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What is truth? said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer.
—Francis Bacon, Of Truth

What does arts-based research look for in its quest for truth? The truth that research seeks is normally taken to be something lasting, something that will not, in Plato’s image, act like a cowardly soldier who runs away from his post at the first sign of attack, but is more like the courageous man who remains there despite all onslaughts. This martial image – last man standing! – lends its tone to the enterprise of knowledge.

In attempting to overturn this immovable image, Nietzsche asked what if truth were “a woman”?—which to him meant, what if knowledge was to be conceived as shifting, changeable, now wearing one costume and then another, never letting itself be seen in the altogether (the “naked truth”). In that case, truth could not be conquered by force (science as will to power) but would only yield itself to suitors who were themselves subtle and full of grace, who came not armed but with arms bearing gifts—metaphor, imagery, in short: poiesis. It was for this reason that Nietzsche said, in reflecting on his book, The Birth of Tragedy, “It should have sung, not spoken, this ‘new soul.’”
Of course, gendered comparisons are no longer convincing. Whether the feminine be thought of as a deficient mode of the masculine or, in a transvaluation of values, as a hitherto suppressed superior modality of being, we are still operating within a kind of phallocentric thinking, in which the binary opposition between masculine and feminine limits our options. Tertium non datur—for this mode of thought, there is no third way. The consequence is that we must choose between science and art, truth and beauty.

And the face of research today? Certainly it shows itself within the Platonic (or Faustian) tradition—in search of a moment to which we could say, “Stay, thou art fair!” Of course there is the underbelly (or backside) of the research project—on the one hand, the funding mechanisms by which research is channeled into avenues that are commercially profitable, and on the other hand, the thousands of graduate students in a precarious age desperately trying to publish in peer-reviewed journals whose standardized formats and prescribed style (especially in a field like psychology—O woe to Psyche with no Eros abounding!) kill all signs of lively thought. But rest assured, dear reader, POIESIS itself is not peer-reviewed and aims instead for idiosyncrasy and interest—which, as Kierkegaard said (though disparagingly), is the mark of the aesthetic.

Whatever its motivation, research today still rides under the banner of lasting and provable truth—its latest standard that of “evidence-based” research. But what then is evidence? Since Descartes (and that means since the founding of modern science), evidence is characterized by ideas that are clear and distinct—which ultimately means mathematical, for only mathematical ideas are, it seems, free of the ambiguity and obscurity inherent in both ordinary and poetic language. Even Husserl, whose phenomenological philosophy tried to deconstruct the mathematical basis of the Cartesian tradition (by showing that it is itself grounded on the presupposition of the world of everyday life—the Lebenswelt), even the founder of phenomenology accepted the premise of the “apodictic” basis of evidence (one which cannot be doubted) as the ultimate ground of truth.

Indeed, philosophy itself, in the form of phenomenology, was meant to provide an indubitable foundation for all truth claims, though for Husserl, evidence was ultimately to be understood as bodily presence. Of course Husserl’s thinking was more complex than this; he understood that consciousness is always in flux and that its temporal character, in which past and future are present in the given moment, prohibits the philosopher from grasping eternal truth. Yet it was not until his student Heidegger was able to think Being under the sign of Time that it became clear how much the stable ground of truth was to be shaken by the perpetual shuddering of temporal being.

When Husserl, near the end of his life, said, “Philosophy as a rigorous science—the dream is over,” it was not only that he was betrayed by his best student (as perhaps all teachers are) but also that Heidegger had shown that truth is boundaried by untruth, that truth is not the correspondence of statements with matters of fact but the opening which occurs as an unconcealment of what is hidden and which itself can never be transparent. If this is the case, then truth is indeed best expressed by poiesis, for only the work
of art can show the struggle between revealing and concealing as brought into the figure (*Gestalt*) and made visible. Thus truth does show itself, but only as bearing concealment within itself—and such concealment is not a disaster, a “bad star,” but rather the North Star that leads the way to further exploration.

So – arts-based research – perhaps the most recent version of the end of philosophy. A heresy, we hope, and a provocation. Is it anything more than a failure to stay within limits—neither art nor science, but a mélange of the two that is fated to miscarry the virtues of each? Yet it seems we now live in an age of hybridity, in which the *melée*, the “muddle in the middle,” is our home and sacred land. Even the duality of gender has come into question, as we witness the birth of intersex, middlesex, transex, and others yet unknown.

Perhaps *poiesis* itself inhabits this intermediary realm of experience, in which science and art do not merge but rather “touch” each other, with all the implications of that word: proximity, contact, influence, and, most important of all, self-reflexivity—since in touching another I am always touched as well. And when the work “touches” me, I am motivated to offer an aesthetic response in return. In this case, *poiesis* would be restored to its Aristotelian sense of knowing by making—science and art encountering each other again.

Who knows what strange beasts will come dancing to this new Bethlehem to be born? We can only hope they will bear both beauty and knowledge as gifts to the feast. It is for the reader – and future author – to determine whether this image will become true to life. For truth, whatever else it is and however queer it may become, will only have value if it is alive—that is, if it shows that it carries its death within it by passing away.

opposite:

**Mowry Baden—Calyx**

*With Mark Alldritt. 131cm x 191cm x 289cm high. Collection of the artist.*

An overhead sensor reads the viewer’s height. A motor lifts or lowers the hemispherical mirror to correspond with the viewer’s line of sight.
KL: Thank you for your willingness to consider some questions that may be particularly relevant to the work of students and faculty at the European Graduate School and to readers of the journal, *POIESIS*.

My first question concerns the notion of “work,” especially insofar as it pertains to the “work of art.” In *The Inoperative Community (La communauté desoeuvrée)* and elsewhere, you suggested that community cannot be thought of as a work (*un oeuvre*) – that is, something produced by and standing over and against a self-subsistent subject – but as something “unworked” (*desoeuvrée*), as that which exposes us to each other and in so doing exposes our exposition.

J-LN: The “work” is not opposed to “unworking,” but opens up to it, so long as the “work” is not thought of as “standing over” once and for all. One could even represent community as a work, if that work is able to imagine its own mobility, openness, and transformation. This is clear in the case of a musical work, which must be constantly rein-
terpreted, or a literary work, which must be reread and re-understood, or for a film, which must also be replayed, re-watched, etc. (along with all those works inspired by other works, which imitate, revise, quote, deconstruct, etc). But this is not the case for a “city,” which is not initially offered up for interpretation, but must instead affirm its stability (status, stature, State…). This is why unworking works (art, love, thought…) must be independent from socio-political stability (which treats instability, when it occurs, as merely an accident that must be cleaned up). And this is why politics must not dictate the forms of the arts…

SKL: Putting aside the fact that you have given up the word “community” as a theme for reflection (since the term itself implies a unity which does not account for our dispersal), preferring to speak of Being-with, being-in-common or being singular plural, I would still like to return to this theme of “unworking” (désoeuvrement). Is it possible to think of the work of art as engaged in a process of “unworking,” in the sense in which, for example, Paul Celan says, “Poetry no longer imposes itself, it exposes itself” (La poésie ne s'impose plus, elle s'expose)? That is, it brings us in “touch” with one another without abolishing our difference.

J-LN: Yes, of course. Every work of art exposes itself, since it only has meaning when it is addressed, shown, heard, read, seen. No art is only for itself—unless it is art that does not manage to be what it wants to be. Balzac’s Frenhofer is a real painter who only thinks about painting’s absolute, and not of presenting a work. This is why the artist is always in an awkward position in society: he or she must exhibit works, and that exhibition is always exposed to socialization and consumption.

SKL: Can you say something about the “work” of art in this regard? Are there still works, and, if so, how do they affect us in our singularity?

J-LN: By “work” I don’t only mean the work of art, unless that also includes “minor” arts (cooking, fashion, perfume, sports) and even “works” like conversation, amorous and erotic relationships, dances, festivals: in short, anything that is not a product (the noun, “product,” not the verb, “to produce,” because a painting is produced, of course, but not for the ends of use and exchange). Production means finality—use and exchange. The “doing” of art means non-finality, exposure.

