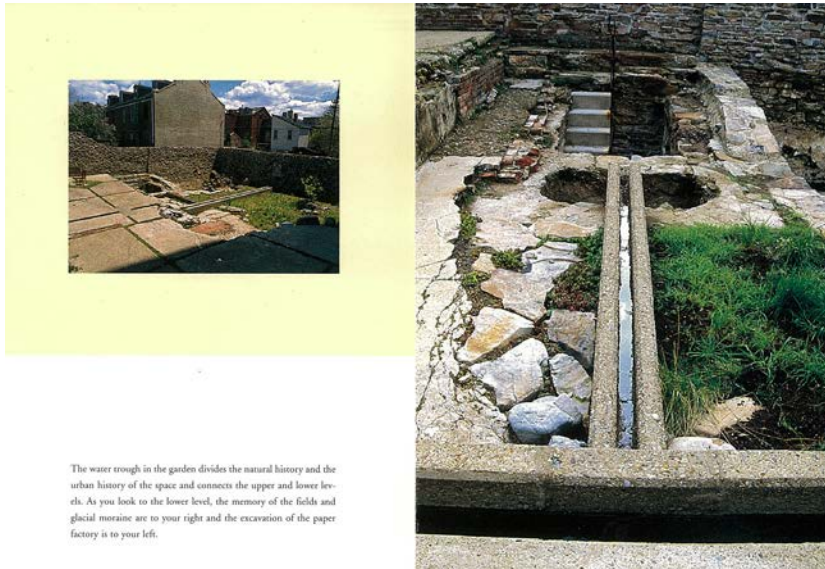


Figure 6. *Garden Installation* by Winifred Lutz, 1993, a permanent installation at the exterior of the MF, Pittsburgh. Images from the brochure *The Mattress Factory Garden*. Photography by John Charley.

Over many years, people have associated the MF buildings with their several different historical functions, and the museum site still represents those in part. Hence, the archi-textures of the MF reveal a complicated set of spatial relations that are comprised of the changing functions of the site, its historical contexts, and its current neighborhood.

The Unique Operation of the Mattress Factory Art Museum

Not only is the museum different from others because of its buildings' multiple historical uses, but in the way that its staff operates, which is quite democratic and flexible. The administrative structure and the work styles of the Mattress Factory Art Museum support artists in trying out new ideas and experiments at the museum, and allows them to make any changes during the installing process. The MF's co-director Michael Olijnyk (2001) said that the museum tries to be "non-bureaucratic" (p. 6) in order to keep enough flexibility to allow artists to change their minds and give directions for the installation of their works during their creation.

The MF's structure can be seen as an art institution with multiple functions where its facilities serve as artists' research labs¹⁶ and alternative studios as well as exhibition spaces. Rather than focus on putting readymade artworks from artists' previous projects into gallery spaces, the MF's spatial practice is to pay attention to those unexpected situations and interactions initiated by the collaboration¹⁷ between invited curators, artists, staff, and the local community to develop an exhibition. Artists don't arrive with ready-made works of art, but create their installations at the MF on site, working as a team with the staff and others. Hence, the museum, in its 35 years, has become a site where artists investigate materials, exchange ideas, and use an entire space inside or outside the museum in which to create artworks.

The multiple spatial practices of the MF imply that an art museum may be comprised of several functional spaces such as a research site and a studio where artists investigate ideas and utilize spaces to create multiple kinds of environments and unique experiences for visitors to encounter art.

Conclusion

While visiting and studying the Mattress Factory Art Museum multiple times, I found that my assumptions about the possibilities

16 The text panel at the interior entrance of the MF read, "The Mattress Factory is a research and development lab for artists. As a museum of contemporary art, it commissions new site-specific works, presents them to the widest possible audience and maintains selected individual installations in a growing-and distinctive-permanent collection. The Mattress Factory's physical and organizational environments have developed out of and responded to a central focus in the creative process."

17 Invited curator and British architect Mary-Lou Arscott of Carnegie-Mellon University, who curated the exhibition *Intimate Friction* in 2012 at the MF gallery annex, worked with 12 invited artists with a limited budget, which she said was challenging, but considered the opportunity to work and cooperate with artists from different disciplines rewarding. As Arscott said, artists "didn't just arrive at the MF with ready-made installations or ideas to squeeze into gallery spaces." There was a "co-operative enterprise (among everyone who was involved in the project)" (Personal Communication, April 2, 2013).

of exhibition spaces were expanded. Because the MF houses room-sized installation art, viewers have the advantage of being part of the artwork, that is, in most cases being able to walk through it, thus participating in a three-dimensional artwork as earlier described in interacting Kusama's *Infinity Dots Mirrored Room* in which multiple reflections in a room of mirrors expand one's sense of reality at the MF. This is the function and participatory nature of installation art. In fact, many of the MF's installations enlarge a person's ordinary view of reality in unexpected ways, and differently for individual viewers. On my first visit to Turrell's installation room *Pleiades*¹⁸ with a friend, my sense of spatiality and the dimensions of the room, as well as the distance between myself and my surroundings were confused because I was forced to sit on a chair at the top of a ramp in the second-floor gallery to face the darkness. After a few minutes, my friend and I saw a glimmer of light emerge and wondered whether it was projected through a hole from outside of the building or an artificial light inside the room. Since my friend heard birdcalls from outside he inferred that the glimmer of light was being projected from outside. However, the harder I looked at this glimmer of light the more confused I became about where it came from. At certain points, the spatial practices of the MF encourage the creation of more representational spaces because they enable invited artists to work with freedom and flexibility, and to immerse visitors in the artwork by using diverse materials, mediums, and lighting effects, which evoke their exploration of art through individual participation and response.

The MF's use of space, allowing artists to take over galleries and design installations of their choice, led me to think differently about art and space. But most of all, I viewed this museum as one large installation itself in the context of its connected exhibition spaces and the archi-textures that incorporate its history and immediate surroundings. I realized this spatial relationship after walking through its neighboring residential district when I first approached

the museum, and later as I viewed Lutz's outdoor installation, which is an extension of the main building and the indoor installations. As I recall my experiences during my 16 visits to the MF, more than a particular installation or work of art, I remember the whole environment, including the neighborhood landscape, the events, and people I encountered and talked with, and the creak of other visitors' steps on other floors. The archi-textures (milieu) of the MF enabled me to transform the museum from a physical place (location) into an experiential space in my mind, as de Certeau suggests, when I related my experiences and memories to the installations.

Finally, the archi-textures of the MF suggest that an art museum is not just a container for artworks. The building that houses an art museum, with its architectural design, historical context, and surroundings, can be viewed as a part of the artwork that creates unique experiences for its visitors. The uniqueness of the MF in this regard and the value it offers museum education is its staff's ability to accommodate multiple spatial practices for a range of installation artists to execute their ideas and for visitors to interact with the diverse explorative spaces they create. That is to say, the MF enables more "representational space" than "representation of space" because its gallery spaces are not fully defined by invited curators or the museum, but through the interactions and collaborations of invited curators, artists, and museum staff, as well as the visitors in response to the unique exhibition spaces.

Certainly while the concept of archi-textures and spatial relations can be applied to other museums—which I will be aware of when I visit others—the fact that the Mattress Factory Art Museum is exclusively focused on installation art, and the collaborative manner of installing it, makes its use of gallery space unique and transferable only to the limited extent that other museums may accommodate installation art in a limited number of galleries, or parts of galleries, and engage installation artists in a similar manner to the MF. However, through museum education, other museums might introduce ways that viewers could become more interactive with artwork to draw upon their own personal and cultural experiences in response to it.

18 See James Turrell's installation room *Pleiades* at <http://www.mattress.org/index.cfm?event=ShowArtist&eid=45&id=216&c=Permanent>

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Occupying Anonymous: Juvenile Arbitration Girls Perform Disidentities

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we discuss a video project, *Occupying Anonymous*, conducted with a group of adolescent girls in an arts-based arbitration program for first-time juvenile offenders. By law, the program requires all adolescent participants to conceal their faces and other physical identity markers in their artwork to protect their public image. Through *Occupying Anonymous*, we aspired to address the tension between our participants' public visibility and anonymous art making by embracing anonymity as a performative strategy. The girls transformed their physical identities by creating alternate personas using wigs, makeup, costumes, and props to perform their poems or prose about significant issues in their lives. We employ productive intersections between theoretical frameworks of Muñoz's (1999) theory of disidentification, Deleuze's and Guattari's (1987) concept of becoming, and Butler's (1990, 1993) notion of performativity to reframe gendered identity and self as supple, fluid, and open to multiple possibilities.

Keywords: At-risk youth; media making; media; community arts; gender; performance

As art educators, we have been involved in an interdisciplinary community-based Women's Well-Being Initiative in congress with our university's Women's and Gender Studies program for several years². It holds a number of local community projects for at-risk women and girls, and has a long-standing partnership with a local county juvenile

arbitration preventive program for first-time adolescent female law offenders³. These girls' offenses range from drug possession, to shoplifting, to battery and assault. Apart from a rather overwhelming tour of the juvenile detention center that demonstrates to the first time offenders what they might expect upon their second law violation, the county juvenile arbitration program offers a few educational and community service workshops aimed to educate and prevent girls' further criminal activity, with our issues-based art and new media sessions among them (Ivashkevich, 2013a, 2013b). When designing our curriculum, we had to consider the overarching goals of the juvenile arbitration program to develop girls' positive sense of self, build supportive community, and make sound decisions about their futures. Successful completion of this workshop along with a series of other sanctions expunges the offense from the participants' permanent records.

In summer of 2012, we embarked on a video project with ten African-American, Latina, and Caucasian teenage girls from low-income backgrounds enrolled in the juvenile arbitration program. This was our first collaboration as community art educators and scholars, which shaped our approach to the workshop curriculum and its conceptual theme, *Occupying Anonymous*. Olga, who previously conducted animation and video-based workshops for this population of girls in 2010 and 2011, has been searching for ways to overcome a significant expressive barrier in girls' work presented by an institutional demand for the participants in juvenile arbitration to remain unidentified, or anonymous, in all images and films they produce while in the arbitration program (Ivashkevich, 2013b). In these previous projects, girls animated dolls to tell their stories via stop-motion films or performed their narratives on camera by hiding or obscuring their faces and other physical identity markers that can be recognizable to the public. While their voices were fully and

1 Authors' name order does not follow the 1st/2nd author rule. Both authors equally contributed to planning and conducting the project and writing the manuscript. Courtne Wolfgang may be contacted at courtne.wolfgang@gmail.com; Olga Ivashkevich's contact is olga@sc.edu

2 The primary goal of Women's Well-Being Initiative is to improve the lives of women and girls in low-income communities of Lexington County, SC. This is a collaborative effort of diverse faculty in psychology, health, social work, English, and art at the University of South Carolina.

3 The concept of law offenders, similarly to other terms such as "bad," "gone wild," and "in trouble," functions as a negative discursive construction that labels and marginalizes particular subject positions. We employ these terms throughout this article in order to disrupt them.

powerfully present, their bodied identities had to be intentionally concealed, which remained an unresolved tension in their film production for both participants and program facilitators. Giving full visibility to these girls' bodied selves, however, seems utterly important because it is their immediate experiences that hold much of the stigma in their lives. Their actual bodies are overwhelmed with events that evoke shame, pain, anger, and fear: police arrest, multiple visits to juvenile arbitration, court hearings, and a juvenile prison tour. These tangible experiences are further complicated by the "bad girl" and "juvenile offender" stereotypes, feeding off of the plethora of media and public representations and discourses (Chesney-Lind & Irwin, 2008).

Courtne's interest in Deleuzian scholarship (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) on identity and difference and Judith Butler's (1990, 1993) theory of gender as performance was vital in shaping our Occupying Anonymous video-based curriculum. Through the curriculum, we aspired to overcome the tension between our participants' public visibility and anonymity by embracing anonymity and becoming as performative strategies. During the course of four three-hour sessions of the Occupying Anonymous project, we asked girls to write poems or prose about the issues and roadblocks in their lives, perform them on camera in small groups, and edit their own short films. To be able to appear and speak directly into the video camera, the girls transformed their physical identities by creating fictional characters using wigs, makeup, costumes, and props. These masqueraded performances provided them with a liminal expressive space of occupying their demanded anonymity. Within this liminal space, they performed an identity without being "identified," a fluid identity in-between, or a disidentity.

On Identity, Performance, and Disidentification: Theoretical Intersections

Our collaboration on Occupying Anonymous created a dialogic space that brought our diverse knowledges together and led us to explore the productive intersections between different theoretical frameworks that challenge a modernist notion of identity as singular, stable, and fixed. Although theory informed our initial approach to the curriculum, interacting with the participants both further complicated and advanced our understandings. We see this process as constantly unfolding, passing back and forth between theory and practice. José Muñoz's (1999) metaphor of disidentification, Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of becoming, and the poststructuralist feminist notion of gender performativity (Butler, 1993) all offer views that reframe identity and self as supple, fluid, and open to multiple possibilities. Although admittedly different epistemologically, these theoretical approaches work to uncover dominant ideologies and discourses behind the normative identity representations and markers of what is presupposed by being "x." For girls in the juvenile arbitration program those markers can include offender, drug user, aggressor, abuser, abused, bad girl, girl in trouble, and other stigma-ridden institutional and societal labels. These markers/labels function as ideological devices to demarcate, pin down, and fixate the girls' assumed social positions while masking and obscuring their actual and utterly more complex lived experiences and stories.

Looking into the artistic performances of non-heterosexual people of color, queer theorist José Muñoz (1999) taps into the issue of ideological visibility of marginalized communities to locate a space of agency where the actual subjects can contest and rework the way they are represented within institutional and cultural discourses. Muñoz's metaphor of disidentification has been particularly helpful in shaping our approach to constructing a performative space of visibility for girls who are in trouble with the law. Muñoz claims that within the existing politics of representation, marginalized subjects cannot access their identity (that is, identify) because it requires a "[g]ood [s]ubject" choosing "the path of identification with discursive and ideological

forms” (p. 11). “Bad [s]ubjects,” on the other hand, are those who “resist and attempt to reject the images... offered by dominant ideology and proceed . . . to ‘counteridentify’ and turn against this symbolic system” (p. 11).

Because the rhetoric surrounding girls in juvenile arbitration is one of “bad” subjects who rebel against the normalizing discourses and systems, further enactment of these counter-identities is dangerous as it can lead to imprisonment. Enacting a “good” subject position, on the other hand, is often difficult for them due to their prior history of stigmatization by the law enforcement institutions. Another strategy of what Muñoz calls disidentification seems to offer the only accessible and safe path of performing identity that helps to negotiate their contested social positions. As he explains, “Disidentification is the third mode of dealing with dominant ideology, one that neither opts to assimilate within such a structure, nor strictly opposes it; rather, disidentification is a strategy that works on and against dominant ideology” (p. 11). By using the dominant narratives and representations in their artistic performances, yet at the same time altering, remixing, and reworking them to produce different logic and meaning, marginalized subject can create an alternative space of visibility and complicate existing public discourses. Thus, when asking our female participants to occupy their own anonymity in their video project, we hoped to give them an opportunity to access and remake their subject positions that go beyond the dominant representations. By dressing as fictional selves to perform their autobiographic narratives on camera, their “bad subject” position escaped into a liminal space of “me” and “not me,” and their stigma was challenged and reworked through this performance of disidentity. Although we did not use language of Muñoz’s “disidentity” in our conversations with the participants, we encouraged them to explore their identity/self as complex, fluid, and not bound by their offense or the stigma associated with that offense. We emphasized what they are yet to become, rather than what they have done to get in trouble.

Similar to Muñoz’s theory, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s (1987) challenge static systems of thought in search of creative lines of flight and increased potential of human existence, that we posit can be achieved through the participants’ liminal artistic performances. Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of “becoming,” which they counter to being, has been particularly important for our project: being is static, while becoming represents a state of constant proceeding and of immanent flows. It is in the becoming that we inhabit in-between spaces, the imperceptible. This is especially significant when renegotiating the terrain of a perceived «bad girl.» What is lost when marking a girl as an «offender» and what are the moves toward a positive reimagining of character once these identity markers are placed?

Furthermore, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the ambiguous performances of becoming hold an immanent potential of becoming “minor,” of deterritorializing and reterritorializing daily acts that mark one’s stable subject/identity. These minoritarian acts resist and subvert dominant ideologies that limit difference and understanding of difference, and embrace marginalized discourses. As a minoritarian performance, our video project *Occupying Anonymous* attempted to map the liminal spaces of «bad girl» and “offender.” By engaging in the participant-driven dialogue about concerns relevant to their lives and articulating those concerns through creative writing and video production, the girls mapped terrains of experience which extended beyond their offense. Although there are inevitable socio-cultural forces that fix identity through repetition and refrain, the gaps and fissures within such refrains make possible the refrain’s destabilization and a potentially productive “crisis” of identity. The passing back and forth through these gaps and openings in hegemonic identification produces a certain namelessness, or what Muñoz called a disidentification. As long as one continues moving, an identity pin is harder to place. Put another way, we stressed to our participants the complexities of one’s identity—especially in regard to girlhood—and the importance of resisting limiting sociocultural expectations. What this means for the

girls in juvenile arbitration is an opportunity (although admittedly a risky one) to perform in-between, or perhaps even outside of the pervasive institutional and societal labels and the essentialist claims of what these kinds of bodies inevitably do.