As for the second part of the question, I don’t quite understand how it follows here, but I would say this: yes, of course, a work (of art) affects our singularities, otherwise it would not do what it’s supposed to do… If read-
ing Faulkner does nothing to my sensibility, my imagination, my relationship to thought, to language, to story; if it doesn’t make me “dream,” not in the mushy sense of the term, but “dream” in the sense of thinking in the broad present of its free play (and not the nighttime dream, which is impoverished and not very free!); if listening to Berio doesn’t allow me to hear the unknown, to sing and dance unknown and impalpable melodies and dances… well, then, it’s a flop!

SKL: My next question relates to the notion of poiesis. In The Muses and in Multiple Arts, you question the very existence of “art,” suggesting that “art” like “community” signifies a dispersal rather than a unity, that the arts should be considered as singular plural as well. Even the unity of the senses (the supposed basis of the unity of art) is brought into question in your discourse—again, the senses “touch” upon one another, but they are not one. There is no such thing as sense in itself.

I wonder what this implies for the thinking of poiesis. Must it imply a gathering into a unity which overlooks the fragmentary being of the arts, as it does in the philosophical tradition, or is it possible to think poiesis in a “deconstructive” way, as a name for the dissemination of sense in the poietic act?

J-LN: Of course: “poiesis” is actually a word divided in two directions: 1) production, as distinguished from “praxis” which does not produce (produit), but could be said to “comport itself” (se conduit)—2) the sense from Greek usage that treats poetry as the “doing” of language, one might say, as opposed to language that imparts but produces nothing. “Poetic” language produces itself as a reality for itself; it does not impart or transmit, but tends toward a “sense” that is sensible, sonorous, rhythmic, in which speech exposes itself as such, as the escape from signifying sense, as an opening toward—and of—intra- or supra-signification.

In this sense this touches on all the arts. But each art is also an interpretation of this beyond/beneath of signification.

SKL: I would like to ask you for your thoughts about the sacred, and especially the sacred in art. Given that the divine is in retreat, and that the being and the unity of God can no longer serve as a foundation for thinking about human existence, you nevertheless continue to reflect upon the experience of destitution which follows from this, seeing it as opening up the possibility of finding “divine places.” You suggest that the name for one of these places is “art,” but only insofar as we understand that “art” is nothing other than a name for the presentation of presentation, and not a manifestation of a hidden divinity.

J-LN: Indeed, there is no hidden divinity. Art is the non-hidden of the divine, or the divine as manifest: “mystery” is also a manifestation, not a secret. When the divine is hidden, secret, or only accessible through special operations (sacrifices, prayers), then it takes power, it reigns, it becomes threatening, it can damn or save. But the manifest divine, “God as evident as the sky” (Hölderlin), does not take power, threaten or save: it just touches… it moves…

When we are moved by religion, without any expectation of grace, non-salvation, etc.—then no doubt we leave the sphere of religion and enter that of art: this may be the
meaning of what Hegel says about the Madonna as the essence of painting.

SKL: Is all discourse about the spiritual in art, then, necessarily caught in metaphysics? How can we take account of the “separateness” of the work (its “sacred” character) in a non-religious sense? Does the notion of the “sublime” still have meaning without its onto-theological basis?

J-LN: Yes, “sublime” is probably too attached to “spiritual” and “sacred” values. We could say, as Heidegger does, that we lack sacred words. But no, instead we must work to enliven words from more sensible registers. “To see”—what does it mean to see? To see the invisible? To see blindly? To see colours or to see in colour? To hear sound or to hear the sonorous, to hear as resonance? Is watching a film the same as watching a documentary? Is it like watching a play? What is it? How to watch a film as both a whole and as a succession of images at the same time? All this leads one to say, at one moment or another, that this is “art”… This word, so imprecise, so vague, so trivialized, is what bears the questioning and the premonition of that which happens in the world outside the world.

Jean-Luc Nancy’s replies translated by Gabriel Levine.

Jean-Luc Nancy is Professor Emeritus at the University of Strasbourg and Professor of Political Philosophy and Media Aesthetics at EGS. He is the author of The Inoperable Community, Being Singular Plural, and many other books of philosophy.
Two Poems by Daniela Elza

“"I quake to think of you as part of myself more admissible than grief."  
—Alan Davies

the crow hour

last night— fragments of a dream
wedged themselves this way and that

into some semblance of

sense. outside the tent the wind
forced the lake against the shore—

quickened that urgency in dreams. an unrelenting rhythm

bore through rocks and pebbles.

an ungrammatical symphony of crest and foam of crash

and roar

knocking

on my existential door.

I step out onto the sand face this wind

that did not go into a lull not once.

behind over my left shoulder — the crow watches me walking

up and down words where I quake.

so close to what appears random.

where I think of you as part of myself
more admissible than grief.

where I do not want anything from you
just everything with you in it.

this :all of a sudden: I know.
this :I am not alone: here.

and poetry? what can it do
before we awake? but take us part way

Note: From Elza’s forthcoming book Milk Tooth Bane Bone (Leaf Press, April, 2013)
“re-examine all you have been told in school or church or in any book,  
and dismiss whatever insults your own soul;  
and your very flesh shall be a great poem.”  
—Walt Whitman

beauty is embarrassing

I am working on becoming  
 an expert  on not  
being  an expert.  a wounded bird  
so to speak.  

*  

let the vertebrae enunciate  
 the skin accentuate  
let them curate the exhibit you make of your mind.

how will you draw the map of your days  
under domed temples  
how will you shake the fever  
the television snow will not cool down  
amidst planes of war that do not stop dropping  
through silences the dead keep sacred.  
how will you?  
when the bitter water closes around your ankles  
like shackles.  
how will you step in further?  

*  

this morning I woke up with the crows  
(is what I was trying to tell you last night.  
my heart— a monk facing monastery walls.  
what if you stopped thinking  
this is you?
stop thinking you are separate from these crows. how will you speak the despair you wake up with the desire that unbuttons into your day? (is what I meant to ask you tomorrow.

matters of the heart are never simple you say. you say your heart is a dark hole a wounded bird an Icarus flying too close to the sun.

yet the sun still fanfares through this stone city it in its brightest colours. sprouts green through the tiny vertebrae of spring.

and a wounded bird can heal I said. and look at you your pockets full of folded stories you keep skipping across bitter water. how will you catch yourself when life hurls you over the edge? how will you reclaim your body as an instrument for singing the world again?

* 

we finger our artistic spectrums. search for the right metaphors to say: Eros is freedom.

to say spirit is not another matter and for that matter is full of spirit.
to know yourself as you are
when you are loved.
perfect that is.
then learn no one is perfect.

* 
still all you want is to go back go back and
rewrite your unforgiving life.
your words will never be good enough.

* 
punctuation becomes sunshine streaming down
your shoulder in a walled-in city
meaning to say nothing. just
stop. pause. exclaim. ellipses
walking away from a crowded history
too intimate to question.

* 
today all we can do is imagine going through
the Museum of Apologies.
(nauseated but still interested.
see how we get it wrong again and again.
learn how to say sorry in this sorry drought.
how to remember You
are my other Me.

* 
I am working on becoming an expert on
not being an expert—
a birded wound so to speak—
because we need to figure things out.
Paulette Phillips
The Directed Lie

*The Directed Lie*, an interactive archive of artists’ portraits that engage the art world in an examination of truth and lying, uses a polygraph and the camera to flirt with the revealed and the hidden. Like the viral internet “selfie,” *The Directed Lie* has its roots in our fascination with the façade of self and offers an uncanny look at the technology and psychology of looking. If photography promised to offer us a window into the soul, *The Directed Lie* is a living archive that looks through that photographic window, offering performance-based video that uses data visualization, software, the polygraph, HD video and the interrogation to examine notions of truth, deception and representation.
1. Are you in Paris?
2. Is this the month of July?
3. Do you believe there is a difference between right and wrong?
4. Have you ever lied to get out of doing something you did not want to do?
5. Have you ever phoned in sick to work even though you were not sick?
6. Is this Tuesday?
7. Are you a woman?
8. Have you ever cheated on an exam?
9. Have you ever lied to a customs official?
10. Have you ever falsified an application?
11. Are you wearing a grey shirt?
12. Have you ever lied about something important to someone who loved and trusted you?
13. Have you ever had sex with someone who was in another relationship?
14. Are you currently in a relationship?
15. Have you ever cheated on your partner?
16. Is your first name Claude?
17. Have you ever pretended to be someone else?
18. Have you ever used your attractiveness to get something that you wanted?
19. Have you ever taken advantage of someone because you knew they liked you?
20. Have you ever lied to make yourself look better than you are?
21. Have you ever been jealous of another artist’s success?
22. Have you ever withheld information from someone because you did not want them to succeed or compete with you?
23. Have you ever stolen anything?
24. Are you sure that you have never stolen anything?
25. Do you download copyrighted material without paying for it?
26. Is this the year 2011?
27. Do you believe that there is such a thing as good art?
28. Do you believe that there is such a things as bad art?
29. Are you a good artist?
30. Are you wearing shoes?
31. Do you think it is important for people close to you to be honest?
32. Are you an honest person?
33. Have you lied on this test?
Philosophie Magazin: You grew up in Ohio, your mother was an economist, your father a dentist. What led you to philosophy?

Judith Butler: My parents were the first children in their families to go to college. At that time they took courses in philosophy, and they bought books and stored them in the basement of my family house. So when there were family quarrels I locked myself in the basement, listened to music, drew a little and read their philosophy books. Spinoza’s Ethics, Kirkegaard’s Either/Or... I also, like many American Jews, went to the synagogue once a week where you learn Hebrew, Jewish history, and you also are involved in debates about ethics and politics. So I started to debate and realized that there was a lot of Jewish philosophy and that the Spinoza I was reading was connected to this.

PM: Your dissertation was about desire in Hegel’s philosophy. What was your interest in that?

JB: I was interested in the fundamental question of why people desire to love and how we describe the desire to live. When I first read Spinoza I was very interested in his idea of the “conatus”: the idea that we desire to persist in our own being, we desire to live. And in Hegel I found a sort of second thought that built upon Spinoza’s idea of the conatus, that we desire recognition and that without recognition we cannot desire to live. So, that interested me very much for all kinds of personal reasons. Because I was also a young lesbian trying to figure out whether there were norms that
could recognize my own desire or whether I could live in a world where I couldn't find the norms that would recognize my desires.

**PM:** That touches on identity, which is also very important for the rest of your work.

**JB:** What interests me here is that I am fundamentally dependent on others to be the person I am. I can't get out of that social context to have my identity. My identity is not separate from the social problem of recognition. We are very dependent on the social categories that exist and they exist outside of us. So sometimes the only way I can get recognition is by conforming to an identity category that may or may not feel right to me. It is already in circulation in the world and I enter that circulation when I demand recognition for my identity. So I'm always having to work with the norms that exist.

**PM:** The main theme in your book, *Gender Trouble*, is the constitution of sexual desire and gender identity. For you, this question is the question of culture as such. Could you explain the fundamental role of gender for the constitution of culture?

**JB:** First of all, for me, culture is always plural. We have to think about many cultures. But one question that tends to emerge in almost every cultural context is whether the establishment of gender is a prerequisite for cultural participation. Does someone have to be established as a girl or a boy in order to be intelligible or recognizable within a given culture? And indeed there are various different cultural responses to this, and we know that for instance in Native American cultures sometimes there is this idea of a third gender. Or in several places there are categories for those who are hermaphroditic. I do think that one question that *Gender Trouble* posed was whether in the dominant society we require someone to have a legible gender in order to be recognizable as a person. So gender becomes a cultural requirement of personhood.

**PM:** You try in your book to show that our gender identity as man or woman is in no way natural. How should this be understood? Aren't there obvious biological differences between the sexes?

**JB:** You know I am not a total fool: I don't deny that there are biological differences between the sexes. But the minute we say there are biological differences between the sexes, we then have to specify what they are. And the minute we try to specify what they are, we are always involved in intense cultural interpretations of these differences. So for instance people say to me: Women can give birth and men cannot—is that not a difference? Surely you don't deny that difference! But the real question is, first of all, there are many women who cannot give birth or don't want to. Do we say they are not women? If we say women are differentiated from men by this capacity and then it turns out that that capacity is not actually essential to who they are, then we are already in a cultural moment and are establishing a cultural norm of reproduction as a way of defining a biological difference. And it's not really possible to say what is biological in this discussion and what is cultural.

**PM:** Let's imagine a woman, culturally feminist, who has decided to live an autonomous life without children. Then suddenly she has an irrepresible wish for children. Is it possible that this wish comes from “else-
where”—isn’t it biologically determined?

JB: I understand what you’re saying, but I think that happens all the time in matters of desire, right? You meet somebody and you think: I would never be attracted to that person and then somehow you find yourself in the middle of an attraction that is completely unpredictable and that comes from “elsewhere.” There’s a lot of desire that comes from “elsewhere.” That makes us not quite know who we are. Because the rational idea we have of ourselves is not always completely compatible with what our most profound needs and desires are; but that incompatibility is, for me, constitutive of the human subject. We could say it comes from elsewhere or it doesn’t come from my rational thinking self. But that doesn’t mean it comes from some archaic nature or some biological truth of feminine reality.

PM: In *Gender Trouble*, you use the expression “compulsory sexuality.” That sounds strong. Are all heterosexual men and women victims of the reproductive norm?

JB: No! Compulsory heterosexuality means a system in which you are not legible as a sexual person outside of the terms of heterosexuality. But there are many heterosexuals who are actively and happily engaged in heterosexuality who don’t support that system, right? So the point is to enjoy as much as possible a non-homophobic heterosexuality if you are a heterosexual. I never accepted the idea that people who practice heterosexuality are supporting a compulsory system. I never made that claim.

PM: Nevertheless, the notion of compulsory sexuality sounds like violence or coercion...

JB: Yes, coercion.

PM: At the same time, though, you say that you consider that there is no subject who exists independently of cultural norms, how can this be understood? If the subject is shaped by discourse and practices, to whom does power then belong? Who is subjected to violence, and how?

JB: We’re formed by many different institutions. We’re formed by different kinds of primary relationships. So we’re not formed in just one way. Compulsory heterosexuality is not the only thing that is working on us. Many things are working on us. So it is not possible to conform completely to one specific norm. I don’t know any heterosexual who doesn’t have some problems with the heterosexual norm.

PM: So the violence is a matter of a reduction of possibilities...

JB: It’s a reduction and conformity. It demands suppression. It demands self-censorship, it demands falsification, it demands producing an image that conforms with the norm even though one suffers psychically by virtue of doing that.

PM: You see a possibility of resistance against compulsory heterosexuality in the setting-forth of the constructive character of sexual identity. Transvestites, for example, show us in a playful way how sexual identity is presented through clothing and habit...

JB: I love the hyperbolic dramatization
of the gender norm, because it brings it out for what it is, and we can even enjoy it for what it is and know it as the fantasy that it is, and we get to live that fantasy in some way. I think that’s extremely important, but it also depends on a distance between itself and another reality. It constantly posits the incommensurability between the fantasy and life. And I think that’s an important gap or distance to have in order to think critically about how gender norms work.

PM: Is subverting gender always progressive and liberating?

JB: Subversion is not a value in itself, it’s not an end in itself. But sometimes we can work with or play with norms in order to make life more livable. This idea of a “livable life” has become increasingly important in my work. I was trying to help make a world in which it would be easier for people to breathe, it would be easier for people to move, it would be easier for people to love, to find recognition, to find association.