Poststructuralist feminist theory was instrumental in framing our curriculum. This theory examines the dominant discourses that inscribe the hierarchy of identity and “identity politics,” while reimagining identity as a performance and tracing the avenues for its disruption (Butler, 1990, 1993; hooks, 1990; Phelan, 1993). As Judith Butler remarks, identity performance tends to exist within a hierarchy of identification which reflects the dominant heterosexual, White, middle class ideologies. “By claiming that some identifications are more primary than others, the complexity of the latter set of identifications is effectively assimilated into the primary one, and the ‘unity’ of the identifications is preserved” (p. 253). This process, according to Butler, is what maintains a unifying narrative by which we identify ourselves and recognize the other. We mask difference in order to create a more stable identity, or what Sue-Ellen Case (1989/2003) calls the masquerade. We perform a set of refrains and socio-cultural codes—the identity “do-over.”

An institutional and sociocultural marking of our participants as «bad girls» or «offenders» is a product of the repetitive regulatory practices, which gives way to the spectacle and marketability of «girls gone wild» (Chesney-Lind & Irwin, 2008). These regulatory practices “produce the bodies [they] govern” (Butler, 1993, p. 235) and create a zone of uninhabitability. “This zone of uninhabitability, according to Butler, will constitute the defining limit of the subject’s domain” (p. 237). Operating within a domain reifies the regulatory practices that determine one’s identity performance, or being. But if one agrees with Butler, identity is not natural or given, which means one performs identity within a symbolic hierarchy of socio-cultural codes. Ironically, the tendency to push back against stereotypes or identity claims that we ourselves do not claim can also relegate us to this same hierarchy: “oh, you think I’m acting like a brat? I’ll show

you what a brat acts like!” However, this also means that one has the power to perform productive crises of identity around and through symbolic hierarchies. One can inhabit the uninhabitable deliberately by renegotiating an over-coded terrain of «identity» through new refrains by becoming different.

The productive intersections between theories of disidentification, becoming, performance, and creative reimagining of a body make more transparent the terrain of subjectification, and suggest potential to “smooth” striated spaces (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) that bind and limit different interpretations of what the identity performances might do. In our video project with the juvenile arbitration girls, we sought to explore this interstitial space of identity and disidentification, knowing and not knowing, and masked and unmasked as a site of productivity and potential. Is the process of becoming anonymous a process of escaping «identity» as a set of predetermined codes? Or is it a discrete identity or, rather, an alterity (immanent otherness—outsider without an outside)? How much does one have to mask and how much does one have to reveal? Or, how much does one feel one must give up in order to better navigate coded terrains? What is a process of becoming anonymous within a fixed binary of adolescence, of girlhood, of “offender,” of «bad girl»? What can anonymity DO?

Occupying Anonymous: Girls Performing Disidentities

Our timeline for the project was limited: we only had 12 hours from our first encounters with the girls to the screenings of their collaborative films on the last day of the workshop. Therefore, establishing trust and the framework for the projects was critical. An essential component to our pedagogy in this space was to let the girls determine the issues through which they would create their video responses and to let the work truly be participant constructed. We asked them to map their roadblocks by creating rhizomatic word clusters around the issues they identify as relevant to their lives, which included substance abuse, peer pressure, family, relationships, sexuality, pregnancy, death, and body image. In addition to issues

mapping, we introduced concepts of identity and performativity through artwork by feminist photographers Cindy Sherman and Nikki S. Lee, and popular singer Lady Gaga. We also provided Flip video cameras, laptops, and video editing software and asked each participant to select an issue that she wished to explore through her writing and video performance. The girls wrote their personal narratives; they selected dresses, wigs, and other accessories to create their anonymous characters; they made the choices about where and what to point the cameras at; they edited their video footage and added music. The ten girls participating worked in three collaborative groups. The work discussed next represents one of these small group collaborations

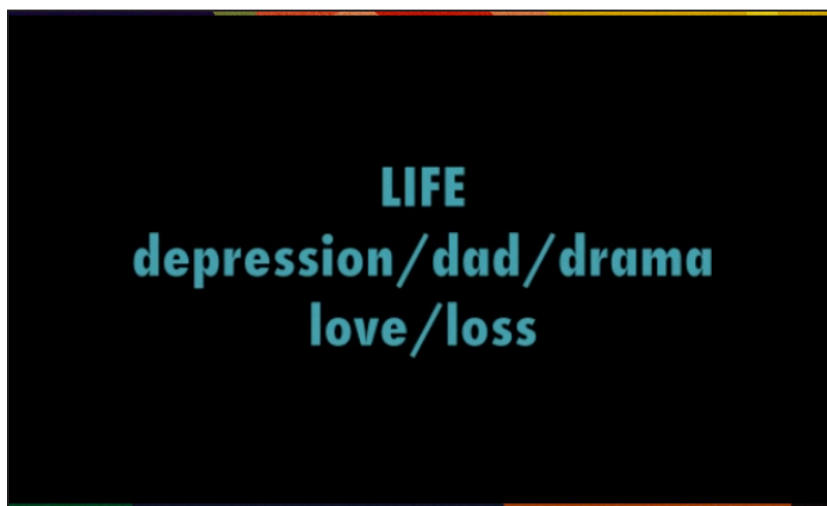


Figure 1. Video frame of a title. Used with permission of subject

The video opens with a black title screen

LIFE

depression / dad / drama

love / loss

followed by the audience's first introduction to the girls: Linda, in head to toe magenta, reaching down to grasp at a flowering weed; Yami, mustachioed, in a straw cowgirl hat, and walking slowly between the pillars of a covered walkway; Jasmine, glamorous in a silver evening gown and long pink and black

wig, clutching at the hem of her skirt and swaying—almost childlike—back and forth. The noise of the street traffic and birds interrupts otherwise quiet moments. Brian Eno's *An Ascent* fades in and out as the performances continue.



Figure 2. Video frames of initial appearances of Linda, Yami, and Jasmine. Used with permission of subject.

Jasmine begins,⁴

Why does daddy ignore me?

Does he even want me?

Daddy treats me different from his other children.

Why won't daddy say "I love you"?

Has he lost faith in me because of my past mistakes?

Jasmine delivers each line of her poem walking toward the camera down an empty hallway. Only occasionally does she break eye contact with the lens in order to glance down at her poem. Punctuating each line, the camera cuts to a shot of Jasmine's legs and feet, her shadow revealing the slow-motion sway of her arms and hem of her long silver dress. Each time the camera cuts back to the hallway, Jasmine gets closer and closer to the viewer. This deliberate and direct engagement suggests strength and an intention that dissolves into a particular sweetness and passivity with the cut. After speaking the last line, so close to the camera that the top of her head is cropped by the shot, the clip cuts back to an extended shot of Jasmine, head to toe, swaying on the sidewalk as if in a trance.

⁴ Participants granted permission to use their first names through an artwork release form.



Figure 3. Video frames of Jasmine's performance. Used with permission of subject

The shot fades, and we see Linda in her pink wig and matching pink satin dress walking down the sidewalk before kneeling next to a cluster of yellow flowers.

Gradually coming closer to each other we came to know we had so much in common. We both had been hurt in the past by being cheated on, used and abused. Then we knew we were meant for each other. But as time passed by, his ex-girlfriends found me on Facebook and were harassing me and saying things that were not true about my boyfriend. And it was making me mad. But after a while of talking with them I was, like, "Okay, this is immature. And I won him and he is mine. I love him and he loves me." So now we let go of the past and proceed into the future.

Linda reads her narrative almost like a testimonial. She uses the stair rail as a podium while she is positioned on the landing. For the first portion, she wanted the camera above her on the stairs, her body below the viewer. But when the narrative takes a turn, when she acknowledges her transition from anger ("it was making me mad") to reconciliation ("I love him and he loves me"), the shot cuts to a new camera angle where Linda's body is above the viewer. She continues to deliver prose very formally but with a decisive change of camera/viewer perspective, which she hoped would communicate her own changed perspective of self-identity. The final scene cuts to Linda, once again outside, walking away from the camera only to stop and turn at the last minute with the toes of her bare feet peeking from under the hem of her long pink gown.



Figure 4. Video frames of Linda's performance. Used with permission of subject

After another fade we see Yami again, walking slowly across the screen.

She was my best friend: sweet, funny, crazy. But it's been too long. We don't talk. We don't speak. It's been more than two months. No, I still haven't seen her.

One afternoon, it's been a long day. "Ready to move?" One phone call changed everything. My daddy called. "Come home. Soon." As my mom and my brother talk, I wondered what was going on. We are back home. Still, don't know what's going on. My mom said to me, "Don't get out of the car. It will be fast." But as I'm in the car with my brother, I see my mom crying. I don't know what's going on, and I really want to know. My mom opens the car door and says, "We need to go now." I feel something, but I still don't know what it is. I'm scared. I'm terrified. I kind of feel pain. We go to my friend's house. She's gone. That's all I hear. She's gone. No one to talk to. No one to speak. Gone.

So that night I closed my eyes and still wondered why.

Four years passed and still no answer. I know she's here with me somewhere. But from now on, she's just gone.

Scene.

As the first lines of Yami's story are read, the camera steadily moves across the floor and up the stairs. At the top, we see Yami: one leg outstretched in front of her and the other tucked up close to her body. Her small frame is dominated by long, black hair and an oversized western straw hat. She never looks at the camera, but slowly and softly tells her story about the death of a childhood friend. There are no cuts, no transitions from one shot to another. The only effect

applied to the scene is a darkened vignette around the edges of the screen. During filming, we suggested to the girls that they say “scene” to indicate to the other participants when to cut the shot. Yami elected to include that as part of her performance. As you hear her say “scene,” the shot transitions back outside again, with Yami walking away from the camera along a covered sidewalk.

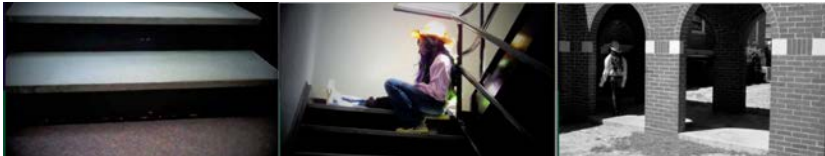


Figure 5. Video frames of Yami's performance. Used with permission of subject.

The video ends similarly to how it began: we see short clips of each girl outside, walking, gazing past the camera, standing alone on the sidewalk. The music pans, cars drive by in the background, and the screen fades back to black with just one word this time: LIFE.

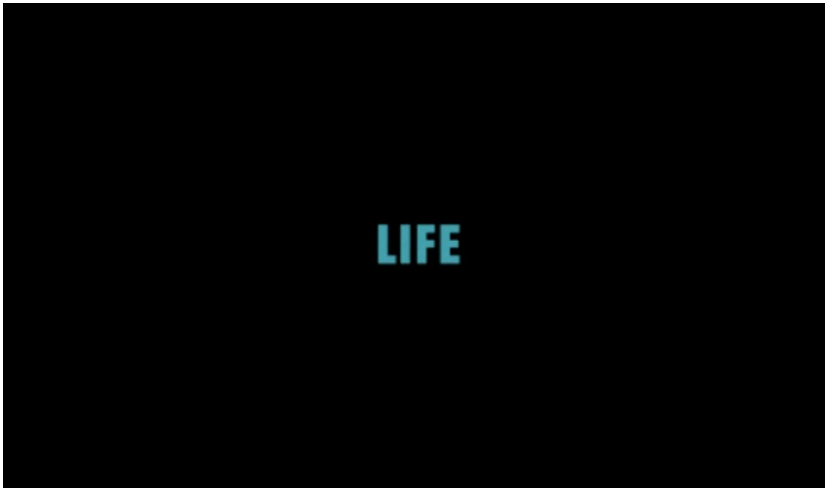


Figure 6. Video frames of final appearances of Yami, Linda, and Jasmine and a concluding slide. Used with permission of subject.

Occupying Anonymous (2012)

<https://vimeo.com/100518663>

We understand the performances of these three participants to be deliberately honest, open, and vulnerable. Given the challenges of working with girls participating in a series of juvenile arbitration workshops—including time constraints, resistance, distrust, and sometimes anger—we posit that the performative spaces of disidentity, becoming, and occupying anonymity allowed the girls strength that is not always easy to come by as adolescents.

Considerations for Art Education

Working with this population of girls has been challenging while, simultaneously, expanding our intellectual scope and capacity for care as art educators. We had to continuously search for and negotiate a delicate balance between our participants' marginalized positions and public image, the anonymity concerns, and expressive avenues of art production that can provide a fuller visibility to their voices and bodies. We laughed, cried, and relived traumatic events with them during our sessions. At times, we faced fierce resistance that we had to give into and allow for some girls to choose a different juvenile arbitration sanction (which usually implies substituting our art class with 12 community service hours). Other times we operated less as teachers than as older siblings, who were also once teenagers with adolescent experiences that made us feel small, angry, and terrified. We never began our sessions knowing exactly what to expect, and were often surprised when a girl, first reluctant to write, would create a sublimely powerful poem, or a girl who was painfully shy would face the camera with a bold determination to tell her story. As art educators, we cherished these moments because it makes more transparent the realm of possibilities for what participants, teachers, and the field of Art Education might be.

Our female participants' obligatory anonymity was riddled with ethical considerations that required concealing their physical identity markers as a measure of public protection; yet these same markers carried a public stigma of bad girl and law offender. By allowing girls to be visible in their video performances, we tapped into both an

institutional taboo and issues of dignity and safety. As we explored the productive intersections of theories on fluid identities and experimented with avenues of video and performance, we discovered a secure liminal space in which our participants' fixed identity as a juvenile offender, girl in trouble, or bad girl vanished as they reinvented themselves as different yet nameless. In doing so, they escaped the oppressive labels via this act of disidentification. In this space, their anonymity functioned as a condition of the performance, but also as its catalyst. A deliberate masquerading and transforming (rather than avoiding and hiding) of their bodied identity markers created an immanent field of self-reconstruction, safety, and renegotiation. It is on this field that our participants navigated bravely and honestly through the critical issues that limit and bind emotional and intellectual growth and life opportunities.

The Occupying Anonymous project also opened up new uncharted territories for the girls' public visibility, otherwise an institutional taboo. As we screened this film (and others) at juvenile arbitration events, community board meetings, professional teacher conferences, and a local university museum, our participants' anonymous performances challenged the pervasive discourses of girls gone wild, and reinvented their public image as powerful writers and capable actors, directors, and editors. In this process, our project functioned as a form of public pedagogy that invited various audiences to reconsider limiting socio-cultural codes, labels, and representations of at-risk youth. Occupying Anonymous formed a liminal space of public visibility, a place of abundant opportunity, a new LIFE.

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“Don’t Judge me. What would you do?” Dialogue through a youth-made film

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ABSTRACT

This visual essay focuses on the ways in which a 17-year-old First Nations filmmaker engages with complex issues of identity and belonging through his short film. Through a narrative analysis of the film along with the participant’s reflection, we highlight some of the complexities of youth-made media as well as how digital-mediated arts practices can carve out space for youth who feel marginalized in traditional institutional contexts. The educational value of film, as a form of digital media, allows both producers and viewers to engage in dialogue with the perspectives of people from different cultures and social classes.

Key Words: Digital media, film, marginalized youth, identity and belonging

INTRODUCTION

This visual essay focuses on the ways in which a 17-year-old First Nations filmmaker Adam¹ engages with complex issues of identity and belonging through his short film. Through a narrative analysis of the film along with the participant’s reflection, we intend to highlight some of the complexities of youth-made media as well as how digital-mediated arts practices can carve out space for youth who feel marginalized in traditional institutional contexts and are defined as young people facing serious difficulties and whose participation in society is inhibited by various barriers (e.g. unemployment, under-education, poverty, and abuse). Recognizing youth’s potential for using digital media as an expressive medium, we present Adam’s work through which he articulates a story of a young man named Tyler¹ who is faced with systemic barriers and personal challenges. This visual essay is created using the data we collected as embedded researchers in one of many new media programs and special projects offered by the Gulf Islands Television and Film School located in Canada, called First Nation Media Intensive Program.

FILM AS AN ART FORM


Two artistic characteristics of film listed by Nadaner (1981) as useful in teaching students about film are the filmmaker’s thoughtful use of the expressive aspects of film that enables him or her to articulate subtleties of human experience and work against stereotypes, and film’s capacity to represent perception as an ongoing process, expressed through the way the filmmaker selects images and arranges them in a rhythmic pattern over the course of film. Nadaner argues that these arrangements and patterns provide the viewer with insights into the forces that affect him or her. Nadaner’s (1981) focus was not on students as producers, but rather as receivers who would benefit greatly from being exposed to film art that is concerned with the perspectives of people from different cultures and social classes. In this case, we see his arguments are relevant for both youth producers and viewers of traditional and new media film. In the contemporary world that we live in today, film remains a major cultural form, as it was in the 20th century, and exhibits a renewed significance as the technology becomes accessible to non-professionals. Manovich (2001), for example, has argued that in new media, film has found a new life as the toolbox of the computer user. Cinematic means of perception, of connecting space and time, of representing human memory, thinking, and emotion have become a way of work and a way of life for millions in the computer age. Cinema’s aesthetic strategies have become basic organizational principles of computer software. The window into a fictional world of a cinematic narrative has become a window into a datascape. (p. 86)

In this visual essay, we seek to explore the significance of a youth film production as a cultural form. Through the process, youth are enabled to interpret and respond to their lived social spaces with creative agency in constantly evolving media ecologies, to become producers in this increasingly mediated and complex world (Castro & Grauer, 2010; Goodman, 2005, Jenkins, 2009; Kral, 2011).