PM: Do you think that at the root of your argument, this idea of discourses that shape our bodies, there could be at bottom a capitalistic phantasm—everything is form, nothing is matter? The promise of healing through cosmetic surgery also rests on the claim that matter is not simply given…

JB: In that sense, then, I have not been understood. In my book, *Bodies that Matter*, I accept that there is a materiality of the body that is obdurate, that is not produced by discourse. I don’t say: Oh there’s no materiality of the body, there’s only discourse and discourse is the cause and the condition for the production of what we call materiality. No! That’s just to take the matter-form distinction and turn it upside down. I don’t want to do that. I am not a discursive idealist in this sense. I think we are always trying to describe the body, biological sciences are describing the body. But there is no description of the body that captures the body. This is what I say. That every description fails because there is something stubborn, particular. Something that “persists.” I don’t think we are free to choose whatever we want or to make ourselves into endless commodities that can change. I’m not a Deleuzian who believes in infinite transformation and I don’t think my theory could be or would be rightly used for an idea of a capitalist phantasm.

PM: From the feminist side, the charge has been thrown at you that you have taken away the foundations of feminism. If there is no longer a natural category “woman,” from what position can we still speak and act?

JB: Deconstruction doesn’t mean destruction. It means: If I participate in the women’s movement, and I do, as an agent, with the capacity to act, do I need to define what it is to be a woman? And do we all need to agree on this definition before we can take part in our opposition to sexual violence? Before we can insist on equal pay for women and men, before we insist on childcare? Or insist on the right to bodily integrity? I don’t think so. And in fact, if we spend too much time trying to reach a consensus on what it is to be a woman, we are going to forget all these really important issues. But if we keep the category open, which also involves maybe transgendered people or women from different cultural backgrounds, there is a greater democratic possibility of inclusion.
PM: In Germany today there is a big debate on the question of quotas for women. Should the percentage of women in leadership positions become a matter of law? What's your opinion about this?

JB: It's important to break the glass ceiling. Right now I am aware that I am the first woman to receive the Adorno Prize and that it was not an easy process. I don't know to what extent some of the opposition to me was based on that; maybe none of it. But I feel it. The question of worth: Is this person worthy? It doesn't get asked about a man as easily as it gets asked about a woman. But what worries me about this quota movement is that it does not take into account the more fundamental questions of women and work. For instance, how many women are in very bad jobs? How many women are cleaning? I don't know what it's like in Germany, but it remains true globally that the overwhelming majority of illiterate people on this earth are women. The overwhelming majority of the poor are women. I think we should start there.

PM: Not only gender as such but also kinship ties is an important theme for you. In your book on Antigone, you are interested in how kinship ties are produced and made impossible through the incest taboo. We live now in a time in which entirely new kinds of parenting relationships can be produced through reproductive medicine. Egg donation, surrogate motherhood, sperm donation: Should the technical producibility of parental ties be welcomed as worthwhile?

JB: I don't think it is intrinsically liberating. I don't want to see every possible use of it. We know that sex selection of embryos, for instance, can be a form of discrimination, and I don't approve of that. But you know, there used to be a question of whether a woman who gives birth biologically to a child has a closer relationship to that child than, say, her partner who adopts the child, whether that partner is a man or whether that partner is a woman. I've seen situations where the biological mother has less of a tie than the non-biological mother or where the father who's not the biological father develops an astonishing relationship with the child that the so-called biological father would never have because he's not around anymore. These things... we have to allow for emotional complexity. I don't think that having the biological connection necessarily establishes a closer tie. At the same time, it's important to have that out in the open and discussed and not be something that's repressed or disavowed.

PM: What do you think about the idea that the new kinship ties that are created through surrogacy or donor eggs disavow other kinship ties—for instance between the surrogate and the child? That this kind of displacement of kinship from the body to social kinship ties does violence in some way to more bodily forms of kinship...

JB: What we are talking about is whether there are experiences of loss that go along with adoption, with the use of reproductive technology, with surrogacy, for a child who wants to know: Where do I come from? At least where I live, San Francisco and Berkeley, there are gay men who offer their sperm to lesbian couples and then they have an ongoing relationship with the child. And the child has everyone there. Or a lesbian offers herself as a surrogate mother for her gay male friends who want a child and she also keeps a relationship. It's not just like there is one
mother and one father. There are two fathers, there is this special mother person or friend or whatever category they come up with, and sometimes they come up with names that are neither mother nor father. But it’s not as if it’s secret or repressed.

**PM:** Does your opinion, that parenting is unconditioned by biology, also translate into the debate about ownership/copyright of texts? In Germany, there is a big struggle about who a text belongs to. Am I, as the author, the mother of the text, or does it belong to the community, as soon as it circulates on the Net?

**JB:** First of all, the question of legal possession is different from parenting because one never possesses a child. It’s not property. You have a legal obligation to a child but you do give it away to the world. So there is a kind of obligation to set free, but also to prepare that child to be set free. A text is a very different issue. There are times when somebody really falsifies a text or steals it, where you have to struggle legally. But citation happens both explicitly and implicitly, and I don’t think it’s possible to track or to prosecute every moment of implicit citation. And actually we should be pleased that people use our formulations and forget that we made them up. I’m always pleased when it happens. It’s good. I don’t need to own the text I’ve written.

**PM:** For several years you have moved away from gender theory towards the question of “precarious life.” In the Introduction to your essay collection, *Precarious Life*, you write that September 11 was decisive for you. Has it changed your thinking?

**JB:** Yes. I was living very close to New York on September 11, and I saw people around me who were very left and progressive and non-violent all wanting to go to war. I actually thought: We are making a terrible mistake. The lesson we needed to learn from 9/11 was that we live in a global situation where every nation is dependent upon every other. We’re all vulnerable, we could all be hurt and we can all injure others, so it’s time to ask the question of how we might think about global life as one of interdependency, where what we do to others can be done to us and to try to move out of that particular cycle of revenge.

**PM:** You distinguish in *Precarious Life* between “grievable life” and “not-grievable life.” What exactly do you mean by this?

**JB:** Well, of course every life should be mourned or mournable, grievable, and I think that what I am trying to do is struggle for a politics that would affirm the grievability of every life. I mean that every life is worth protecting, that every life has value, that no life should be abandoned, through systematic negligence or through the destruction of war. And yet it seems to me that in many of the recent wars the US has undertaken, they do target certain populations as ungrievable or as unworthy. They can be killed without being mourned, because they were never really regarded as human and they were never really valued as human. I am interested in how that tactic works.

**PM:** Do you see the danger, in your pointing out the mechanisms of exclusion and oppression, that the victim status of certain groups will be consolidated rather than dissolved?

**JB:** I don’t think I use the word “vic-
“Even when I talk about the force of compulsory heterosexuality I talk about the power of subversion. These systems are not closed! I mean, those who are killed at war, they are victims—no question. But most of the demonstrations we see in the Middle East these days… they tend to be around funerals. Somebody has died in the war and people come out into the streets of Syria, when they are not safe. But they are going to bury the dead. They are demanding their grievability and they are resisting the regime at the same time. You could say they are victims; but I think they are in a struggle to become grievable, to become livable and to oppose a violent and unjust regime.

**PM:** The period of the Arab Spring was also the height of the Occupy Wall Street movement, which in its leaderlessness and, if you will, its unstructuredness, came across as quite deconstructivist—is the politics of tomorrow to be a renunciation of centralised power?

**JB:** Well, first of all, I have supported them, especially in New York. I think it’s an extremely important movement. But look. Of course power was not centralised in the Occupy movement, but in every small group there were those who continued to show up as leaders. And then there became a question of whether Oakland was the center or New York was the center and there is... sudden collaboration, sudden competition. So there is some re-centralising. And now there is a committee that meets to try to plan the future—so the general assembly cannot work as an effective tool for deciding the future. It’s hard to have a radical decentralised social movement under contemporary historical conditions. It’s inevitable that there will be some centralisation and re-centralisation.

**PM:** If even the Occupy Movement is not free from the power structures that it fights against, can there be anything like pure resistance?

**JB:** I don’t believe in pure resistance. I mean, there are some anarchists who take up a position of pure resistance. I don’t think that’s quite possible because even they have to sustain themselves through some way. They are dependent on a market, or they are dependent on social services, or they are dependent on a bus system to get to their demonstration, and it has to be funded from somewhere. Or the anarchists who understand themselves as opposed to state power very often require state power in order to define themselves in opposition to it. And the question is: How would they define themselves without state power?