STORY OF ADAM

The film created by Adam is about 12 minutes long and illustrates thick, complex layers that exceed the notion of youth media production as a form of self-expression. It is not a perfectly executed, highly entertaining blockbuster movie nor is it a documentary that captures the lives of real people; instead, it is a short film with technical flaws and what seems to be an overly dramatized plot made by a young filmmaker. What it provides, however, is a complex snapshot of the daily struggles of a young man, thereby creating a space for much-needed dialogue. As Adam explains in an interview,



I know most of people don't like this type of filmmaking that has violence and drugs, but this type of serious movies is my favorite because it really strikes my emotions. It represents a life of addiction in reality that I hope I discouraged people from this type of terrible lifestyle...

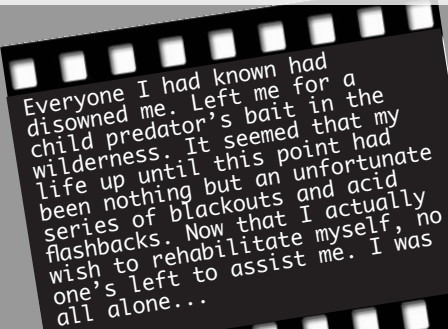


I feel the thing I've written this time. It's really autobiographical in a way. My story is about a Native person - I named him Tyler - who just got out of jail. His parents are deceased. His foster mom kicked him out. His girlfriend left, and all his friends ditched him... I came up with a story in a day and I've got much more into it...

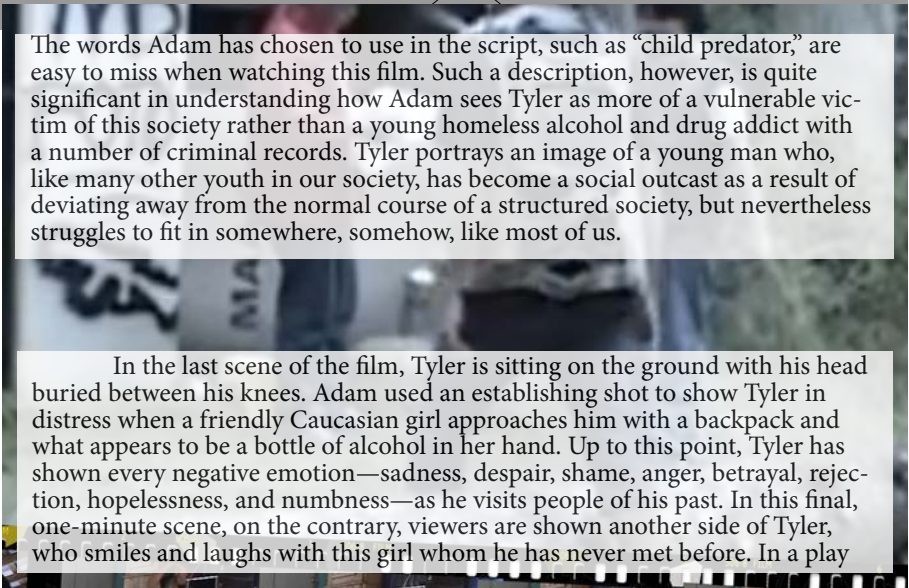
It became personal to me because for a very long time, I struggled with drug and alcohol addictions and in a way, I still am. This story is about a person trying to overcome those addictions but nothing is working out for him. In the end, he just ends up drinking. It's personal to me. It's just about a Native trying to stay sober and trying to fight to stay sober and no one is helping him out. (Adam, personal communication, October 20, 2011)

In the first scene, the main character, Tyler (played by Adam) draws an X on each of his wrists as he narrates the story of how he got to the lowest of all low points in his life. His horrific life story is told in juxtaposition to the backdrop of a beautiful sunset; heavy metal music plays simultaneously and is almost as loud as his voiceover. As viewers fight to hear his words, they may internally debate whether to have condescension or sympathy towards a heavily intoxicated boy telling the viewers how he got to where he is. A surge of questions concerning the lives and culture of marginalized youth arises, such as, where could a struggling young person go within a social system that is structured to benefit those who follow its guidelines while ignoring or punishing those who don't? What are our responsibilities within such a society?

When the film transitions from the second to the third scene, the screen blacks out and we hear narration from Tyler again,

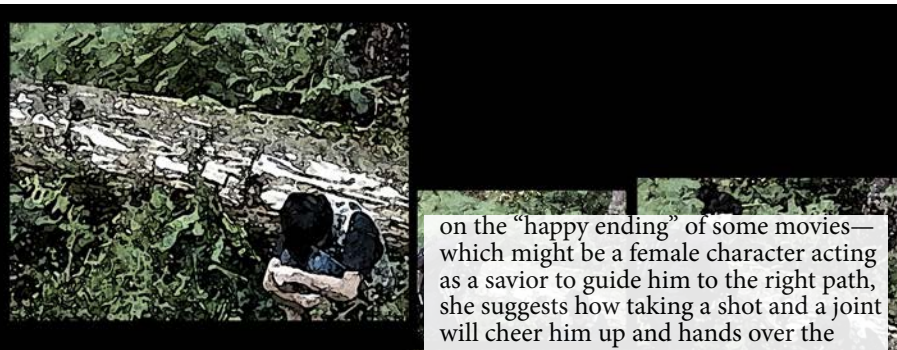


Everyone I had known had disowned me. Left me for a child predator's bait in the wilderness. It seemed that my life up until this point had been nothing but an unfortunate series of blackouts and acid flashbacks. Now that I actually wish to rehabilitate myself, no one's left to assist me. I was all alone...



The words Adam has chosen to use in the script, such as "child predator," are easy to miss when watching this film. Such a description, however, is quite significant in understanding how Adam sees Tyler as more of a vulnerable victim of this society rather than a young homeless alcohol and drug addict with a number of criminal records. Tyler portrays an image of a young man who, like many other youth in our society, has become a social outcast as a result of deviating away from the normal course of a structured society, but nevertheless struggles to fit in somewhere, somehow, like most of us.

In the last scene of the film, Tyler is sitting on the ground with his head buried between his knees. Adam used an establishing shot to show Tyler in distress when a friendly Caucasian girl approaches him with a backpack and what appears to be a bottle of alcohol in her hand. Up to this point, Tyler has shown every negative emotion—sadness, despair, shame, anger, betrayal, rejection, hopelessness, and numbness—as he visits people of his past. In this final, one-minute scene, on the contrary, viewers are shown another side of Tyler, who smiles and laughs with this girl whom he has never met before. In a play



on the “happy ending” of some movies— which might be a female character acting as a savior to guide him to the right path, she suggests how taking a shot and a joint will cheer him up and hands over the

bottle that she has been holding. Despite his earlier effort to rehabilitate himself when his old friend offered him a drink, the enticement from a girl he can laugh with, can find something in common with, and can share his “old comfort” with causes him to instantaneously fall back. After a short contemplation, Tyler grabs the bottle and gulps the drink down. As soon as he takes his mouth off the bottle, he spews out the last mouthful. Just then the screen freezes, and the final narration begins,



Either this ending's happy or sad, quite possibly the beginning of the end whichever you decide... but during this magic moment, I realized I can either fight to stay sober and rehab, commit to a life sentence of useless education and slave away for currency, “whities” or I can remain wasted ‘till death with this beautiful white woman. I tell you this straight edge life is much too boring. Don't judge me. What would you do?

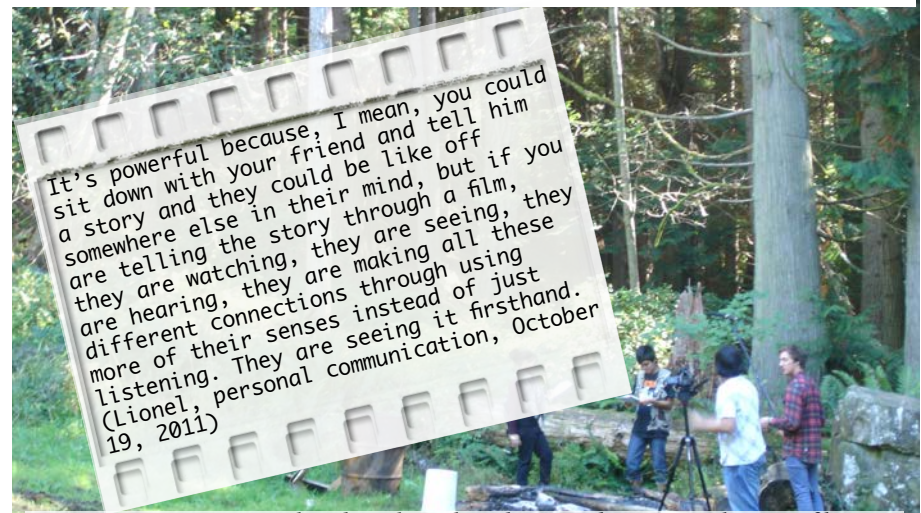
Adam does not create yet another Hollywood-type happy ending to his story. Instead, the film reflects the endless, vicious cycle that an aboriginal youth experiences, one in which he is so tightly entangled. Moreover, he obliquely remarks how white people, the “whities” who left him no choice but to live a wasteful life, have power over Tyler either way he chooses. Adam's film is an example of “how youth filmmakers use the medium of film to address complex issues of identity, particularly the construction of a viable social identity” (Halverson, 2010, p. 2372). In this case his understanding of his racial identity arguably acts as a deciding factor. The last line of the film, “Don't judge me. What would you do?” further complicates the conversation as it invites the viewers to question, to ponder, and to seek after our own interpretation of what we would do if we were Tyler. Moreover, it suggests examination of our social and cultural values as they intersect with those of people whose perspectives and backgrounds are different from ours.

Adam's film goes beyond appreciating his reflective narrative as he intentionally provokes us to confront our own values and cultural assumptions. Youth filmmaking in this way utilizes “the evocative and open-ended features of new media technologies [that] are not rooted in [a] singular space and place, but as de-territorialized forms offer[ing] unique possibilities for informal learning that can be actualized in non-linear ways” (Bazalgette, 2008, p.252). Intended or not, dramatized or not, based on a true story or not, what we may be able to agree upon is that filmmaking provides a unique opportunity for youth to express their ideas in ways that are distinctive for film. It provides limitless possibilities for stories within space and time to be created, paused, re-visited, fast-forwarded, and imagined, “creating encounters for both producers and viewers to experience differing ways of knowing” (Grauer, Castro & Lin, 2012, p.139). Such encounters prompt us to rethink about what it means to learn and teach in the world of today.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Adam's film serves as a good example of how youth are not only capable of producing a complex narrative that is multi-layered and rich, but also a space for dialogue through filmmaking. The process of filmmaking as well offers a source for artistic expression for youth like Adam. For example, script writing and storyboarding encourage youth to draw ideas from what they have experienced, seen on screens, or imagined. As they start to work as a team to produce a film, they are asked to bring their ideas to life by setting up the shooting locations, playing various roles, and participating in post-production process while constantly communicating and overcoming various struggles together, whether these may be technical, environmental, or physical. As a form of art, the process of filmmaking creates opportunities for the youth to negotiate and renegotiate what story to tell, how to tell it, and to whom. Such a process involves the constant tug and pull generated in filmmaking, which encourages youth filmmakers to engage in communication with their inner thoughts as well as with the intended audience.

Lionel¹, who operated the camera for Adam's film, commented on what filmmaking is for him,



It's powerful because, I mean, you could sit down with your friend and tell him a story and they could be like off somewhere else in their mind, but if you are telling the story through a film, they are watching, they are seeing, they are hearing, they are making all these different connections through using more of their senses instead of just listening. They are seeing it firsthand. (Lionel, personal communication, October 19, 2011)

His response sums up what digital-mediated art production, in this case filmmaking, can be for youth as well as for all of us. It helps us to make sense of what we experience everyday—how we struggle to communicate clearly with one

another, how we seek to be heard, and how we have become desensitized and/or over-sensitized to be able to listen.

The penetration of the Internet and mobile technologies has provided youth opportunities to experiment with the explosion of new modes and channels of communication and multimedia production at any time and anywhere as well as to explore complex issues of identity through the participatory aspect of digital media spaces (Halverson, 2010; Jenkins, 2008). For art educators, it signals a need to recognize and value the wide range of film genres, skills, knowledge, tastes, and collective effort that youth bring to media production. As Goldfarb (2002) states, it is important for youth to engage in a media production that “represents an emergent and distinct youth cultural aesthetic embodied by an original vision and style, irony, political savvy, and an immediate sense of young people’s urges to carve out independent spaces for exchanging ideas, images, and information” (p.138). The process of filmmaking as an artistic practice is a space that enables youth to explore the inextricable connections between lived social spaces and identity. It provides an avenue for them to communicate issues of their interest that are scarcely discussed in schools, an outlet through which they may tap into and share their emotional and aesthetic sensibilities. This is what Adam presented through his film. When encouraged with the tools to find voice through film, youth filmmakers will amaze us with what we can learn if we really look and listen.

NOTE

¹ Adam, Tyler, and Lionel are pseudonyms.

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Suburban Spaces: Rethinking the U.S. Dream

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ABSTRACT

When asked to create two-dimensional paper model communities without adequate analysis of the US lifestyles and architectural development, elementary education teacher candidates (TCs) in the Mid-west created residential areas with very little civic architecture, public transportation or amenities. The communities emulated suburban sprawl and reflected the students' memories and lifestyles. A redesigned project included in-depth class discussion of social, economic, and ecological issues, along with a critical review of suburban history. Through democratic action TCs designed and created more socially and environmentally equitable model environments. Within the study the author reflects on the initial practice and pedagogy that she employed and then revised to enable TCs to think and organize civically, rather than materialistically. The author recommends built environment education within the pre-service education classroom to prepare students to be critically knowledgeable citizens. The practice can be extended to the public school classroom.

Keywords: suburbs, sprawl, subdivision, built environment, art education

Suburban Spaces: Rethinking the U.S. Dream

People develop a relationship to space and place that is dependent on their cultural and physical backgrounds (McFee and Degge, 1980; Neperud, 1995). These relationships represent values, cognitive structures, and subconscious patterns for dress, language, compartment, and consumption that are developed over time (Bourdieu, 1984). The use of space as an environmental imprint lends itself for review. Memories and social interactions that people have within these spaces contribute to their personal identities and sense of place. When we review our personal spaces we reflect upon our ways of living and our cultural values (Hicks & King, 1999; Vande Zande, 2011). A study of built spaces can reveal social, cultural, and

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historical narratives that reveal complex issues of race, class, and gender (Powell, 2008; Teaford, 2008; Tuazon, 2011). This paper is the result of a study in which the researcher asked how elementary education teacher candidates (TCs) could envision built sustainable environments that are socially, economically, and ecologically equitable. Within this process it is important to understand the history of the built U.S. environment, especially that of suburban expansion.

Suburbs and Feminist Theory

Suburbs are outgrowths of urban centers. They are diverse collections of communities with varying patterns of ethnic and socioeconomic development (Teaford, 2008). I define community as a coalition of shared meaning—values, memories, and expectations—that manifests itself in streets, homes, businesses and public institutions and structures of power (Levine & Harmon, 1992, as cited in Baxandall & Ewen, 2000). Suburbs are characterized by low-density land use, heavy reliance on automobiles, inadequate public transit, absence of city centers, lack of multi-use development patterns, and expensive infrastructure needs (Morris, 2005). Well over half of the population in the United States lives in suburban areas, and the numbers continue to grow as new subdivision developments increasingly destroy farmland and natural areas and continue our reliance on the automobile (Chow, 2002; Lindstrom & Bartling, 2003). A subdivision is a piece of land that a developer purchases and uniformly divides into lots intended for sale as future sites of mostly pre-designed single-family detached homes (Morris, 2005). The culture of consumption, combined with a sense of individualism and pastoral romanticism, has contributed to the growth of suburbia and suburban subdivisions (Knox, 1993; Lindstrom & Bartling, 2003; Teaford, 2008).

Feminist urban theorist Delores Hayden (2002) asserts that as an educated citizenry we must create sustainable communities that intertwine public and private spheres, question consumerism as identity, analyze how lived environments determine social roles, and understand how civic engagement can play a part in changing

the way that we live. Sustainable communities offer a variety of equitable and affordable housing options at various economic levels and are situated close to frequent destinations. They provide safe and walkable environments and affordable public transportation. They promote economic competitiveness and maximize federal policies and investments to their best advantage. Such communities preserve historic sites and value existing community structures and mores within their neighborhoods. Sustainable communities are ecological communities that value the natural environment, efficient and sustainable energy use, and the environmental and physical health of their citizens (U.S. Department of Transportation, 2014). This vision includes the necessary inclusion of an economically viable framework of public services, amenities, and built spaces that include racial, gendered, and abled equity within private spheres. It also challenges the gender roles that have been embedded within suburban subdivision housing that equate females with hearth and home, and, in turn, makes provisions for public and private spaces for self and for social interaction. It includes provisions for childcare, transportation, and access to needed commodities. From an ecological viewpoint, Hayden advocates re-envisioning existing suburbs, rather than continuing expansive growth. Viewing community as an interconnected network of spaces rather than as tracks of disparate volumetric residences suggests flexibly-planned houses with shared walls, courtyards, and communal spaces that would allow for varying family structures and lifestyles (Chow, 2002). To help us rethink the Victorian arcadian ideal² upon which the U.S. dream is based, the fabric of housing would interweave with the fabric of the community.

2 The U.S. Victorian arcadian ideal, as defined by authors Dowling (1841/2001) and Beecher & Stowe (1869/2001), included either a cottage or stand-alone middle class home located in the country, away from urban crowding and stresses, and surrounded by gardens. Dowling and Beecher & Stowe envisioned the men of the household as gentlemen of leisure who cultivated the lawn and the women as managers of the household duties, the children, and the gardens. At the time of these authors' publications, city townhouses and domestic servants were the norm for U.S. white middle class women (Hayden, 2003).