**PM:** But don’t you misconceive reality? In your writings you demand a “power-free ethics”—how can we envision such an ethics? Isn’t this utopian?

**JB:** Everyone says I’m unrealistic. And I like that. Because: Would it be a better world if there was no one who held out for a non-violent world? What if there was no one who supported the idea of a non-violent world? It seems to me that that world would be worse than the one we have. That would be a more impoverished world. So we need a world in which there are people who say impossible things, right? To hold out the hope even though it’s not realizable. Otherwise we allow our own horizons to collapse and we become identified with the hopeless. So, you know, that’s what philosophers are for.
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Endnote

1. Interview conducted by Svenja Flasspöhler and Millay Hyatt and published in Philosophie Magazin (Germany), January 2013, © philosophie magazin. The questions were asked in either German or English; Judith Butler replied in English. Translation of the original German by Stephen K. Levine, with the help of Sabine Silberberg.
Death From Above

Stephen K. Levine

Drones fly overhead their sound
the martial music of our time
Sometimes they are inaudible
until they crash and kill

We do not have to risk our lives
We man the screens on which the killing comes
When boredom's there we turn to games
and kill some more but really just in fun

Who sees the broken bodies
the mutilated flesh we leave behind
There is no witness to our crimes
We go about our business
and watch the dollar fall
The cost of lives is somewhere factored in
by eyes that hover over all

Someday the judgment will arrive
and we will wonder why
Our hands are clean and free from sin
It must be that they envy what we have
It must be that their evil god
lays waste their bodies and their lives this way

Flesh of our flesh
Blood of our blood
Metallic sounds drown out your cries

And who will hear us as we die?
Chris Cran—Manifesto

Ink and acrylic on foam core, 14” x 10”. Collection of the National Gallery of Canada.
On the World View of a Vita Activa

Wolfgang Schirmacher

1. Working to Death

The “active life” (vita activa) has come under suspicion of being that wherein the human species works itself to death. Human praxis destroys our most fundamental natural resources. The world view of a vita activa, which has come to seem self-evident, has functioned along the way as a “switch man,” but the track it has opened leads to an untimely death. We are not mortals, but suicides. The universalizing tendency proper to every world view since Max Weber has, with the terror of rationalization, overrun even those cultures that ascribe no value at all to the visible. Presence has been made mandatory for nature, that it might be better measured and exploited.

To grasp praxis clearly means, with ever greater urgency, to renounce it. The notion that we might improve the situation of the world through our activity proves itself ever more illusory. It is our successes, not our failures, which are killing us. Even managing not to worsen the world through our mode of existence seems nearly impossible. We live insofar as we annihilate others, and the reparations or replacements we offer count for nothing. Might, then, the extinguishing of humanity – at our own hands and preferably without commotion – be the only “good deed” that remains to us? We could always still recognize ourselves as an evolutionarily “faulty design” and draw the consequences. But is not such self-pity merely the reverse side of the once-dominant belief in progress, the hangover that follows the orgy of planning and doing?

What is the vita activa anyhow, which together with the vita contemplativa would comprise the human mode of being? Hannah Arendt, the muse of Being and
Time and political thinker of the philosophy of existence, laid out as early as 1958/1960 – in her work _The Human Condition_ [Vita Activa, oder Vom Tätigen Leben] – an analysis, stemming from the Greeks, of three fundamental human activities: working [labour], producing [work], and acting [action]. This deep breath, the “step back” to the beginnings of Western metaphysics, is necessary if we are to understand “what we properly do when we become active” (12; 5-6). In contemporary discussion, however, which treats relations between praxis and nature against the backdrop of the ecological crisis, Hannah Arendt’s provocation has not been taken up. And she, for her part, was already aware – over twenty-five years ago – that our actions were leading toward a crisis that would beg comparison with any other in history. Hannah Arendt foresaw that we would “devise machines to relieve us of thought and speech, because the structure of our brains hinders us from following in thought the things that we do” (10; 3). With weapons technology, that day has already come—within the extraordinarily complex web of computers, there would remain but a few moments for a responsible decision.

Hannah Arendt was aware that, over the course of history, the human being had forgotten ever more how it is. “The man of the future,” she wrote prophetically, “owes his existence to the rebellion of humans against that which was given them with birth as a free gift, that which they wish at once to trade for conditions of their own making” (9; 2-3). Since, however, these self-made conditions now present themselves as the likely grounds for there being no future at all for humans, the rebels ought to be cautious. _An activity for life [Tätigkeit für das Leben], not a work for or to death [Arbeit zum Tode], would need to be grasped_. In her text, Hannah Arendt circumscribes the _vita activa_ through three fundamental activities; this classification can be modified and criticized, but it sets out the decisive features of our worldly life. Working is defined as the activity that arranges our metabolic exchanges with nature, a biological necessity; producing functions as an intervention against nature and as the improvement of nature through artifacts. This distinction alone is already crucial, delimiting the needs that are necessary for the maintenance of life, that are, so to speak, ecological, from those needs that developed historically (and thus also may be surrendered historically). Working and producing, however – the Greeks called our attention to this – cannot constitute a life (bios); they are, in modern terms, not modes of life specific to humans. Even this simple statement is of explosive importance, for it displaces the naïve return to nature just as much as it does the whole world’s trust in technological solutions. Both ecologism and industrialism proceed from the false assumption that they genuinely express the essence of the human.

For Hannah Arendt, it is acting [Handeln] alone that, in praxis and politics, allows human existence to come into being and authenticates our freedom. It is only as actor that the human lives how he is, and even the _vita contemplativa_ reaches its apex in the power of judgment. But how should this be understood? Hannah Arendt criticizes instrumental reason—but does she thereby place the humanistic world view in question? Her teacher Heidegger showed – in “The Age of the World Picture” (1938) – that the moderns, who pushed the human to the center and brought the world into view [die Welt ins Bild setzen], made us forget how we exist.
The development in which the human “became that being upon which every being, in its way of being and its truth, is founded” is untruthful. Instead of open *Dasein*, we are secured stock, and freedom has long since deteriorated into action-theoretical gesticulation. We ought not to fall behind this fundamental ontological critique, especially since the prediction Heidegger deduced from it has long since been confirmed. “As soon, however,” Heidegger wrote,

as the gigantic, in planning, calculating, establishing, and securing, changes from the quantitative and becomes its own special quality, then the gigantic and the seemingly completely calculable become, through this shift, incalculable. This incalculability becomes the invisible shadow cast over all things when man has become the *subjectum* and world has become picture. (72; 95)

2. Beginning as “Essential Praxis”

Hannah Arendt’s phenomenological analysis, marked as it is by the anthropocentrism we all share, nonetheless offers decisive clues for what is perhaps the most demanding project of contemporary philosophy: that which proceeds worldwide under the heading of “essential praxis.” In this, an intercultural effort without precedent or model, the aim is to design a *vita activa* that will proceed without a world view and hence without the human as subject. “Essential praxis” can only be an acting that, in the Arendtian terminology, is not already determined—either biologically, like work, or socially, like producing. Acting is the existential, holding us in the open without aims, without expectations, intentionally directed toward being itself. Disposition [Stimmung] without determinacy [Bestimmtheit], attention to proportion without accounting, devotion to the happenstance of what is in every case particular—so, in actuality, do politics and praxis reveal themselves. Political acting – as Hannah Arendt explained, against all reliance on social mechanisms and institutions – lies in our capacity always to begin anew. Mortality [Mortalität] is only one side of the human, for to us belongs likewise natality; our mortality [Sterblichkeit] bespeaks an originary creativity. The new beginning that arrives in the world with every birth point, per Hannah Arendt, to our own capacity to make a fresh start. The human is above all else *the essence of beginning* (das Wesen des Anfangs), and it is probably this fundamental experience, operative for thousands of years and now nearly buried, that allows us to remain so inappropriately optimistic even during the dying of the human species, which has already begun.

The human does not merely have the capacity to begin, but is being-able-to-begin itself (das Beginnenkönnen). We are in a literal sense the origin of the human world. It was in always renewed beginning that Merleau-Ponty, too, saw our essential feature; in this, we overcome unavoidable alienation and exist, our own start. It is only thereby that being-in-the-world emerges. Strategies of anticipation, by contrast, the devilish prescription of the makers, reveal only how deeply we mistrust our mode of existence. Thus have humans unlearnt the “essential praxis” of beginning in the technical world—but nature’s response, in the ecological crisis, could teach us once more to heed ourselves. Asceticism, renunciation, and gentleness do not simply recant our current misguided conduct, but rather enable a
beginning that is always and ever other, that is unheard-of. No world view, with its seductive order, directs us and urges upon us deathly consistency. For the human is not merely capable of so-and-so-many beginnings, as one wishes to calculate for us; instead, attunement to beginning accompanies the actor right into the euphoria of his timely death. Even dying can be acting, as the philosophers knew. It is always a start, with every word, in every silence, and no content can withstand the dynamism of beginning. Throughout, we need not decide enduringly, as the reality principle seems to require. Only surpassing holds sway, in every direction, inwardly conducted.

The cool analysts of the “third way,” like Baudrillard and Lyotard, wish neither to assent to nor to reject technical civilization. One works to figure out, *sine ira et studio*, how much further the eradication of sense from the earth can yet be pressed. Marxists’ suspicion, this alternative movement clarifies – their consent to the threatened downfall, without freely willing it – stands to reason, but is beside the point. The condition of the world, as concrete as it appears to be, is as fragile as a breath. We are in no way constrained to grapple with what lies before us. The strength of renunciation and the militancy of renunciation emerge out of being-able-to-start, which promises to change our feeling and thinking more sharply and radically than could be dreamed by the philosophy of the schoolmasters. That which appears from the traditional perspective as a man-machine symbiosis is, in another conception, the actual human being. To take ecology as the guiding discipline for understanding human praxis would only be to install a new single-mindedness. What is needed is an attitude of thought no longer slave to the *logos*, but wise instead. *Ecosophy* may name that which brings us to understand how humanity is inscribed in the most modern technology, even if we can decipher but little thereof.

3. Ecosophy and the Explosion of the Sciences

Considered ecosophically, without concern for the egoistic aims of the species, our essence as it is embodied in machines reveals more markedly than ever before that we are beginners, those who begin. As long as it is not instrument, but rather mode of life, state-of-the-art technology allows for an acting previously reserved for the gods. We can approach this acting through a few paradoxical determinations: Technically, we are capable of throwing away without waste, of changeability without loss of ground, of recognizing mortality without fear of death, of substitution without spoliation, of felicity [Gelingen] without violence. Fundamental technologies bear us lightly and unremarkably through life, a life whose contents are never too tightly grasped. Flattening-out of life’s contents, however, need not be feared, for felicity finds its limits at necessary suffering. Even after eliminating the suffering, as great as it is unnecessary, that humans bring upon one another, sufficient unavoidable hardship will remain for our spirit to develop itself—in resistance to it. The artist, who would be in Hannah Arendt’s sense an actor, and not the worker, is the paradigm for the coming human.

But is this not all too romantically conceived, a fool’s paradise in which praxis and nature are reconciled only because both have lost their edges? The makers who rule our world are amused by such romanticism—or
they evince hypocritical respect for the fantasy of it, which does them no harm. Even the undeniable destruction of the world, which goes beyond all systemic boundaries, does not bear witness against the guilty without interpretation; and it is they who serve a well-oiled disinformation apparatus. Here, little is to be achieved by enlightenment—the protests remain paper. The rulers will not leave off making their grand plans until faced by an actual doomsday. How would the smirk be wiped from their faces? There are countless possibilities for doing just that, and it is the power of fantasy to discover these and to give them physical reality. In the alternative movement, as the philosopher can joyfully discern, a dangerous potential has arisen.

However, an ecosophically responsive vita activa cannot take place “outside” the life-world. Marginal phenomena, like commune-living muesli-munchers and endlessly self-reflexive intellectuals, make no difference. The human is a technician [Techniker] and fulfills his life in individual techniques [Einzeltéchniken]. Education, too, belongs to this process, and we are whizzes in this domain. The philosopher Georg Picht warned of an “education catastrophe” brought upon us by the contemporary “glut of academics” [Akademikerschwemme], which is not to be lamented, but rather forms the basis for broad-ranging transformations. Picht’s unsurpassably apt demand for “education for all” can today be sharpened, becoming the demand for an “explosion of the sciences.” Mind you, it is not teachers that we need, but instead pedagogically, philosophically, and social-scientifically experienced – and thus “dancing” – technicians, the brothers of Zarathustra, who played aloud the melody of things themselves and not merely of fossilized relations.

Concretely put, the human and social sciences belong in a fundamental course of study, mandatory for all, while profession-oriented curricula ought to encompass solely natural sciences and technical subjects. Law and economics, for example, are from an ecosophical perspective classic hobby disciplines. In order to grasp this proposal, one must free oneself from the image that contemporary natural sciences and technology or engineering [Technik] offer up of themselves, for it is just these that must be exposed to the force of new beginnings. Three thousand natural scientists can be prescribed a standard, and even thirty-thousand already comprise a critical mass in this regard, but three million in our universities (as the total number of students will shortly be) could transcend disciplinary conventions and methods entirely, should they all study natural science and technology. The flying pieces of such an explosion of individual sciences would allow new sciences to emerge and enable combinations that have until now seemed unthinkable. Computer-art, social engineers, gene technology: these are only harbingers of a development whose promise we can fulfill.

Demands for content, this holdover from the ontologies of substances, need not be levied; the grafted-on dialecticization of the sciences and the ineffective appeal to scientists for social responsibility can be dispensed with. Unbridled creativity is fully sufficient, needing no stimulation, for it belongs to our essential being. Such creativity, too, will not so readily go astray as is suspected by the schoolmasters of the revolution, since contemporary creativity is guided by an aversion toward metaphysics in its appearance as ruling ideology. This resistance is not one of theory, since theories are defenseless against the logic of metaphysics, but rather a resistance of the body. Tree
huggers at the computers, the reincarnated Francis of Assisi as informatics scientist, the “folks” of the peace demonstrations in the laboratories: This is no idle wish, but was already to be experienced at the Mainz Congress of Literary Scholars, titled “Responsibility for Peace,” which called three thousand to their feet. And here one need not await a “long march through the institutions,” since that was a concept of individual struggle. The glut of natural scientists will allow institutions to sink, will return them to the sea of inspiration from whence all human living arises.

It is this that the movers and shakers, the grand planners, must fear, for this ecosophical intelligence not only exceeds by far their narrow rails, but is in the human-machine-system identical with the *vita activa*. But needn’t one first transform the consciousnesses of the natural scientists and the engineers? Where would such an abstract theory of learning even read off its measurements? There is no need to spoon-feed creativity. Those growing up in our rotting world need no gurus; their corporeal experience suffices. And the obdu- rate metaphysicians, who have for everything an exculpating explanation and who dissemble heroism, will die out. The conditions of socialization for a scholar are today already massively overrun—who is there under forty who still knows an academic of the classical style?