Suburban History

Suburbs developed for diverse reasons: as garden communities, as ethnic enclaves, as industrial sites, as sites for affordable housing, as wealthy retreats, and as segregated districts (Wiese, 2004). The concept of suburbia as a rural retreat from the congestion and dangers of urban centers became popular in the second half of the nineteenth century with the publication of *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* by landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing in 1841 and *The American Woman's Home* by Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1869. Both publications, aimed at the white middle class, instructed readers to live tasteful and fashionable suburban lives by paying attention to home and garden décor. Beecher equated godliness with the domestic skills of cooking, cleaning, gardening, and child raising, removed from the stresses of work in the city. *The American Woman's Home*, the precursor of women's home magazines, offered Beecher's innovatively designed houses and a call for the purchase of new commodities to fill them (Hayden, 2002).

Garden Communities

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century garden communities provided early examples of economically and environmentally equitable planned environments. Landscape architects worked with building architects and urban planners to create leafy, suburban enclaves with curved streets and public spaces (Jackson, 1985). These model villages accommodated social interaction across economic levels. They contained multi-use and multifamily dwellings, single-family homes, green spaces, footpaths, commercial venues, access to municipal buildings, and mass transit. In 1935, the elimination of many trolley lines made these suburbs automobile-dependent (Morris, 2005).

Greenbelt Towns

To shore up the economy during the 1930s Depression, the Roosevelt Administration built three planned greenbelt towns near Washington, D.C., Cincinnati, and Milwaukee (Arnold, 1971). They linked affordable townhouses, single-family homes, and garden apartments to retail and public spaces that included open areas, a community pool, footpaths, a library, a shopping mall, a school, a gas station, and a human-made lake within a green setting. These new suburban towns had a form of governance and a sense of community that were found in small towns and some urban neighborhoods; they acted as models for possible future town planning (Bloom, 2001; Morris, 2005). Hurt by excessive construction costs and conservative attacks from the National Association of Home Builders, Congress scrapped the greenbelt plan following World War II (Hudnut, 2003; Jackson, 1985). Without government directing the process of urban planning, private developers determined the nature of suburban development.

Federal Housing Administration and Veterans Administration Mortgages

After World War II, the federal government, faced with providing housing for ten million returning veterans, helped finance the biggest housing boom in U.S. history. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, known as the GI Bill, created the Veteran's Administration (VA) and VA Loan Guaranty Program that, along with the FHA, insured private lenders' long-term low-cost mortgage loans for new single-family home construction. White male veterans benefitted the most from the plan. The government neglected to inform returning women veterans about their benefit eligibility, and laws at the time made it difficult for women to secure mortgage credit (Oakes, 2006). Local municipalities often denied loans to servicemen and women of color (Wiese, 2003).

The FHA set minimum standards for lot size, setback from street, separation from adjacent structures, and house width, ensuring that veterans who wanted to buy many existing homes, apartments, or

attached homes would not be able to buy them (Chow, 2002; Morris, 2005). Veterans had little choice but to buy new homes outside of urban areas. These suburbs lacked amenities and had no access to public transportation, ensuring that their inhabitants would buy cars. Between 1944-1952 the U.S. Federal Government financed four million homes, built mostly by large private developers (Jackson, 1985). New home building became a fixed part of the U.S. economy and has evolved from a private into a global financial enterprise.

Nine million people, six percent of the population, moved to the suburbs in the decade after World War II. In 1956 the Interstate Highway Act led to the eventual creation of 42,000 new highways that cut through city neighborhoods and that increased the flight to suburbia. Suburban neighborhoods were often racially segregated. Subdivisions frequently enforced covenants that prevented the sale of property to African Americans, making the suburbs the symbol of white flight and uniformity (Jackson, 1985; Morris, 2005; Wiese, 2003).

Levittown and the Creation of the Subdivision

Builders, such as Levitt and Sons of Long Island, mass-produced huge tracks of affordable single-family detached homes (Kelly, 1995). Builders marketed the identical interiors, complete with radiant heating, eat-in kitchen, General Electric stove and refrigerator, Bendix washer, venetian blinds, and Admiral television to women and lawns and carports to men (Jackson, 1985; Kelly, 1995). Pervasive public media detailed the perfect lifestyle of the male provider and the female homemaker, based on consumer products. Developers kept housing costs low to facilitate the one-worker family. Community facilities in the forms of shopping malls, playgrounds, and schools focused on women, emphasizing their domestic roles.

The Levitts displayed five models of pre-packaged homes in air-conditioned showrooms reminiscent of car dealerships. According to the Levitts, the U.S. consumers' dream was a 750 square foot single-family, two-bedroom, one-bath Cape Cod bungalow or open ranch style dwelling set in the middle of 6,000 square feet of land

(Kelly, 1995). Although today's average house has 2,000 square feet of living space, it still is sold in a manner similar to that of Levittown (Chow, 2002). Urban theorist Paul Knox (2008) wrote that the spirit of modern consumerism, as epitomized by suburbanization, blossomed in the 1950s and beyond as people engaged in romantic capitalism, constantly seeking pleasure. This U.S. dream of upward mobility and passion for discretionary spending escalated in the late 20th century and was marketed as social capital in the form of upscale malls and lifestyle villages (Knox, 1993).

Development Issues

The suburbs' lack of community due to the absence of communal spaces such as town centers, coffee shops, and municipal centers often created a sense of isolation (Morris, 2005). Developers left overworked municipal governments to make up for the shortfall in public buildings and services in the wake of their residential planning (Hayden, 2003), finding it more profitable to build low-density, highly-priced detached houses than mixed-use buildings and family apartments (Teaford, 2008). Workers often no longer travelled into city centers via public transportation, but spent increasingly more time in their cars commuting from suburb to suburb (Knox, 2008). The 2008 gasoline crisis, the 2009 recession, and concerns about global warming forced a reconsideration of the American lifestyle that has developed over several generations (Kamp, 2009). In 2013, only 20% of households consisted of married couples with children, and a majority of these consisted of two-wage earning parents. The share of households with only one or two people rose to 61% (Vespa, Lewis, & Kreider, 2013). Current zoning patterns favor single-family households and do not reflect changing economic and demographic patterns that call for multi-family or communal households in the case of life changes, divorce, retirement, relocation, unemployment, or choice (Hayden, 2002).

Description of the Study

Over the course of two-and-one-half years, within an undergraduate Arts for Elementary Education Majors: Visual Art course that I taught at a university two hours south of Chicago, I engaged teacher candidates (TCs) in a built environment community lesson for the elementary classroom. The project took place over two one-hour and fifty-minute class periods each semester and was meant to be an exercise that could be adapted by elementary educators to any public school environment. Although the project could have been expanded to include community interviews (La Porte, 2011), photo collages, personal maps, and journals (Powell, 2008), design analyses of local buildings and public amenities (Vande Zande, 2010), an exploration of ecological architecture (Muller, 2014), and a critical ecological review of the environment (Graham, 2007), the course time frame and structure at that time did not allow for this expansion. One hundred seventy-eight TCs—164 females and 14 males—participated in the project for the two years and a summer before I instigated a change. Sixty-four additional TCs, 59 females and five males, participated in the revised project. The TCs somewhat reflected the university's demographics: about 84% were under the age of 25; 93% were white, and only one student was not a U.S. national (University Quick Facts, 2014).

I noted that community was a geographic location of streets, homes, businesses, public institutions, as defined by the people and their practices within it and the power structures that shaped it (Levine & Harmon, 1992, as cited in Baxandall & Ewen, 2000; Neperud, 1999). I presented a lecture on housing history that demonstrated how government policies and mass marketing created our contemporary notion of residential housing, particularly suburban housing. I emphasized the evolution of contemporary housing expectations of increased house size and luxury items in comparison to post World War II two-bedroom, one-bath bungalows of Levittown. I provided alternatives to subdivisions with the possibility of planned communities of mixed-use housing. However, I did not engage

students in an in-depth discussion about their own experiences with social and economic issues within their own communities before they began community construction.

TCs worked on structures individually, then worked in groups to lay out streets and their facsimile two-dimensional communities on bulletin board paper. TCs reflected on the project within a final questionnaire that asked them to describe the structure they had created, the kind of house they lived in at home, if they lived in a subdivision, if the subdivision had been built in the last 15 years, what the subdivision says about the U.S. lifestyle, if they'd live in a subdivision when they bought their own home, and, to this last question, why or why not? The TCs created communities that were familiar to them and that reflected their lifestyles and concerns. The end results contained very little civic architecture, public transportation, or amenities. One quarter of the students said that they had copied the homes in which they had grown up. Another quarter said that they had created their dream homes. Two-thirds of the TCs had lived in subdivisions, over one-third of which were built in the last fifteen years, revealing the nation's recent rapid housing growth. A little over a quarter of the TCs wrote that subdivisions either expressed our need to conform and to live near people like ourselves or expressed our desire to show off our material wealth, especially through house size and location. Almost three-quarters said that they would like to live in subdivisions when they buy homes, citing neighborliness and the fact that they grew up there as their main reasons for living in such an environment.

Upon reviewing student responses and my teaching practices I realized that I had done little to encourage a collective consciousness among the TCs that would enable them to work collaboratively to share ideas and to discern equitable and ecological community needs. I had relied upon individuals to take it upon themselves to create civic structures, amenities, and public transportation. Although I had valued the ideas of garden communities and greenbelt towns within my lecture, I had done little to enable this planning to happen.

Instead, by having the students work individually and uncritically, I had facilitated the creation of unplanned sprawl. After coming to know the students and their backgrounds, I realized that I needed to actively engage future classes in the process of community planning and reflection so they could put the concepts from the lecture and discussion into practice.

A Revised Lesson

In a revised lesson I made my approach to built environment education more direct. We spent an extra day in whole class discussion. This discussion included in-depth engagements about community housing alternatives and ecology. We talked about changing family structures and lifestyle patterns, multigenerational families, extended families, and non-traditional families. I connected single-family housing to the gender specific nuclear family that was no longer the norm. I linked suburban expansion with commercial development, commodification, and stereotyped advertising. We discussed the physical needs of low-income families, mostly headed by women, and the need for available childcare, transportation, and green space. We recounted the prospect of developing multi-use buildings like those that were being built in the town where the university is located—structures incorporating apartments, offices, and retail spaces built near public transportation—a revitalization effort that included green technology.

TCs elaborated on the economy since the recession, the environment, the unsustainability of unbridled growth, and the conflation of well-being with material opulence. I used McFee and Degge's (1980) method of analyzing individual and shared space within a city as a model for inquiry. TCs democratically decided what type of community they wanted to create and where they wanted it to be located. Viewing community as a political and social entity in which participants have voices and agency is crucial to this civic process (Knox, 2008).

I helped each class form community development associations; TCs divided themselves into designated development groups consisting of four to eight persons; some created landforms, some created civic spaces, some created residential buildings, and others created commercial properties. TCs conducted brainstorming sessions in which they named buildings and forms within each group, using these as prompts for construction. Those who chose to be a part of the landform group also acted as town planners and, with the advice of the other class members, created the town's structure. TCs in each group selected what they would make, often basing their selections on personal preferences and experiences; however, they now made these decisions with social consciousness.

Results

The resulting communities contained planned streets and footpaths, public transportation, childcare centers, residences located near places of work, public housing, apartments, townhouses, green spaces, civic buildings, as well as mixed-used residences and commercial spaces. Some of the commercial spaces reflected the TCs' interests as well as experience with corporate U.S. TCs carefully thought through the placement of community components to ensure that residents of all economic levels would have easy access to amenities and that corporate-owned business would not compete side-by-side with family-owned ones.

A revised questionnaire asked TCs how their class community was similar to or different from their home communities. Almost half of the TCs said that the classroom community was not like their community, since they lived in subdivisions where residences were further away from commercial or civic amenities. Over one-third said that their class community reminded them of their home communities because it had a variety of civic amenities, businesses, and residential spaces that were in close proximity to each other; many did not mention public transportation, but stated that they lived either in older suburbs or in small towns. Very few students lived in rural areas

that were not like the classroom communities. Lived experience along with guided reflection played a part in how the model classroom communities developed and what was included within them. TCs who lived in communities where resources were more equitably available felt comfortable in playing a larger part in town planning. When asked what they chose to create for the community and why they chose to create it, TCs revealed their diverse tastes and values. One TC wrote, "I made the hospital because I felt it was a vital part for the community." Another TC noted, "I chose to create the town hall because you need some place that handles government issues," while a TC who created a homeless shelter and a retirement home wrote "I didn't want to forget about the smaller percentages of the population." A TC who created a library stated, "I liked to read so I wanted to do this one." Another TC created a childcare and a recreation center. She also reflected the class discussion within her creation:

I chose to create the daycare because every community has children and now a days [sic] with single parent homes, parents need more help. I also created a rec. center because it is nice to take care of your body and people like to go to relieve stress.

The questionnaire asked TCs what they liked about their model communities and what they would do to improve them. TCs approved of their model town's public transportation, layout of streets, and variety of residences, businesses, services, and green space. They liked the town's diversity of amenities and their closeness to living spaces. They could see themselves living there. One TC mentioned that everyone had access to the same resources. TCs liked their model community's public waterfront and green spaces and some wanted to create more residences, parks, playgrounds, and recreational areas. One TC suggested that we create a community recycling center. Another TC would include low-income housing throughout the community. TCs felt that they could repeat the process within their own classrooms.

Conclusion

Without prior in-depth discussion and reflection, TCs created residential communities that lacked public transportation and essential services, possibly mirroring the suburban environments in which they were raised. These communities were middle or upper class representations of many of their own experiences and made little accommodation for low-income persons or families or lifestyles other than those defined by the nuclear family and the traditional U.S. dream. After reflecting on my own pedagogy, I re-envisioned the project and initiated broader class discussion about socio-economic diversity and ecological sustainability. We connected residential and community development with commodification to analyze the commercial, cultural, and government forces that have created our landscape. We modeled civic responsibility by creating a planning council and development groups. A future lesson could analyze TCs' home communities; it could include maps of personal travel routes to places of importance to trace social encounters or interactions. A review of present and past images from home and garden magazines and advertisements could enable TCs to assess and critique economic expectations and racial and gender roles. Analyzing the work of artists like Meg Aubrey, Beth Yarnell, and Michael Salter who critique suburban life would illustrate these issues, as would a review of the visionary community planning of Estudio Teddy Cruz, Charles Goodwin, and Rafael Gómez-Moriana.

Recommendations

Critically questioning materialism and cultural trends within the form of built environment education is a process that can prepare and empower students to become knowledgeable and active citizens. The designed environment impacts students' lives, physically, socially, and economically. Knowledge of suburban history can help students understand that sprawl can be re-envisioned. By opening dialogue about the spaces and places in which we live our lives, students can begin to question and reassess the values that have created them (Guilfoil & Sandler, 1999; Vande Zande, 2011). It is important that

students understand that community planning is civic planning that includes public services, public transportation, amenities, green space, and economically viable private spaces that support social interaction and sustainable lifestyles. A well-planned community integrates housing for the homeless and low-income families and includes provisions for childcare, transportation, and access to needed commodities. When TCs analyzed built environments to understand what people value and how they choose to interact with each other, they engaged in cultural critique that questioned consumerism, ecologically unsustainable growth, race, and gender roles. It is up to pre-service educators to enable future educators to recognize and to value environments that are economically, ecologically, and socially equitable and sustainable, and to rethink the U.S. dream.

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Museum and Art Education as a Response to Place in Doha, Qatar^{1,2}

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Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art

ABSTRACT

In this article we address the theme of place through the lens of the significant and recent changes in the nation of Qatar and how a particular museum, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, has addressed its geographic location in Doha, Qatar. Through a description of the recent efforts to transform to a knowledge-based economy, focusing on the arts and education in Qatar, we set the stage for how the student art exhibits at Mathaf are responsive to the local area. Through these recent exhibitions, Mathaf is offering opportunities for young people in Qatar to make art in ways that relate to their local context and the rapid changes in the region. Further, by exhibiting student art within the museum galleries, the museum communicates the importance of young people and their art to all Mathaf's stakeholders.

Many scholars within art and museum education advocate for education that relates to place and to out-of-school contexts (Blandy & Bolin, 2012; Congdon, 2004; Congdon, Blandy, & Bolin, 2001; Gray & Graham, 2007; London, 1994; Neperud, 1995; Shwartz, 2010; Wickens, 2012). Though these efforts may be published and documented, there are still many art and museum educators developing unique programs related to their environment that may not be widely known. Congdon (2004) identified a shared location as an important aspect of community and noted that when people care about their location, they are willing to work toward the positive future of the place they call home. Because many museums are tasked with creating exhibits of national and international importance, attending to the idea of

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2 Authors' Note: This is a collaboratively written article by a museum educator in Qatar and an art educator in the U.S. who has taught numerous art classes to children in Qatar since 2008.

place may not be prominent in their programming. However, as an integral part of culture, the geographic location of people has a profound effect on various aspects of education and expectations of art. Also, in our frenetic contemporary world, finding and maintaining connections to history, culture, and communities can be a challenge (Gray & Graham, 2007).