The explosion of the sciences also need not be politically organized. Of course, political support would hasten the process. Fundamentally, however, the rulers – regardless who they may be – cannot withstand the draw of technology, which will eradicate rulership as a principle. Technology will once more be identical with the knowledge of life [*Lebenswis-

Transcribed by Ira Allen

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Endnotes

1. [Translator’s Note: The terms in square brackets here are Arendt’s own designations in *The Human Condition*, published in 1958. The corresponding terms in her 1960 self-translation into German are *Arbeiten*, *Herstellen*, and *Handeln*, which I have given here as “working,” “producing,” and “acting.” Of particular note is the fact that, when rendering herself from English back into her native German, Arendt opted for nominalized verbs that are not substantivized, i.e., nouns that retain their verbal character: *Arbeiten* is “to work” or “to labour,” *Herstellen* more commonly “to produce,” “to make,” or “to fabricate,” and *Handeln* “to act” but also “to trade” or “to negotiate.” Both the more active character of these nouns in German and their somewhat different resonances should be kept in mind while reading Schirmacher’s account, which proceeds not from the English original but from Arendt’s translation – and, importantly,
revision and emendation – of that original text into German. For an excellent discussion of the variances between the English and German versions of what is generally regarded as Arendt’s masterwork, see Roy T. Tsao. “Arendt Against Athens: Rereading The Human Condition,” in Political Theory 30(1): 97-123. All quotes from Arendt are here translated from the German, with reference subsequently to Arendt’s English version; I have hoped thereby also to maintain the continuity of Schirmacher’s thinking. All page references are thus first to Hannah Arendt. ‘Vita activa’ oder Vom Tätigen Leben. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1960 and then to the corresponding passages in Hannah Arendt. The Human Condition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958.[


3. Martin Heidegger. “The Age of the World Picture,” in Off the Beaten Track. Trans. Kenneth Young and Julian Haynes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 66-67. Compare Martin Heidegger. “Zeit des Weltbildes,” in Holzwege. Gesamtausgabe 5. Frankfurt a/M: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977, 88. [Translator’s Note: Though I have here rendered Weltbild with the familiar “world view” and not “world picture,” the reader should note the essentially imagistic, pictorial, visual character of a world view. A world view is not simply a way of seeing the world, but also and problematically a hypostasized uptake of the world, a static picture of it that imagines man to be its necessary receiver. For a fuller articulation of this, see esp. 70-73 in “The Age of the World Picture.”]


5. [Translator’s Note: The term Gelingen – here translated as “felicity” – is crucial to Schirmacher’s work, particularly in the notion of das gelingende Leben, “the felicitous life.” Typically, gelingen is rendered in English as “to succeed,” with Gelingen as “success,” but this misses a resonance Schirmacher is particularly concerned to draw out; where “success” is “achieved” in English, it is the well-won fruit of one’s labours with regard to some end (and often is shorthand for such well-defined ends as “gaining wealth” or “winning fame”), Gelingen offers the notion of happy outcomes that cannot be thought as simply “achieved” or “won.” Gelingendes Leben is a life that, yes, has been successful, but not necessarily relative to any clearly defined measure or as the clear and direct result of some particular control exerted by an individual. Rather, the structure of Gelingen is more like “felicity” in J.L. Austin’s account of speech acts, where a speech act is “felicitous” simply when it happens as act and “infelicitous” when it does not, regardless of whether anyone has consciously set out to achieve it. So, for Austin, a speech act may well be clearly defined—christening a ship the “Mr. Stalin,” which can only be accomplished by certain persons under certain very clear conditions, is one of his delightful examples—but it also can be something that occurs without design, such as an apology that is offered uncalculatingly and accepted by its recipient. In the latter case, as with Schirmacher’s gelingendes Leben or “felicitous life,” the “success” in question cannot
be thought as some conquest or even achievement within a life—it is rather life itself as the happy outcome of acting. This should not, obviously, be confused with mere good fortune or grace, as in the felix culpa, for “felicity” in both Schirmacher’s and Austin’s sense is, though not exclusively directed by human intentions, very much bound to acting in a strong sense. Cf. J.L. Austin. How to Do Things with Words, 2nd Ed. Ed. J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975.]


Facebook Trilogy

I
Once, the word “like” was bonded with
something within me.
Now it means one movement
of my right hand on a keyboard.
Connected to hundreds of my new friends,
disconnected from the essence of things,
I slide across the surface,
liking unimportant matters.
They pretend to be real.
In our safe houses, warm pyjamas,
let us play in a popular game,
a hit, a must-have:
“I am an involved citizen of the world,
making 3 clicks every day
concerning events and actions
that I do not have time
to read about nor fully understand.”
Brother, sister,
let us slide,
surf,
swallow.

II
Sit straight. Touch your keyboard. Caress it. Speak to your computer. Get angry
at him. Restart him when he is not behaving well. Like every other punishment,
this too will hurt you both. Your friends are smiling at you. Directly at you, from
the photos they shared with 500 other people. They are near, responding to your
e-mail in a couple of minutes from their home you have never been to, 1200 km
away. Your husband is on skype. Touch the screen. Take off your clothes. You
almost got it. It is almost there. But when you lick it, it tastes like glass. You are
surprised. You start to cry.
III
Let me check if I am still alive. Wait—
I was so busy today that I have forgotten
what this means. Is it about
this warm liquid running in my veins
or that network of associations
sparkling in my brain? Or is it maybe happening
when I hold your hand, yes, I think
this might be it,
or not—wait—this one is
not about me, but about you, now,
could you help and touch and tell,
and please do not say
you have also forgotten.
Maybe we are websites?
Countless, shallow, passing,
our popularity decreasing with time:
not updated, we are lost.
Yes, I am sure we are websites.
My question was silly, please, just delete it.
Without comments or likes.
Sailors’ Wives

What do sailors’ wives dream of
There are no oceans or seas in their dreamland
No waves or storms
No rivers, no creeks, no lakes or ponds
No rainy days, no drizzles
No big floods or puddles

There is only fire

But when they wake up alone
With their hands between their thighs

The whole world gets wet
And salty
Again
To H.

I
The same people the same men walk up the same hill
The same looks the same hello under the same sky
The same cold river and embrace of the same towel
The same wooden bench the same birds asking for more
of the same bread, Heraclitus, You have never changed
so convinced that Everything Else is changing, You stayed
in the middle of motionlessness, proudly claiming
Change to be the mother of us all. Beware of her,
She gives birth to so many, forgetting our names.

II
Be nice to mummy and eat this hamburger of sorrow. This is a limited edition, only for
humankind. The sauce of oblivion tastes so good, like nothing on Earth, it tastes like
nothing, like a void. Your negligible being deserves it. Feed yourself with more emptiness,
let the dark meat of fear nurture you with its black medicine. Bon appetit, my wrinkled
little daughter with many names, or maybe you are my son, also forgotten.

III
A page full of little black beetles.
He looks and asks: Are you all right, honey?
I look down. Beetles gather in little tribes, forming words.
Their sound echoes in my empty head,
Once full of meaning,
now only a lair for insects.
Don Gill—*Erratic Spaces*

Gill engages in walking as an intellectual practice. He is an urban walker whose art practice involves moving through space on visual and conceptual planes simultaneously. *Erratic Space* involves collecting evidence of urban meanderings through photography, video, texts, detritus, maps, conversations, encounters, anecdotes, gathering information to be sorted, analyzed, considered and archived as a record of the act.

Above: *Dec 30. Vancouver, Calgary, and Lethbridge with 1.7 km drawing.*

Right, top: *Jan 08. Lethbridge with 2.9 km drawing.*

Right, bottom: *Jan 14. Lethbridge with 3.4 km drawing.*
Could elBulli have ever become the project it was and will be without Ferran Adrià’s drive to *educate*? The term is hardly sexy, and there is no denying that it stumbles and falls short of the brilliance of haute cuisine. But if we pause to savour the etymologies in the way Adrià might consider the complex qualities of an element such as water, we might glimpse creative possibilities. In education, teaching, pedagogy, we hear a reference to a leading, a drawing forth, even a showing that engages language in a fundamental sense. We hear a furtive reference to childhood. Then there is “master”—a term whose etymology contains a singular, almost redundant insistence on a greatness that is *more*. The master traces thresholds and opens distances. They may even distend space and time with their singular presence.