In this article, we address the theme of place through the specific example of the nation of Qatar, focusing on a museum in the capital of Doha. Qatar is a rapidly changing country with an overt goal of building a knowledge-based economy (Qatar Foundation, n.d.). This goal is helping to expand its art scene and is creating changes in its educational system. Because of these factors, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art provides an interesting illustration of a contemporary approach to museum education that addresses the concept of place as related to art education and community-based art education. We provide a brief background about Qatar,³ focusing on Doha, and its growth over the recent past. We pay particular attention to how Qatar created an education system and embraced the arts. After this overview of the arts and education in Qatar, we turn our attention to the specific example of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, a modern and contemporary art museum. In the spring of 2013, Mathaf held its first student art competition and exhibition related to the theme *Transform*. Through the lens of art that students submitted to this exhibit, we analyze how the process of the competition and the exhibition *Transform* enabled teachers and students to think about the rapid changes in their geographic area and respond through art, significant because strong, "community-based art programming encourages all people to engage in creative experiences as they

3 We recognize that there are many cultures present throughout Qatar and that the idea of place can depend upon the various geographic regions and cultures within any country. For a thorough discussion of identity and culture in Qatar and as related to terms including "Arab," "Middle East," and "Gulf," please see Excell and Rico's (2013) article. Estimates suggest that approximately 60% of the 2,100,000 residents of Qatar live in the capital city (Central Intelligence Agency, n.d.). Thus, throughout this article, we focus on Doha while recognizing that other regions of Qatar have different local issues and cultural identities.

relate to the individual's experience of being human" (Congdon, 2004, p. 11). In conclusion, we encourage museum educators to collaborate with schools in order to foster art appreciation and ways of connecting museum education to the local community.

Doha, Qatar

Doha is a rapidly growing, busy metropolis in which a multitude of cultures intermingle. Situated on the Arabian Gulf (also known as the Persian Gulf), the city has prominent ocean views along an area known as the Corniche, significant skyscrapers and embassies in the West Bay, human-made islands in a new shopping and housing development known as the Pearl, large housing complexes for construction workers in the industrial area, a multitude of shopping malls, a new airport that saw almost 3,000,000 passengers in January of 2014 (Khatri, 2014), several major museums under construction, and frequently has new traffic patterns. Because it is a city in the desert, much of the landscape is the beige color of the sand and most houses are a similar color. However, in some areas, various plants and trees are cultivated and these spots of green punctuate the local area.

Because urban development began in the 1950s (Eakin, 2011) and the population is growing rapidly, much of the built environment is new construction. Several times in recent years, the government has significantly revised population growth estimates, with 15% growth in country expected between the end of 2013 and 2015 (Khatri, 2013). The current estimate includes many immigrant construction workers to build the infrastructure for the burgeoning population and the World Cup 2022 stadiums to be built in Doha (Khatri, 2014). Approximately 90% of Doha's 1.3 million residents are expatriates, with the majority coming from Southeast Asia. As the population of the country has quadrupled since 2000, changes in the physical environment seemingly happen overnight, with cranes and construction sites omnipresent elements in Doha.

Though this rapid change is evident throughout Qatar, and especially in Doha, what has not changed are the Islamic principles of fairness,

honesty, generosity, and mutual respect. Life in Doha is a daily mix of traditional and contemporary elements of culture, with many Qatari people choosing to wear the garments of abayya (women) and thobe (men). It is within the traditional society of Doha that the arts and, in particular, museums and galleries are emerging. Yet, Bouchenaki (2011) wondered about "the degree to which these museums are integrated into the cultural context of these countries" (p. 101). Further, Excell and Rico (2013) noted the complexity of the concept of heritage in Qatar and how it, like other neighboring nations, is engaged in a conscious effort to preserve, represent, and invent an "individual and distinct national culture and heritage" (p. 675).

The Rise of the Arts in Qatar

Over time, and especially in the last 10 years, Qatar has engaged in a concerted effort to develop a knowledge-based economy, rather than continue to rely on its carbon-based economy. This intentional effort has brought a considerable transformation to the capital of Doha, with significant government efforts in the arts and education. In the recent years, Qatar's prominence as an international arts hub has increased. Qatar is certainly not alone in the venture of overtly increasing its visibility in the arts with other countries in the region, including the United Arab Emirates, embarking on their own ambitious plans to become significant arts and museum destinations (Seligson, 2008). Within Qatar, one early manifestation of the cultural change to embrace the arts was the formation of the Qatar Museums Authority, a governmental agency established in 2005 (Anderson, 2012) and now known as Qatar Museums (QM). Recently, QM opened two significant art museums in Doha including the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) designed by renowned Chinese-American architect I. M. Pei and Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, a museum dedicated to modern and contemporary art. Opened in 2008, the MIA is home to one of the world's most important collections of Islamic art and is a significant part of Qatar's endeavor to make itself into the art and education center of the Middle East (Aldridge, 2009). Mathaf opened in 2010 and is housed in a converted school building re-

designed by the distinguished French architect Jean-François Bodin. Construction is underway for two additional QM-run museums in Doha, the Qatar National Museum designed by noted French architect Jean Nouvel and the Orientalist Museum designed by Jaques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, an award-winning team of architects from Switzerland. Through the design of these museums and other buildings, Qatar's goal of transforming itself into a destination for architectural tourism is apparent (Baker, 2013). Also intentional in the design of these cutting-edge structures are references to the past in the form of architectural elements related to traditional Islamic or Qatari buildings. As Bouchenaki (2011) noted, many earlier iterations of museums in the Gulf seemed to take a modernist approach in that they were looking to modernize and update. More recently built museums reflect recognition of the need to preserve the past, make connections between the past and the present, and look towards the future. Further, the programming of the institutions is also designed to be responsive to local needs, rather than replicating practices of Western museums (Atkinson, 2011). The museums in Doha have been at the forefront of this movement, negotiating both the local context and that of world globalization. In particular, Mathaf has situated itself as being a place for scholarship and discussion about the role of contemporary culture and the arts (Atkinson, 2011).

While the government runs most arts agencies, there are other entities that have recently emerged to support the arts, including the Katara Cultural Village that opened in 2010 in conjunction with the inaugural Doha Tribeca Film Festival. Additionally, Souq Waqif, a central marketplace in Doha, houses multiple arts entities. These include the Souq Waqif Art Center run by the Ministry of Culture as well as the al-Markhiya Gallery, a commercial venture. In other words, the visual arts are backed by the government and private entities and are increasingly prominent throughout the country and especially within the capital city of Doha.

In addition to developing museums and arts organizations, the head of the QM, Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin

Khalifa Al-Thani, is the largest collector of modern and contemporary art in the world (Art Review, 2013). In 2011-2012 Sheikha Al Mayassa spent 50 times more on art than the Museum of Modern Art in New York (Arlidge, 2013). Far more than a casual art buyer, she purchases a wide range of art for QM's many institutions. She explained her desire to change "both Western perceptions of Islam and Islam's perceptions of the West" (Arlidge, 2013, ¶11). She believes that through viewing works of Arabic art, Westerners will come to see the peaceful message at the heart of Islam, learning from Arabic artworks. At the same time, she hopes that by displaying Western works of art in Qatar that the society will become more accepting of modern art, learning from different cultures. Thus she is employing art as a means of engaging in cultural dialogue, a goal notable in its ambition and its recognition of the importance of art within societies.

Education in Qatar

At the highest levels, the government of Qatar espouses education as important to the strength of the nation and valuable for individual citizens. These efforts further indicate ways the government is overtly working to build a knowledge-based economy. The constitution addresses how education is the foundation of a society (Supreme Education Council, 2013). Though the government began offering public education in the middle of the twentieth century, by 1970 only about one-third of Qataris over the age of 15 could read (Erickson, 2011). Rapid and significant changes began to occur shortly after Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani came to power in 1995 because of his emphasis on culture and education.

Through issuing Decree no. 37 in 2002, the Emir established the Supreme Education Council (SEC) as the highest entity responsible for education in Qatar. The SEC was tasked with a significant school reform effort at the K-12 levels that is intended to "decentralize authority and increase autonomy, accountability, variety and choice within the system" (Guarino & Tanner, 2012, p. 226). Through their work with consultants from the Rand Corporation, the SEC

developed national content standards in Arabic, English, math, and science, as well as a rigorous testing regimen, and began implementing this new curriculum in 2004.

According to a Curriculum Specialist in the SEC's Curriculum Standard's Office, art was removed from Qatari public schools several years ago. However, due to the influence of Sheikha Al Mayassa, the SEC is reintroducing visual arts into the schools a few grade levels at a time. The 2013-2014 school year was the pilot year in which visual art was taught in five schools to students in 3rd and 4th grades. The plan for the 2014-2015 school year is to have art in all schools that the SEC oversees in 3rd and 4th grade, thereby significantly increasing the number of students who have access to art in Qatari schools. In the coming years, the SEC plans to add a few grades at a time, with the hope of having art classes widely available in schools in the near future. As art is being reintroduced, the SEC is also drafting a formal curriculum with distinct goals and benchmarks for students at every level. Within this context, there are plans to possibly develop assessments that teachers throughout Qatar could use for their art students, thus allowing significant data collection and analysis. As of the publication of this article, the standards and assessments are not available to the public.

Mathaf and its history

Within the context of a rapidly expanding local and national arts and educational scene, Mathaf emerged. The history of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art goes back to the grandson of the ruler of Qatar in the 1960s, His Excellency Sheikh Hassan bin Mohammed bin Ali Al-Thani, who became aware the importance of art in his early travels to London. While in London, he noticed the presence of artwork in average homes and the absence of artwork in Qatari life (Al-Khudhairi, Chalabi, & Shabout, 2010). As Sheikh Hassan pursued his studies in history, he often wondered about Arab artists' contributions to the art world and how he might be able to connect with them. His personal interest and curiosity led him to a course

called "Art of the 20th Century" taught by Qatari artist Yousef Ahmed at Qatar University. This course was the impetus for Sheikh Hassan to investigate Arab artists in the modern era. He developed a vision that focused on four key elements: to have personal contact with the artists; to delve into knowledge, history and the inevitable role of these artists; to examine art as a process that casts its net across identities, causes, principles, and time; and finally, to collect regional works of art from the late 19th century to the early 20th century.

Due to the rapid growth of the art collection, in 1995 Sheikh Hassan realized the need to share his collection with the public. Thus, he installed his works in a villa and established it as a private museum to help inform the public about modern Arab art. The museum became a local landmark and also housed an artist residency space where many modern Arab artists took refuge to create their artwork away from the political pressures of their own countries. Over time, he decided that making the museum public, thereby making his collection accessible to a wider audience, would be a more productive route to fulfilling his vision. Thus, he proposed to the major Qatari governmental philanthropic and development wing, Qatar Foundation (QF), that his art collection become a public educational resource (Al-Khudhairi, 2010) and they agreed.

To honor Sheikh Hassan's vision and emphasis on education, in 2010 QF and QM developed the first public home for Mathaf in a refurbished school building in the midst of Education City, a multi-university complex in Doha (Exell, 2014). This overt choice eschewed traditional ideas of museum exhibition spaces around the world as temple-like buildings. Instead, situating this collection within a renovated school surrounded by universities specifically indicates the importance of education.

Since the opening of the museum, Mathaf's education department has offered programs that are based on learning opportunities for visitors of all ages, helping them make connections, acting as a catalyst for new ideas, creating a sense of local place, and spreading ideas by contextualizing works of modern and contemporary Arab art (Mathaf

Education Department, 2012). The education department intentionally created many programs for school students, knowing that the children attending public school did not have art in their classrooms. Through interacting with their school visitors, the educators at Mathaf learned the importance of developing programs that foster creativity and critical thinking. The local situation in Qatar, with no public school art education, was the impetus for the education department to launch a nation-wide student art competition in 2012. This initiative provided K-12 students with a platform and encouragement to express their opinions through artmaking.

The idea behind the exhibition was to showcase the curiosity, enthusiasm, and creativity of the youth who visited the museum. The Mathaf educators chose the theme of *Transform* due to its presence in many of Mathaf's exhibitions; how it reflects ways artists "change the ordinary into the extraordinary," which later became the slogan for the exhibition; and the significant transformations occurring within Doha and Qatar. Using *Transform* as a starting point, students were asked to think about how they could turn everyday objects into something different. Through school visits, working with teachers, and providing information to youth, the educators at Mathaf helped children in Doha interested in participating in this show by providing them with activities related to the theme and based on artworks from Mathaf's past exhibitions.

The museum received submissions from nearly 600 students from independent (public) and international (private) schools across Qatar, though the vast majority came from Doha. The judging took place over three phases until the selection was narrowed down to 221 works from 42 schools. Some of the most striking works included *Clothing*, an installation piece made of old clothes that were dipped in mud rock plaster and later painted white and transformed to hanging figures that resembled an abandoned balcony in a haunted place. As Qatar and Doha are rapidly changing and older buildings are demolished for new construction, we interpret this piece as an allusion to the many uninhabited buildings. Further, because

the clothing is so stiff and is the color of plaster, the artist could be commenting on the relationship between humans and the rapidly changing built environment in Doha. However, there could be many other potential interpretations of all of these works of student art.



Figure 1. Malak Zahed, *Clothing*, Old clothes dipped in mud rock plaster, paint. "I stained clothing items and then applied mudrock/plaster on all clothing items in order to make them sculptures. Once they dried, I retained them and added highlights with coffee and white acrylic paint. I wanted them to look old and evoke emotions."

A group of students from an all-boys independent school presented an award-winning sculpture made out of an old satellite dish that was wrapped with old newspaper clippings, including a picture of a mother and a crying baby. At the tip of the satellite feed cone stood a flipped bottle of milk that appeared out of reach. The work was appropriately entitled *Milk for the Children of Somalia*. Through these materials, the students addressed a pressing humanitarian issue. One possible interpretation of this work as it relates to the theme of transformation is that the students altered materials and used their art to call for changing aid policies or relationships with other cultures.



Figure 2. Group work, *Milk for Children of Somalia*, Mixed media – satellite dish, old newspaper, bottle of milk. “We used an old satellite dish with newspapers and turned it into a work of art that includes the idea of humanity to highlight the suffering of the children of Somalia.”

Another artwork, *Sedu: Then and Now*, involved multiple reinterpretations of traditional sedu⁴ designs frequently found on rugs or covers. Created by a group of students with special needs, the work expressed the undeniable rapid cultural changes in the region. This group took an old, traditional sedu pattern and changed its colors and function, making the pattern modern and more vibrant. Another piece they made showed a traditional *sedu* that was tattered with dim colours that gave the impression of it being forgotten. Yet another iteration of the sedu utilized neon colors, perhaps as a means of updating the sedu to the present day and making connections between the traditional elements of the past and the contemporary world.

4 Sedu is a regional wool craft traditionally practiced in Bedouin desert communities, design elements of which are still widely used in textiles. Al Sedu (in Arabic) indicates the process of weaving and is also the name of the loom. Sedu patterns traditionally involve geometric shapes woven into the textile and frequently use red, black, green, and white, colors common in Arab countries (Mathaf, 2011)



Figure 3. Group work. *Sedu: Then and Now*. Watercolor on paper. “Sedu is symbol of heritage in the Gulf and is one of the oldest traditional crafts in the Arabian Peninsula. And we wanted to show how change can affect tradition.”

Through these works, the students not only physically transformed materials, they also worked with cultural concepts and transformed them. Further, the museum transformed itself by putting student work in the galleries, not in the basement or in a hallway. This notion that student art is important and worthy of being displayed in a

museum is an important shift in museum exhibition practice that was well received by the public. The opening of the *Transform* exhibition had the highest attendance of any opening that Mathaf held up to that point, according to museum records. We believe that the substantial number of entries and the attendance at the opening demonstrate the significant local interest in art education and museum opportunities for youth. Further, through this exhibition Mathaf built connections to students, teachers, and schools throughout Qatar. Thus, this exhibit worked to help further the goals of museum and arts education in Qatar by expanding the reach of the arts and building networks of art and museum educators. This is especially important within the local context of a country that is beginning the reintroduction of art in the schools.

With change and transformation in mind, Mathaf launched its second Student Art Competition under the theme of *Black and White*. The competition ran during the 2013-2014 academic year, with the display of student work in the galleries held during the summer of 2014. Students were asked to make art related to differing interpretations of *Black and White* by considering the central question, "What can you learn by looking, thinking, and working through black and white?" The museum educators selected this theme to encourage students to observe and notice what they encounter daily through a specific lens. In the local context of Qatar, the colors black and white carry deep symbolic meaning and cultural significance. These colors are evident in daily interactions with people because of the traditional dress of white (thobe) for men and black (abayya) for women (Mathaf, n.d.).

For the *Black and White* student show, Mathaf received over 300 submissions from 39 schools across Qatar, with the majority coming from Doha. A judging panel included staff from QM, Mathaf, and other personnel from local arts organizations. The judges chose 191 works to be included in the exhibition. While the artworks in this exhibition primarily used black and white, they were not monotonous. Sometimes serious and sometimes joyous, the artworks explored a wide range of materials and subject matter. The students'

artworks were curated and displayed throughout the museum, grouped by the themes that emerged from their responses to the central question.

The exhibition opened on May 24, 2014 with at least 500 students, families, and community members present. The opening also featured performances from student musicians and the Doha Children's Choir. In addition, attendees were invited to an artmaking workshop that involved the creation of a mural inspired by the students' artworks. The Chair of QM, Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa, saw the exhibition and recommended that next year's student exhibition should select a few works that could be converted into public art to further encourage and foster the role of museum and art education in Doha.

Conclusion

As we considered this special issue on place, we were struck by the rapid changes in Qatar and how those changes were manifested in the visual artworks the students created for the Mathaf exhibit. Through exploring how students in this particular place interpreted the theme *Transform* while living in a rapidly transforming nation, we can gain insight into ways museums can work with students and schools. The idea of exhibiting student art in an art museum gallery, not just in an educational gallery, is an important step in recognizing the importance of education and the arts. In the case of Mathaf, the *Transform* exhibit theme intentionally connected to the rapid changes in the students' surroundings. This enabled them to participate in the exhibit while thinking through their role in a transforming place. Through connections like this to a community, museums can embrace ideas relevant to their communities and connect with the people and the place in which they operate. This challenge to previous ways of exhibiting embodies what Wickens (2012) posited as a goal for museums, "first to be for someone, and second to be about something" (p. 91).

Though the case of Qatar is unique, other museums can attune to

the educational, artistic, and political climate of their areas and plan programs or art competitions for youth that embrace local issues, ideals, and values. As we live in a postmodern world, considering the context of museum education programs, including place, is an important way to understand the programs and their meaning (Neperud, 1995). Further, building education and exhibition goals around place is another way for museums to fulfill their missions as educational institutions in ways that are relevant for their visitors while challenging past practices. The student art exhibition run by Mathaf is one way that the museum addresses Bouchenaki's (2011) questions about how contemporary museums are relating to the particular cultural context of their area.

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Linking Art and Geography Education: A Museum Model for Elementary and Middle Schools

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ABSTRACT

A program designed as a model for schools and museums to use in teaching art and geography in concert is described. The role of place in art-making and art interpretation is emphasized. Docents and teachers are trained to discuss geographic information related to materials, styles, and content of art from diverse cultures. Students observe that people everywhere make art, they make it in different ways, and what they make is influenced by where they are and their perspective of that place. Students discover other cultures and viewpoints based on direct observation of specific objects. Art projects incorporated in the program enable students to represent their mental maps of concepts taught, thus providing feedback about the nature of their spatial thinking and organization.

Spatial relationships are common concerns of art and geography educators yet the interfaces of the two disciplines are rarely explored. The Kreeger Museum in Washington, DC has initiated a program that connects art and geography by emphasizing the role of place in art-making and art interpretation. The program consists of a gallery tour and workshop for field trip students and is designed to serve as a model for working with students in many age groups and in a variety of learning environments. Docents and teachers receive an educator's guide, *Art&Geography: School Tour and Workshop* (Keel, 2012), concerning fifteen works in the museum's collections. Students receive a world map indicating sites of origin for those works. The educator's guide includes geographic information revealed in

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the artworks, influences of geography on the various artists, and art projects enabling students to provide feedback about the nature of their spatial thinking and organization.

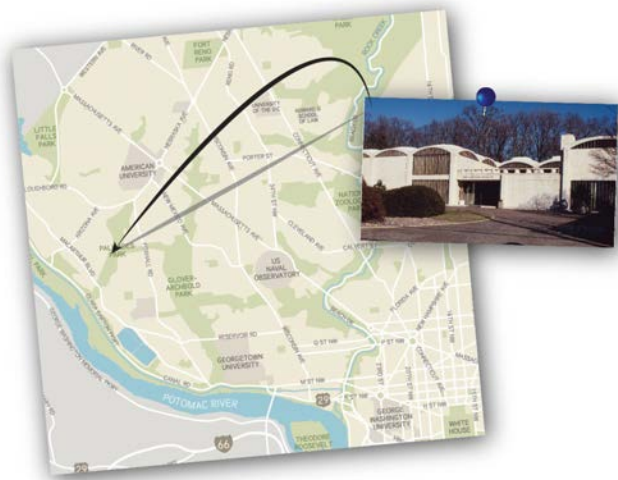


Figure 1. The Kreeger Museum location, Courtesy, The Kreeger Museum, Washington D.C.

Touring the museum, students are introduced to architectural elements, paintings and sculpture from different countries and cultures. They are asked to consider geographic sources of the materials, styles and content of the works. During the workshop segment of the program, students learn to visually represent their mental maps for concepts discussed in the tour. Mental maps are visualizations or internal images that all people form enabling them to plan routes from one place to another, recall aspects of places they've been or plot imagined places (Gould & White, 1986).

Resources that artists are able to find locally or bring from elsewhere establish possibilities and set limits. According to Onians (2008), "they also determine the nature of all activities requiring material expression, including art-making" (p.10). Whether studying art history or learning to produce art, it is logical, even necessary, to learn about the resources that are such powerful influences.

Concurrently, works of art can convey aspects of spaces and evoke places in ways that aren't easily expressed in words, especially by young children (Tuan, 1977).

The following excerpt from the *Art&Geography* (Keel, 2012) educators' guide accompanies William Christenberry's sculpture, *Dream Building II*, seen on the tour:



Figure 2. Christenberry, W. *Dream Building II*, 1981 Courtesy of William Christenberry / HEMPHILL & The Kreeger Museum, Washington D.C.

William Christenberry lives in Washington, DC but grew up in Hale County, Alabama. Yearly visits to the places of his childhood are constant sources for his work. His recollections, filtered through his imagination and intellect, reveal a brooding preoccupation with discovering the true nature of a place beyond its physical appearance. Hale County is a poor rural area of the Deep South. Christenberry has used soil from Alabama at the base of *Dream Building II*. A deep expanse of chalk, a form of limestone, is below the topsoil layer in Hale County. Because chalk is extremely porous, water drains through very quickly, resulting in drought conditions that cause frequent crop failures.

Dream Building II is a solitary structure that evokes the Southern landscape of the artist's childhood. It is not an architectural model but a statement about a place and the passage of time. The simple shape, drab colors, weathered signs, and commonplace materials, including corrugated tin, indicate it is old and from a poor area. The signs convey aspects of the local culture. The absence of windows and doors suggests abandonment, as does the faded and damaged signage. The sharply pointed roof refers to the shape of the pointed hoods worn by Ku Klux Klan members active during the artist's youth. Christenberry insists on the ethical responsibility of artists to reveal aspects of the landscape that may be strange or brutal or ominous as well as those that are beautiful. The repeated use of steeply triangular roof shapes in his work serves as a continuing reminder of Klan activity and the artist's deeply felt concerns about it. (n.p.)

Another passage in *Art&Geography* (Keel, 2012) describes a painting of an urban environment:

Jean Dubuffet traveled from France to Italy, South America and New York but strenuously objected to adopting mainstream "culture" from any source. He rejected the fashionable nonobjective style in art to insist on figurative work conveying ideas and emotions directly and with energy and spontaneity. Dubuffet created the label "*Art brut*" or "Raw Art" to describe art created outside the boundaries of official culture. He emulated the work of children, the mentally ill, prisoners and graffiti artists. *L'eau dans le gaz* (*Water in Gas*) is a slice of city life revealing a street scene, most likely in Paris, where Dubuffet worked. The title is an idiom signifying "tensions exist" or "trouble is brewing." Other phrases appear as names on storefronts but convey the artist's displeasure with urban society. Among the signs are *manches à gigot* (a very dishonest person), *balances truquées* (fraudulent scales), *Banque la Mariole* (Buffoonery Bank), *Fripouille père et fils* (Rascal and sons), and *au chèque bidon* (a phony check). Dubuffet represents city life as

full of vitality and pulsing energy but rife with corruption. The jammed surface, bold colors and thickly painted surface convey the artist's vehemence. The wavy contours, schematic figures and crude brush strokes are childlike. The absence of arms on all the figures suggests their powerlessness in the post-World War II urban environment. While the picture plane is crowded, the figures are stiff and isolated from each other, walled off in gray enclosures formed by the artist's brushstrokes. Although Paris is widely regarded as one of the world's most beautiful and civilized cities, Dubuffet has created a generalized city with a very different aspect. (n.p.)²

These passages demonstrate the wealth of geographic information contained in brief analyses of works of art. It is standard practice to simply state the country of origin of artists when presenting art to students. But when those students have little or no knowledge of geography, as is often the case, merely identifying nationality is meaningless. And while location on a map is an important starting point, knowledge of geography's significance involves much more. Geography encompasses not just where things are but why they occur in specific places and the power of place in people's lives. Geographers study how our attachment to a place colors our perspective of both the place we live in and our view of other places. The descriptions of work by Christenberry and Dubuffet included here illustrate how profoundly both artists were affected by their individual views of important places in their lives.

Students are immediately interested in the world maps distributed at the start of the Kreeger tour. They are eager to find their own location and that of family members in distant places. Young children often demonstrate remarkable understanding of aerial views (Tuan, 1977). The prevalence of Google Maps has increased students' comfort and facility in reading maps. In addition, we find that maps are

2 A photograph for the above passage may be accessed at https://www.kreegermuseum.org/about-us/collection/painting/Jean-Dubuffet_Water-in-Gas-Leau-dans-le-gaz

captivating entry points for discussions of art and a way to vary typically used questions, such as: “What do you see?” or “What kinds of colors has the artist used?” Maps are concrete and therefore engage student discussion in a more immediate way than queries about the basic elements and principles of art instruction that tend to refer to abstract ideas such as color theory or perspective.

Docents are trained to ask and invite “Why” questions. These may include: “Why might the artist have chosen to vacation here?” for the landscape *Gaspé* by Milton Avery. For a Mayan sculpture from Campeche, the questioning may include, “Why might the artist have chosen limestone for the material of this sculpture?” and “Why might the surface have acquired its weathered texture?” For a Pissarro painting of summer in Paris’ Tuileries gardens, we ask, “Why might the trees have such abundant foliage?” and “Why might the park have been named for clay tiles?” For a mask from Central Africa, questions include, “Why might the artist have given the mouth of this mask a rectangular form?” Photographs of the works mentioned here can be accessed at www.kreegermuseum.org/about-us/collection and found in The Kreeger Museum catalogue (Spilsbury, 2009).

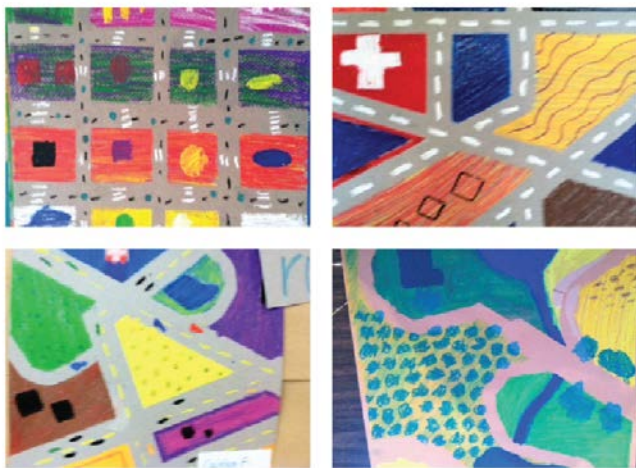


Figure 3. Elementary school student

Figure 3. Elementary school student work, Courtesy, The Kreeger Museum, Washington D.C.

The artist-led workshop section of the program provides tools for students to register and compare visual responses to the presented material by depicting urban or rural environments in the form of aerial view maps. Students convene around tables of art supplies in the museum. Having seen landscapes in the Kreeger collections, elementary school students compare and contrast landscapes from rural and urban places, listing characteristics of each space. After discussing differences between profile and aerial views, they choose masking or artist’s tapes of varied widths to layout their designs for urban grids or rural pathways. Each student represents her or his own ideas on separate sheets of paper. Water-soluble crayons are used to fill the negative spaces between the taped roads with colors and textures symbolic of different areas within the chosen environments. Student drawn or stenciled symbols are added to indicate landmarks and topography. Next, removal of the tape is always a dramatic moment, after which many students choose to add road lines, bridges, train tracks and other details.

Projects for older children may include using contour lines to make topographic map interpretations of profile view landscapes seen in the museum. All ages enjoy drawing strip maps. These are linear routes from start to end points that include pictorial landmarks on both sides of the route (MacEachren, 1986; Southworth, 1982). The combination of discussion and graphic methods can facilitate a clearer expression of the organization of spatially structured elements (Lehman-Frisch, 2012).

A similar approach to The Kreeger Museum’s program is in use by art and geography teachers at The National Cathedral School in Washington, DC. One unit develops content and skills in three disciplines – Geography, Visual Arts, and Language Arts (Schell, Roth, & Mohan, 2013). Students explore the geographic concept of a sense of place and the ways that people use the arts (visual and literary) to express their connection to a particular place. Two different landscapes with low annual precipitation are explored – the Arctic and the Southwest United States. The Arctic focus compares the

paintings of Norwegian artist Ingrid Jangaard Ousland, whose Arctic landscapes speak volumes of her passion for this bewitching place, with the diary entries of Knud Rasmussen, famous Arctic explorer. The paintings of Georgia O’Keeffe and prose of Willa Cather comprise the exploration of place in the Southwest. Following the development of a sense of place for these two dry but very different spaces on the globe, students express their own connection to a special place of their choosing in both visual and written forms.³



Figure 4. Middle school student work in progress. Courtesy, The Kreeger Museum, Washington D.C.

³ Profound connections between art and geography were explored in the exhibit “Earth Matters: Land as Material and Metaphor in the Arts of Africa” at the National Museum of African Art. The curriculum resource unit accompanying the exhibition provided lesson plans around five themes: *Material Earth*, *Power of the Earth*, *Imagining the Underground*, *Strategies of the Surface*, and *Environmental Action* (The Smithsonian Institution, 2013). Like the Kreeger’s program, the unit emphasized both teaching for content and encouraging self-expression.

Traditionally, art teachers direct students to consider spatial relationships within a work of art. The Kreeger approach broadens consideration of space beyond the frame of a painting or setting of a sculpture. It provides each work its “fit,” or place, in a global perspective and helps the student develop an expanded mental map of different places and cultures. While the Kreeger program is specific to its collections, the same approach is easily applied to different works of art in other museums. Wherever presented, the method of combining art and geography teaches that people everywhere make art, they make it in different ways, and what they make is strongly influenced by where they are and their perspective of that place. These simple statements underlie understanding and appreciation of spaces and places around the world. Students in the greater metropolitan area of Washington, DC, so many of them immigrants or children of immigrants, have responded to an emphasis on place in discussions of paintings, sculpture and masks from many regions of the world by making comparisons with places in their own experience. The Kreeger Museum’s *Art&Geography: School Tour and Workshop* is a multicultural program based on direct observation and discussion of specific artworks rather than oversimplified generalizations or hearsay stereotypes.

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Unraveling the Yarn: Self-Reflection, Critical Incidents, and Missteps Leading to Continued Growth as a Culturally Sensitive Art Educator

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AUTHOR NOTE

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ABSTRACT

Teacher reflection has been shown to have a positive influence on educators' professional growth. This article features the author's autobiographical reflection on his eight years working at an elementary school within a predominantly migrant Mexican American community, with specific attention paid to his mistakes while implementing a lesson on the indigenous Huichol culture of Mexico. Through the author's critical self-reflection, a number of common missteps in multicultural instruction are discussed, including the selection of lessons that call for shallow reproductions of cultural artifacts, the error of false assumptions of cultural homogeneity, and the culturally-insensitive practice of assuming privileged roles of academic authority that treat indigenous people as exoticized subjects unable to describe themselves and their lived experiences. The article concludes with a synthesis of lessons learned from the author's errors, and encourages other educators to engage in similar teacher reflection to further their own growth as culturally sensitive educators.

Keywords: teacher reflection, critical incident, autobiographical narrative inquiry, culturally sensitive teaching practices, Huichol art, Mexico

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The willingness and ability of teachers to reflect on their own practices, decision-making, potential biases, and socially responsible actions has been shown to be a positive influence on educators' professional growth (Danielson, 2009). While such reflection can occur on a situational basis as teachers solve daily classroom problems, it can also occur in reflection of past events and as a way to make future changes based on recognized incongruities in philosophical orientations and practice (Farrell, 2004). In this process, it is important that teachers remain open-minded and willing to recognize their own errors, rather than placing blame on students, parents, or school conditions. Furthermore, they must be able to look critically at entrenched disciplinary practices, and willing to reposition their own long-held conceptual frameworks to evolve and adapt with circumstances in schools and in awareness of larger social contexts (Larrivee, 2006).

A number of strategies have been found to be effective in promoting teacher reflection, including the use of support groups, autobiographical inquiry, journal writing, and the analysis of recognized critical incidents in classroom situations (Larrivee, 2006). This article draws on two of those strategies, autobiography and the description of critical incidents, to share what I have learned from my own missteps in my ongoing evolution as a culturally sensitive art educator. In brief, autobiographical narrative inquiry focuses inwardly on a teacher-researcher's first-person reflections on selected life experiences, but outwardly on a particular social phenomenon involving the teacher-researcher (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). A critical incident can be similarly autobiographical, but relates to a specific classroom occurrence that has been self-analyzed for having significant impact in reinforcing or changing an educator's practices or perspectives (Farrell, 2004; Griffin, 2003). In combination, then, I use autobiographical inquiry in this article to share my past experiences as an art teacher who worked for eight years at an elementary school within a predominantly migrant Mexican American community, focusing specifically on my missteps and a critical incident involving efforts to implement a lesson on an

indigenous Mexican culture, the Huicholes of the Western Sierra Madre Mountains.

I hope that sharing my mistakes and resulting repositioning as an evolving culturally-aware educator provides a springboard for other teachers to consider their own conceptual orientations and decision-making when planning instruction for culturally diverse populations. I begin by providing a brief review of literature on teacher reflection before describing my teaching experiences at the school, with specific attention focused on a particular critical incident involving the unit on Huichol art and culture. Concluding sections analyze the critical incident and synthesize the lessons learned from my errors for others to consider. Throughout the article, all personal proper nouns, except for the names of my wife and myself, have been replaced with pseudonyms.

Teacher Reflection

Dewey (1933) recognized the importance of teacher reflection nearly a century ago by maintaining that experiences become educational only when participants reflect deeply on the purpose and efficiency of such transactions. He contrasted these meaningful experiences with situations where people are blindly guided by routine habits or the orders of others to complete tasks. Decades later, Donald Schön (1983; 1987) would bring greater attention to the need for continuous reflective decision-making in a variety of professions, including education, and popularized the term *reflective practitioner*.

Other scholars (Farrell, 2004; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Larrivee, 2006) have since expanded on the ideas of Dewey and Schön by identifying various levels of teacher reflection that lead to deeper stages of introspection with greater potential for acting on identified social, moral, and political issues. Larrivee's (2006) synthesis of the various levels of reflection proposed by others provides a suitable framework for the purposes of this article, and begins with surface reflection. At this lowest level, teachers' main concerns are with finding improved ways to efficiently manage their classroom and keep students on-

task to reach pre-established goals, rather than examining the value of such predetermined curricula. The second level, pedagogical reflection, involves deeper thinking related to teachers' beliefs about good instruction, and whether or not their selected practices are congruent with those beliefs, making the appropriate adjustments as necessary.

The third level, known as critical reflection, finds teachers becoming aware of inherent social, political, and cultural injustices embedded within established institutional systems (including schools), and making efforts to address these injustices in how they select and engage students in planning curricula (Larrivee, 2006). Self-reflection, the fourth and final level, has teachers thinking more deeply about social injustices, but this time inwardly about how their own assumptions may have been unconsciously shaped by unacknowledged cultural privileges and family imprinting. Seemingly, it is these final two levels of reflection that have the most relevance to working ethically and morally with diverse student populations, and to the personal stories and critical incident shared within this article.

Autobiographical Narrative

Prior to my current work at the university level, I was employed for eight years as an elementary art educator in a predominantly migrant Mexican American community in rural Florida. McCarty Elementary was largely populated with students from families that came to the area to work in the local citrus groves before moving on to new locations. Depending on the season, approximately 60% to 70% of the school population was Hispanic, and about 80% of students qualified for free or reduced lunch programs (GreatSchools, 2013). At the time of my hire, I was 22 years old and embarking on my first teaching job in a context with which I was remarkably unfamiliar. I had grown up in a different state where the community demographics were almost entirely White and African American, and I didn't know a word of Spanish.

Furthermore I had just recently completed my undergraduate training during the early 1990s when discipline-based art education (DBAE) was still the dominant instructional model for K-12 art education. During the DBAE era, many art teachers were trained to write sequential lesson plans that featured objectives related to the disciplines of studio art production, art history, criticism, and aesthetics (Greer, 1984). Since that time, these methods have fallen out of favor for lack of attention to multicultural issues, overemphasis on Eurocentric views of art historical excellence, and for largely ignoring visual culture, technology, and creativity (Carpenter & Tavin, 2010). Over time and through reflection that I have documented elsewhere (Broome, in press), circumstances quickly led me to also realize that DBAE did not offer the most engaging curriculum for the Mexican American populations at McCarty Elementary. I found that many examples from Western art historical canons did not resonate with these students nor connect to their past experiences and interests in art, yet they had a vast knowledge of local cultural iconography and traditions that far exceeded my own, and they were fascinated by art in this context.

Convinced that I needed to shift my approaches to art education, I enlisted the aid of available resources, involved students, and the school's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) resource teacher (who was also a native of Mexico) to introduce me to these locally relevant visual cultural icons so that I could incorporate such examples into the curriculum in place of purely Western sources. My learning curve was steep, but through situational analyses of the extended school community (Stuhr, Petrovich-Mwaniki, & Wasson, 1992) and throughout my first five years of instruction, I gained an understanding of local visual culture iconography and customs including the Virgin of Guadalupe, *quinceañeras*, lowriders, and *cholos*, often dealing directly with these topics in my instruction (Broome, in press).

In spite of the apparent obstacles I faced during my first years of employment, including a purposeful distancing from the practices

espoused by my discipline-based training and my own inexperience as a professional and with diverse populations, my years at McCarty Elementary School were formative in my development as an art educator and in shaping my own culturally sensitive worldview (Broome, in press). I became convinced that it is a teacher's responsibility to proactively learn about diverse cultures within their class rosters, and to ensure that those cultures are somehow represented within curricular examples.

Experiencing success with these reflective shifts in my teaching approach, and having become more knowledgeable of Mexican customs through my deepening relationship with the ESOL resource teacher (we were married several years after meeting at the school), I was compelled to seek out deeper investigations into Mexican art in hopes of introducing unfamiliar aspects of native culture as a way to broaden students' intra-cultural understandings. It was partially for this purpose that my wife, Monica, and I arranged a visit to an indigenous Huichol *ranchería* during one of our trips to Mexico, where many members of Monica's family still resided. I had intended to gather resources and first-hand knowledge about Huichol culture for use in creating an instructional unit to share with my students. I was certain that this unit would represent, at that point, the pinnacle of my efforts in making connections with Mexican American populations at McCarty Elementary School. Unfortunately, I couldn't have been more wrong. Instead, the unit itself was underwhelming for students, dissatisfying for me, and represents a critical incident that became a catalyst in my own evolution and critical self-reflection as a culturally aware art educator.

The Critical Incident

Visiting the Huicholes. Monica and I had traveled far to remote regions of the Sierra Madre Mountains in Mexico, traveling by plane, bus, and boat before finally hiking on foot to reach a Huichol *ranchería*. At the turn of the century, the Native American Huicholes numbered around 43,000, about half of whom at the time of our visit

still lived spread out in pockets throughout the Western Sierra Madres (Furst 2006; MacLean, 2012). This mountainous climate helped to protect the Huicholes from invaders during colonial periods (Lazare, 1990), and left their customs relatively unaltered in comparison to other indigenous Mexican cultures (Primosch & David, 2001; Weston, 2010). Monica and I had arranged for the services of a Huichol guide during our trip, and were able to converse with Huichol artists and purchase their work both at the *ranchería* and later at a Huichol-owned artisans' store.

I was particularly interested in Huichol yarn paintings (see Figure 1), which are made by pressing yarn into thin wooden boards covered with beeswax (Primosch & David, 2001). Over time, yarn paintings have evolved from a medium used strictly as votive offerings for nature-related deities, to a way to depict traditional mythology and new shamanistic visions, and, finally, for commercial purposes, providing a source of income for Huichol communities (MacLean, 2010; 2012). Armed with several purchased yarn paintings, my new knowledge about Huichol art, and photographs of our trip, I left the *ranchería* excited about my plans for incorporating these experiences into art lessons at McCarty Elementary. However, as we descended the Sierra Madres, my spirits fell too and I caught myself pausing to question the commercialization of indigenous arts and other aspects of our trip that troubled me in its brevity and overtones of cultural tourism. I tried to put my worries at ease by remembering that the main motivation for our visit was to learn more about indigenous Mexican arts to incorporate into my future instructional plans. Little did I know that my troublesome thoughts foreshadowed events that would spur on further critical and self-reflection on my own teaching practices and unacknowledged biases.



Figure 1. Huichol yarn painting, Collection of the author. Photo: Jeffrey Broome. Used with permission of photographer.

The resulting lesson. The next year, I implemented a lesson plan inspired by Huichol yarn paintings. I began the unit with a slideshow of our experiences in traveling to Mexico and at the ranchería, while emphasizing contextual information and discussing how Huichol culture has remained relatively intact during periods of colonization. The initial introduction to the slideshow stimulated animated conversation with students, and they asked many questions about my trip and made personal connections to their own experiences living or visiting relatives in Mexico and seeing similar textile works of art and imagery on those visits. However, as the content of my presentation became more specifically related to Huichol art and culture, I noticed that students were making fewer contributions to discussion and their use of personal connections ceased altogether.

In designing an accompanying studio project, I consulted several commercially popular teacher-resource books that suggested art activities, and students and I set about making modified yarn paintings, substituting wood and beeswax with tagboard and glue. I instructed students to sketch an image from nature in the center

of the tagboard and to first glue yarn around the contours of this image and the perimeter of the piece before filling in these borders with solid colors (see Figure 2). Although we worked in relatively small dimensions (7" X 6"), and the process did not take long to complete, enthusiasm for the project continued to decrease, especially in comparison to the initial excitement I had noted during the introductory portions of the slideshow.



Figure 2. Student work from the Huichol yarn painting lesson.

Afterward, I arranged a display of students' work and was surprised to find myself experiencing a sense of dissatisfaction with the studio portions of the lesson. A collective view of the work revealed little variety from one piece to another, indicating that the assignment was close-ended and allowed few opportunities for individual creativity. This realization opened internal floodgates in questioning other aspects of what I had assumed were sound multicultural teaching practices. Although the introduction to the slideshow was stimulating for some, why did overall student interest dissipate shortly after the focus turned specifically to Huichol art and culture, and even more so after beginning art production that typically provided the pinnacle of enthusiasm for most lessons? In essentially recreating modified versions of Huichol yarn paintings, what had students really learned?

What types of critical thinking were involved in the subsequent studio project, and what topics related to social justice were left unaddressed in our classroom discussions? I had traveled far and put significant well-intentioned efforts into creating a culturally relevant project for the students at McCarty Elementary. Where had I gone wrong?

Discussion

In the stories above, there are several instances worthy of further discussion that illustrate teacher reflection and represent my own ongoing evolution as a cross-culturally sensitive educator. Although none of the stories directly relate to the first level of reflection, surface reflection (Larrivee, 2006), I most certainly dealt with classroom management and other surface issues during my first years as a teacher, but these issues simply lie beyond the scope of this particular article. In terms of pedagogical reflection (Larrivee, 2006), I eventually recognized DBAE and its over-emphasis on Western examples of art history as lacking resonance with the interests and experiences of the diverse populations at McCarty Elementary, as students tend to seek familiar cultural representation within instructional content (Sadker & Zittleman, 2007). Since I have thoroughly described how this level of reflection spurred me to learn about and utilize examples of local visual cultural iconography at McCarty Elementary in other writing (Broome, in press), I will not dwell further on the topic here, and will instead advance the discussion to the third and fourth levels of reflection involved with the critical incident featured above.

Critical Reflection

My missteps in instructional decision-making begin to reveal themselves at the level of critical reflection (Larrivee, 2006), involving my unawareness of shallow cultural representations in established educational resources, as well as my inability to select appropriate curricular content or to engage my students in this selection process. My intentions in planning the unit were guided by an attempt to engage in authentic *border studies* (Garber, 1995) that moved

beyond the review of multicultural literature (Nieto, 2009; Wasson, Stuhr, & Petrovich-Mwaniki, 1990) and instead involved in-depth engagement with an intracontinental culture for the purpose of sharing information with students and broadening their value and understanding of the selected culture. My execution of such border studies, however, was flawed from the outset in choosing the Huicholes as the focus of my investigations without first asking students if this selection was relevant to their lived experiences. I had no evidence that any of my students were of Huichol descent, and while many had been born and lived in Mexico, I did not check in advance for familiarity with Huichol art and customs. Indeed, those who have played seminal roles in developing (Freire, 1970/2002) and synthesizing suggestions for critical pedagogy (Forbes & Kaufman, 2008), continuously note the importance of involving students in the selection of generative themes that stem from their own local concerns.

Rather than seeking my students' input, I turned instead to my own interest in Huichol art and implemented a project suggested by teacher resource books that called for the introduction of cultural artifacts, such as yarn paintings, and the subsequent reproduction of shallow facsimiles of these items. In discussing the fallacy of this approach, Stuhr, Petrovich-Mwaniki, and Wasson (1992) warn the following:

Such tokenism not only trivializes the aesthetic production of all sociocultural groups, but, what is worse, it avoids confronting the real challenge of [authentic critical inquiry into] . . . the meaning of the object, artist, [and] process, in [a] . . . sociocultural context. Further it fails to make . . . contributions to the students' lives in ways that are morally, ethically and cognitively sound. (p. 21)

Additionally, my selection of these token multicultural activities shows that my abilities in critical reflection were not yet advanced enough to recognize that textbook industries are part of

institutionalized systems that may perpetuate culturally insensitive and depersonalized representations of minority populations. While I am not claiming that these types of books are unusable, I am suggesting that packaged teacher resources should be consulted with careful consideration and primarily as jumping-off points (Davenport, 2000) for tailoring activities to locally specific needs.

Self-Reflection

The fourth level of reflection, self-reflection, involves a teacher's willingness to look inwardly at themselves and uncover any hidden cultural or social assumptions that he or she may hold as shaped by their own family history or unacknowledged socio-cultural privileges (Larrivee, 2006). If surface reflection deals with a teacher's need to respond to readily identified classroom situations, then self-reflection is a difficult tension-filled process likely to occur after greater passages of time, as it deals with characteristics in ourselves that we may not recognize immediately. I have grappled with self-reflection related to my missteps in implementing the Huichol art lesson for many years, beginning from the moment I first questioned the value of our trip as we descended the Sierra Madres, to my disappointment in viewing the resulting display of student artwork, and even in the writing and revising of this particular article.

No matter how long it took, I can now acknowledge that I did take a privileged stance throughout the creation and implementation of the art unit described above. I did not engage my students in selecting culturally and locally relevant themes for classroom investigation; I chose it *for* them. Furthermore, even after my missteps in this selection process, I went about collecting information on Huichol art and customs with much of the same privileged authority noted of culturally-insensitive academic research into indigenous cultures. For colonized peoples, such academic investigations can be painful reminders of their struggles against imperialism as such research tends to treat indigenous people more as exoticized subjects or objects, not as human beings, and certainly not as human beings

possessing the capabilities to describe themselves and their lived experiences with organized expertise (Smith, 2012). I had traveled abroad, collected art from indigenous people, came home, and presented these artifacts to my students much as a cultural tourist might, unwittingly implying and promoting cultural hierarchies in that process (Ballengee-Morris, 2002) and as if I were doing my students an assumed favor, rather than consulting their true needs, interests, and artistic traditions within the local community. A more inclusive approach could have involved student research into their own family links, or the invitation of local Mexican American artists into the classroom to share and discuss their work.

The critical incident described in this article also reveals missteps related to false assumptions of cultural homogeneity (Brody, 2003; Saldivar, 1990). Such assumptions are created by superficially generalizing specific cultural practices, traits, and interests to all members of a larger ethnic group or nationality, without realizing that there are distinct differences within those groups. I had assumed that McCarty Elementary students would find the yarn painting unit intrinsically interesting simply because Huicholes live in Mexico, without realizing that migrant Mexican-American experiences may have little in common with Huichol culture and customs. In this particular case, but fortunately not all teaching during my time at McCarty Elementary (Broome, in press), my missteps were both figurative and literal: I had traveled great distances to conduct in-depth border studies, yet my best resources were only steps away in the communities surrounding McCarty Elementary.

Conclusions

The purpose of this article was to use autobiographical teacher reflection and the description of a specific critical incident to share what I have learned from my errors in implementing a unit on Huichol art and customs. While I have described my progression through levels of teacher reflection in repositioning my stance on this particular unit, some readers may still wonder exactly how this

reflection contributed to my growth and evolution as a culturally sensitive educator. A cursory reading may have left some to conclude that I evolved from a considerably insensitive person with minimal levels of teaching competence, to one that just recently awakened to any sense of awareness to issues of cultural diversity. I hope that is not the case, as the incident described in this article only represents a small snapshot of my early teaching practices and who I was as a beginning art teacher and young adult. A more comprehensive view would reveal that I chose to work at McCarty Elementary among several other options in different socio-economic communities, that I was honored with an award for teaching excellence during my time there, and that I have always been proud to learn and explore Mexican cultural traditions with Monica and, now, our two young children who are experiencing a *border consciousness* (Gómez-Peña, 1989) of their own in a household of mixed heritages.

By the time the critical incident occurred, I had already realized, largely on my own, many of the failings of DBAE to resonate with the lived experiences of McCarty Elementary students, and I had begun to seek out approaches that were more culturally inclusive (Broome, in press). I may have had good intentions in wanting to share examples of Mexican art and culture, but my execution was poor and reveals where there was room for additional growth in terms of cultural sensitivity and awareness. In retrospect, I can now see that I did hold unacknowledged biases related to assumptions of knowledge that privileged my own status as a formally trained educator with discipline-based expertise, and that perpetuated an institutional divide, rather than partnerships, between *us*, as academic instructors, and *them*, the progeny of prior colonized peoples. In sharing the Huichol unit with my students, I primarily relied on a metaphorical *banking system of education* (Freire, 1970/2002) that assumes that lecturers are experts who can make deposits of information into the minds of passive and uninformed learners.

By sharing my missteps, I hope I am able to encourage other art educators to avoid similar mistakes, to continuously reflect on how

awareness of cultural issues can guide practice, and to more quickly consider alternatives to frequently packaged teacher resources that call for the reproduction of cultural artifacts. I am also hopeful that this article will provide an impetus for teachers to take the time to nurture their own reflective practices, particularly at the highest levels that seemingly relate to the further development of sound cross-cultural instruction. Finally, I encourage other researchers to more openly share their own mistakes and evolving conceptual orientations; otherwise we adopt a stance as incontrovertible keepers of great knowledge that runs countercurrent to the spirit of student-centered active learning and critical pedagogy.

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Problems Related to the Practice of Video Education in Japan

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ABSTRACT

The practice of video production as a means of learning through art is closely related to the concept of *media literacy*, although misuse of the term in Japan has created some obstacles. First, an imbalance exists between video literacy's two educational aspects: using video to express ideas and interpreting the expressions used within them. Second, unqualified instructors are frequently tasked to teach video production in an educational context. Third, rapid changes in social environments lead to disparities between social reality and educational objectives. These problems are rooted in an outdated understanding of media literacy as a concept in Japan, which in turn can be attributed to an inadequate translation of the term into Japanese that strips away its creative connotations.

Keywords: video production, media literacy, media, instructor education, video expression and education.

How should video education be taught in Japan? To answer this question, one must first understand the current state of media literacy in Japan, since both subjects are closely related. Literacy can refer to one's ability to read and write, in addition to a general state of being educated; in contrast, video is a medium through which information is transmitted. Video creation is included in art and cultural education curricula in Japan, and closely linked to media literacy, since educators seek to develop students who are literate in video creation, which is a form of media. When the word media is affixed to literacy, however, it encompasses more than the mere ability to communicate using media. This conceptualization of media literacy is relevant to all media, not just video, although it varies according to each situation. As Kasahara (2012) notes, "the term lacks consistency in [its] interpretation,"² an assertion that is particularly evident in Japan where media literacy is interpreted according to

researchers' specializations and positions. In other words, the precise meaning of media literacy in Japan remains undefined in academic discussion and practice; consequently, the ambiguity of the term has exerted a negative impact on video production as an educational tool. Hence, this article addresses problems unique to Japan regarding the educational practice of video production caused by an ambiguous understanding of media literacy.

Propagation of Media Literacy as a Concept in Japan

Media literacy as a concept arose against the backdrop of the Grunwald Declaration in 1982 at UNESCO's International Symposium in Germany. The declaration generated worldwide awareness concerning the importance of media education that cultivates a critical viewpoint, and appealed to a multitude of societies and organizations. Moreover, it asserted that societies under the strong influence of mass media should "develop greater critical awareness among listeners, viewers and readers" (UNESCO: 1982) through education, thus redefining the concept of media literacy.

Media literacy became a buzzword in Japan during the late eighties and early nineties, when mass media faced heavy scrutiny regarding a series of scandals that would cause the public to doubt its journalistic integrity. The first incident occurred in 1989, when a photograph accompanying an inspiring newspaper article on the environment was deemed misleading; next, in 1992, an investigation revealed that segments of a popular televised documentary were intentionally falsified. This wavering confidence in mass media accelerated the spread of media literacy as a concept, and subsequently stimulated educational activities involving it. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (then the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications) responded to these developments by establishing a research committee on media literacy. Their findings were summarized in a report entitled "Youth in the Broadcasting Sector and Media Literacy" (2000), which would later function as a blueprint for the practice of media literacy in Japan. The report is summarized as follows: The

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2 Translations from Japanese to English are the author's.

forefront of present-day Japan's unsolved challenges is "to promote healthy and tense relations between broadcasters and audience" (p. 1). Implication of the word "broadcasters" in the report encompasses all media with information transmission capabilities across a dispersed audience. On that basis the report says that it is important to cultivate people's ability to think critically toward broadcast content as defined by the report. Following these developments, many educational programs involving video production were sanctioned to cultivate learners' ability to critically evaluate mass media through the lens of media literacy.

Media Influence and Media Literacy

Moving images can be described as a series of codes that vary in meaning according to each recipient's cultural background. As Barthes (1985) notes, "[These] codes are simply associative fields, a supertextual organization of notations which impose a certain notion of structure" (p. 288). Therefore, the meanings embedded in moving images not only differ between recipients, but also between recipients and the author. But mass media does not exert influence solely through the meaning embedded in moving images. As we see later in this article, mass media itself is a social device capable of influencing people's judgments, and similar to any entity that possesses authoritative power.

In the Milgram experiment (also known as the Eichmann Experiment), Stanley Milgram (1972) demonstrated that individuals tend to obey authority regardless of their personal beliefs. The experiment's participants were given orders contradictory to their ordinary moral values to determine what proportion of the subjects would comply. The results revealed that most individuals would obey orders when given by a person of authority despite their moral apprehensions.

Nick and Eltchanin (2010) expanded upon Milgram's work and examined whether television cast members would obey producers' orders to perform content contrary to their moral values. In their

article, examples of participants' actions were reported as follows: "behave dishonestly" (p. 204), "flight from reality" (p. 205), "they used violence to obey the producer" (p. 269). Additionally, the researchers rang a bell to alert participants when they had inadvertently submitted to such influence. As Cialdini (2010) observed, when the acceptance of an authoritative power is internalized, individuals adhere to a simplified decision-making process devoid of critical thought. The aforementioned studies suggest that television through its authoritative power can diminish viewers' ability to make sound decisions. Hence, television is capable of influencing audiences' behavior in a manner devoid of critical thought, and therefore a social device that facilitates non-democratic situations.

As mentioned in the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications report from 2000, media literacy education designed to effectively combat mass media's non-democratic nature is "absolutely necessary in developing a democratic society comprised of people with a multitude of values" (p. 2). In other words, media literacy is a fundamental component of a properly developed democratic society. In Japan, the purpose of teaching media literacy is to foster skepticism towards mass media, and subsequently considered a valuable concept from both a social and educational standpoint. Yet the government curriculum guidelines for art education in Japan have no mention of media literacy. Still, Shimoguchi and Hase have pointed out that "practices of video production as a means of learning through art have been parallel in purpose to media literacy" (2014, p.98). This does not mean that video production as a means of learning through art has been well practiced in Japan. For one thing, there is "a major problem of lack of video equipment" (p.96). Working against this difficult situation, a highly-motivated art teacher may pay for video equipment out of their own pocket in order to teach video production as a means of learning through art. Generally, however, educational methods of video production in Japan are taught as a simplified process of professional video making, with outcomes of making short films, video advertising, and news shows.

Obstacles to Teaching the Expression of Ideas Using Video in Japan

In the instructional practice of video production to promote media literacy, students are familiarized with one kind of literacy: how to express ideas using video. Media literacy allows students to understand how viewers interpret messages presented in videos, thereby enabling them to independently evaluate mass media such as television. Art education curriculum designers in Japan are supportive of studying video production. For example, [the government curriculum guidelines](#) for art education by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (2009) includes a section entitled, “Expressing ideas using video pictures,” which entails the following four objectives: creating works that demonstrate a mastery of video equipment; effectively conveying messages using visual elements such as lighting, shooting angles, and motion; fully utilizing the potential of video media to achieve one’s creative vision; and finally, capturing images while considering various forms of expression and understanding (p.44). Shimoguchi and Hase (2014) investigated historical practices of art educators using filmmaking in Japan through review of the professional magazine *Kyouiku Bijyutsu* [Art in Education]. First published in 1935 and still in publication, the magazine mainly offers practices of art education. Shimoguchi and Hase’s investigation revealed that Aiba was using filmmaking in his classroom in 1975. At the time, “video equipment was too expensive” (p. 95) so he taught students to make a television program with support from his school. He was using filmmaking in art education because “he was deeply concerned that people might believe that all televised things are truth” (p. 98). In other words, he thought media literacy was needed in the curriculum and got started by using filmmaking in art education. Aiba’s practice began seven years earlier than the Grunwald Declaration. Shimoguchi and Hase’s investigation also showed that, historically, filmmaking in art education in Japan mainly contained media literacy elements; the practice of filmmaking in art education was not active. Reports of filmmaking in art education were published in *Kyouiku Bijyutsu* only in 1975, 1993, 2000,

2008, 2010 and 2011, totaling 20 articles over 36 years. To contextualize this, *Kyouiku Bijyutsu* publishes over 10 articles every month on art education practices. This has resulted in “the situation that teachers tried to practice [teaching filmmaking in art education] by trial and error” (The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications: 2000) and the rate of practice is low.

While it is clear that guidelines exist within the Japanese art education curriculum for video production, media literacy education still fails to address the expression of ideas using the medium. In that respect, the following three obstacles, outlined below, prevent students from learning how to effectively express their ideas using video.

A Disparity Between Understanding and Creating Videos

As mentioned earlier, media literacy education in Japan tends to focus on understanding videos rather than using them to express ideas. In a report entitled “The Improvement and Enhancement of School Textbooks” (2008), the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology observed a problematic trend in which “the literacy dimension of the current media literacy program places disproportionate emphasis on the receiving (interpreter’s) side, regardless of whether it is an individual reading literature, listening to a voice, or viewing films or videos” (Chap. 1-4.2.2.1.a). The report further states that, “although literacy should fundamentally include both reading and making abilities, the making aspect has received insufficient attention” (Chap. 1-4.2.2.1.a). In this scenario, the problem involves policymakers’ failure to promote the practice of expressing one’s ideas using video. When compared with initiatives to increase students’ understanding of expressions in videos, steps to improve learners’ ability to express ideas using the medium are virtually non-existent. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications pointed out this fact in noting that the “opportunity to systematically learn teaching methods relating to video media is rare” (2000, p.37). The root of this problem, however, lies in a shortage of instructors qualified to teach learners how to effectively express themselves using video, as expanded upon in the second obstacle.

One can obtain video production skills in Japan either from systematic learning at a college or vocational school, or through on-the-job training in the media industry – and instructors capable of teaching students how to express their ideas using video are no exception to this rule. At the college level, filmmaking is generally taught in specialized departments or courses. However, Tamegaya (2008) notes that while universities are “expected to bear the important responsibility of training instructors” in art-related fields, no specific attempts have been made to establish programs to train instructors capable of teaching video production (p. 27). The primary objective of filmmaking programs at universities and vocational schools is to produce graduates who will utilize their talents within the film industry, not the classroom. As addressed in the following section, one might assume that industry professionals can perform adequately as educators, but this is not necessarily true.

Unqualified Video Production Instructors

The demand for qualified video production instructors in Japan cannot be fulfilled simply by hiring professionals with industry experience. Hoshida (2004) astutely notes that among professional Japanese video producers who learned through apprenticeships, few are capable of explaining concepts related to effectively expressing ideas through the medium since they were not trained as instructors.

Komaya’s (2008) survey of junior and senior high school students highlights the problems associated with employing professional filmmakers as instructors. Participants in the study completed a series of exercises involving the creation of television programs, which were overseen by professional television producers; later, the students completed a questionnaire related to the experience. The results revealed that nearly half (43.2%) of the participants desired a more concise explanation of how to create television programs. Hence, the study fortified the notion that an individual’s expertise is not indicative of an inherent ability to teach video production effectively.

Hiring industry professionals as educators presents another dilemma, in this case related to media literacy’s function in counteracting the perception of media as an authoritative figure. Specifically, it is possible that students will inadvertently accept the infallible nature of media since they are being educated by a school-sanctioned industry professional. In this sense, learners are placed in a state of mystification, whereby a sage teaches his craft. Indeed, as one participant expressed in Komaya’s (2008) study, “I have respect for industry professionals’ ability” (p. 87), a heightened mystification of mass-media may result from this teaching. Yet, Japanese educational institutions currently have no alternative to the practice of hiring industry professionals. Moreover, the notion that ideal instructors even exist in the field is erroneous because of the aforementioned deification of media professionals, and the inherent conflict this poses to the concept of media literacy.

Rapid Changes in How Video Is Viewed and Produced, and Consequent Gaps Between Social Reality and Educational Objectives

Recent changes in Japanese society have also impacted how the practice of expressing one’s ideas using video should be taught. Specifically, the relationship between individuals and information is in constant flux. While television has traditionally been the most widely used medium, its overall importance is in a state of decline. Hashimoto (2012) conducted two separate surveys in 1995 and 2010 to determine the average number of hours Japanese twenty-year-olds spent watching television. The results revealed a 32.4% and 38.5% decrease in viewing by twenty-year-olds and teenagers respectively, a trend that will undoubtedly continue as individuals begin to rely on alternative media sources. Additionally, two studies conducted by Hakuhodo in 2005 and 2012 confirm the aforementioned shift: while individuals surveyed spent greater time consuming media in general, the proportion of that time spent watching television each week dropped from 52% in 2005 to 45.9% in 2012.

Despite these changes, the direct influence of television is by no means weak, although the Internet has clearly affected the extent and manner of its public impact (Nick & Eltchaninof, 2010). The emergence of services such as YouTube, Niconico (a Japanese video sharing site), and Ustream has created an environment in which nearly anyone can produce and distribute videos. Furthermore, these services have transformed the medium from a unidirectional to bidirectional form of communication. The Arab spring is a prime example of this phenomenon, in which videos filmed and distributed online by amateurs played a pivotal role. Video with social media was unquestionably a key element.

More importantly, perhaps, bidirectional video communication allows content creators to bypass traditional media gatekeepers both on a small and a large scale. Video creation and distribution are no longer practices limited to a select few, but accessible by the general public regardless of their status, and to some extent, economic condition. This increased accessibility and understanding of the medium's power increases the need for effective instruction in video production.

The Need to Enhance Video Expression in Japanese Media Literacy

Given the aforementioned changes in the public's dependency on mass media, and the increasing use of video as a communicative tool, it is necessary to reconsider how video production is taught. In the past, individuals were merely consumers of video, and so media literacy focused on analyzing content from a critical point of view. Currently, however, technological advances make this approach inadequate; present-day pedagogical approaches to media literacy must address how users can effectively express their ideas using video so that learners are equipped with the skills necessary to utilize the medium in a bidirectional manner.

Additionally, the literal translation of *critical* into Japanese carries with it connotations of denial, or rejection. Hence, the equivalent Japanese term for media literacy (and its relationship to critical

thought) fails to impart the importance of people's video expression ability typically associated with its Western counterpart. In turn, this misinterpretation hinders educational institutions' ability to teach creative video production. While Japanese researchers are well aware of the nuances between Western and Japanese notions of media literacy, and have repeatedly stressed said differences, educators in the country continue to reduce the concept to a realization that mass media is inherently deceitful. Such habits make it perpetually difficult to disassociate media literacy with negativity so that it might embody creative elements as well, which is fundamental to all forms of art.

Prominent art educators remain confused about how to successfully realize the medium's benefits. While these educators are tasked with teaching pupils about video production, they remain unaware of how to actually operate common video devices, much less teach students how to use them as a tool for artistic expression (Hiramuki, 2007). Despite an awareness of video production's importance in relation to media literacy, Japanese educators have failed to actively consider the practice of video production itself.

In summation, the view that media literacy strictly entails the act of analysis and criticism is outdated. Moreover, the concept of media literacy commonly propagated in Japan is inadequate in fulfilling the goals of art education, that principally involve students creating in media. Unfortunately, alternative interpretations of media literacy have not gained momentum in Japan. This condition is problematic in the development of pedagogical approaches to video production in Japan, which by default reference antiquated notions of media literacy.

Conclusion

This article highlighted three unique obstacles to teaching video production in Japanese education institutions. The first is that a disparity exists between teaching video to express one's ideas and interpreting the medium's content. This inadequacy can be attributed to the second obstacle: an insufficient number of qualified instructors

in the field of video production. Furthermore, professional experience in the media industry does not necessarily deem an individual qualified to teach video production. The reason for this is twofold. Those who learned their craft through apprenticeship may lack the pedagogical skills necessary to convey their knowledge to students in a concise manner. Additionally, the traditional goal of media literacy (to enhance reader / viewer / listener objectivity) may be obstructed by the deification of the instructor and the mystification of his or her profession.

The third and final obstacle is a chasm between social reality and educational objectives caused by rapid advances in how videos are viewed and produced. This is rooted in the absence of curricular components to teach expression as part of media literacy. Because this understanding of media literacy guides art education in the country, it must be reassessed to meet modern pedagogical demands.

In examining the above-mentioned issues, one point becomes evident: the interpretation of media literacy prevalent in Japan is negatively influencing the development of pedagogical approaches to video production in the nation (please see Fig. 1). To solve this problem, a reconceptualization of media literacy must occur that also encompasses the notion of *video literacy*, and subsequently the importance of students' ability to express ideas through video.

Regarding the reformulation of pedagogical approaches to video production, Hase (2014) asserts that filmmaking entails the creation of a collective intelligence. If video creation can be portrayed as an intellectual activity, it can be implemented in an educational setting in isolation, without the connotations traditionally associated with media literacy. Since no alternative to media literacy presently exists in Japan, reorienting video production so that it is perceived as an intellectual pursuit may prove advantageous. To establish an effective means of teaching video production, it is imperative that the aforementioned approach be implemented in the Japanese educational context.

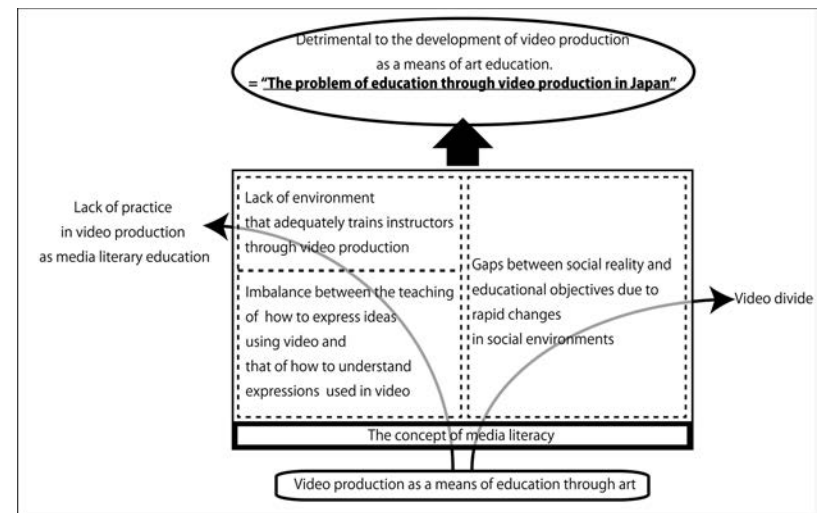


Figure 1. Negative influence from the concept of media literacy on the development of Japan's education through video production.

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