Anyone who has spent time with Ferran Adrià knows of his desire to communicate the detail and meaning of what he has undertaken; this is part of the *gift* that is his work. And anyone who has visited the website of elBulli or the publications associated with it knows that the educational impetus absorbs every mode of presentation. There could be no more generous form of publicity than what has been offered by el-Bulli. But the intelligence and beauty of the exposition, in all its forms and in all the media, draw their true source of meaning from the educational program that unfolded in the restaurant itself. There, near the stove, so to speak, we find the heart
of Adrià’s educational gesture, and we find the ground for the steps to come. For it is clear that the elBullifoundation will have to proceed from this foundation if it is to become something more than a culinary institute. El-Bullifoundation, we are told, is to undertake the highly paradoxical task of teaching creative freedom. Thus, it must proceed from a version of the practice already undertaken at elBulli, where clients were actively exposed to a form of fundamental research in cuisine—a transformative engagement with the historical and conceptual grounds of culinary thought. Adding a new turn of reflection and discussion suited to the new context, and drawing from the experimental procedures of elBullitaller (Adrià’s laboratory in Barcelona), the new Foundation will be built on the “public education” already undertaken at elBulli for well over a decade on a nightly basis.2

If we accept this proposition, then perhaps we have the basis for defining what education might mean in the Foundation to come, and what might be at stake in teaching the culinary creativity associated with elBulli. Let us therefore begin from a brief description of the experience at elBulli as it has unfolded thus far. In what does a meal conceived by Ferran Adrià consist, and how does it proceed?3

Speaking summarily, we may say that the educative process begins at Adrià’s table with a re-awakening and directing of sensibility that is indissociable from a powerful stimulation of emotions. The guidance taken in this drawing forth of sensibility and affect will always be singular (the capacities and histories of the individual are involved), and will always involve complex temporalities. By after-effect, for example, one may find oneself opening to an entirely new cuisine (as happened to this author in Japan). By recall, a memory of taste that leads back to the origins of memory may be tapped, as well as a childlike receptivity, recalling to us Jean-François Lyotard’s lesson that it is only in our surviving infancy that we open to an event.

But the full scope of the experience presents a challenge that provokes and even requires the aid of the intellect—a thinking engagement that remains anchored in bodily affect, but reaches as far as one’s culinary fluency and analytic (perhaps poetic) capacity will allow. For, as almost every commentator has noted, this cuisine mobilizes a language; it speaks to a history of cuisine and to a body of expectations that are perhaps only latently articulated, but require articulation on such an occasion.

The dining passage itself (“experience” suggests by etymology a dangerous traversal) entails an orchestrated series of mini-events that each mark a rhythm in two movements. At each step, there is an aesthetic moment where visual contemplation prevails (though olfaction has become increasingly important). This is the first stage of the formation of what is both an image and a poetic proposition. Contemplation, where fascination takes hold, mixes sometimes with hesitation, even fear (profound instincts are brought into play here), then gives way to the act of ingestion, with its multifold dimensions of discovery, so complex that Ferran Adrià has obliged us to consider the necessity of composing a new Physiology of Taste.

But if we may describe each dish (somewhat simplistically) as doubly articulated, then we should not fail to recognize that a
rhythm also forms in the suite of dishes. This rhythm gathers, in counterpoint to the norms of established cuisine, through a subtle play of contrast and resonance in flavours, textures, temperatures and tone—the latter comprising all the forms of Adrià’s humour and allusion, and what we might call the degrees of surprise and the temporalities of satisfaction. All of it, once again, is carefully orchestrated, down to the underlying tempo of service, which sustains the challenge to the sense and the intellect. We might think of cinematic or musical orchestration, but here the particular form of participation (via the senses and ingestion, with its various forms of tolerance) gives the term “experience” its singular force. It is bodily, it is emotional, and it is intellectual. Its rhythmic configuration articulates all three in a gathering design for which we may again advance the term “language,” though now at a level that touches upon its poietic, ontological ground (its character as a showing). Nothing of this can surrender to a full discursive account, an “interpretation” or an explication. This is not a play of signification (or not merely—clearly a vast discourse of cuisine and culinary reference is called upon); it is a disclosure of the culinary possible in an artistic event that engages our earthly being.

The “possible”—because one senses, here, an opening. It is, for many, a radical opening that extends well beyond cuisine. But cuisine itself is at stake because its fundamentals have been exposed and opened to question. “On a touché au vers,” Mallarmé famously declared, coyly announcing a revolution in literary thought and practice. Something of a comparable order occurs in Ferran Adrià’s experimentation. The foundations of culinary practice are brought systematically into question and re-engaged in creative invention that puts into play the contemporary relation to food in all its existential and cultural dimensions. Adopting a philosopher’s Greek shorthand, we might describe this as a creative exploration of the relation between physis and technē—one of the most advanced of our epoch.

How, from here, do we think about the educational mission of the coming Foundation, presuming that it is to be something more than a school devoted to the reproduction of the style of Ferran Adrià and his team? We can be confident that Adrià will discover new ways of communicating what I have termed an opening to the possible of cuisine, new ways of bringing forth its questions and the meaning of its experience. The hospitality that makes this education possible at elBulli will remain present in the forms of the new centre and even part of its fundamental research. From an educational point of view, there are no grounds for regretting the closing of the restaurant and the transformation of the project. But the educational ambition of the new Foundation will require the artistic transport of the restaurant, its manner of stimulating what Adrià calls a sixth sense.4 For creative response is implicitly called for when that sixth sense is prompted. If, as I have suggested, the relation of physis and technē is fundamentally engaged in the research undertaken at elBulli, then the educational task in the new context will be to mobilize that relation in new ways, drawing out how both terms are in play in the artist’s technē. Great artists are masters of craft, but they are technites inasmuch as they proceed in their craft from a mode of knowing that involves a fundamental disclosure. The artist undertakes his or her craft having glimpsed the possible, and in searching for an articulation of what is thus
already given, if only as an exigency to create.

The new Foundation will have at its heart an educational mission devoted to exploring and propagating what it means to be tech-
nites in the field of cuisine: one who works and creates at the grounds. This is where Fer-
ran Adrià’s presence as master (but the beauty of this collaborative project is that it can welcome more than one master) will be most important. He will bring the fruits of an im-
mense learning and vast experimentation to bear—all of it of inestimable importance. But one does not go to a master simply for knowledge. One seeks in their sometimes un-
settling presence singular habits of question-
ing, thinking, and doing that will have to be appropriated and transformed into a new ges-
ture. Adrià will set a rhythm of experimen-
tation and development, and he will infuse it with a playful performance that will nev-
er fail to convey that what is being explored is a technique for dwelling creatively on the earth. He will thus be pursuing an “ethos” in the sense of this term that Heidegger sought to convey in retelling the famous story of the visitors who were shocked to discover Hera-
clitus warming himself near a modest stove. The gods come to presence here too, Heracli-
tus offered by way of invitation. The manner of this little gesture of pre-Socratic hospitality will find its renewal at the new Foundation.

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tive Literature and Modern Thought at the University of Aberdeen and director of the Centre for Modern Thought at Aberdeen. His most recent book is Last Steps: Maurice Blanchot’s Exilic Writings and he is currently completing a second volume on the topic of infancy that focuses on the contributions of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-François Lyotard.

Endnotes

1. I take the risk of presuming that readers will recognize the names of this distinguished Catalan restaurant (which closed in July, 2011) and its celebrated chef. I perhaps also take a risk in assuming that a form of avant-
garde experimentation in cuisine deserves attention in a publication such as POIESIS. But I believe, in fact, that Ferran Adrià’s cre-
ative endeavours rank among the most glo-
rious examples of “poiesis” in our new cen-
tury, and I believe there are strong grounds to look forward to the full launching of the elBullifoundation, which is currently in de-
velopment and will come to host chefs, phi-
losophers, artists, and other “researchers” in a centre devoted to culinary research. The level of achievement that brought elBulli repeated recognition as the best restaurant in the world is sure to be carried into this new venture.

I should note that this essay was originally prepared for an issue of Matador N, edited by Adrià himself; it is by his request that I took up the topic of education. I found it strik-
ing that he sought to have this theme treated in such a context (a high-end magazine of art and culture), and I take this fact as confirma-
tion of my sense that teaching is actually at the heart of his creative work.

2. I cite my companion, Edith Doron, who laughed when told the relatively modest cost for this experience after a meal in 2003. A Director of Programs in a children’s muse-
um in New York, she exclaimed, “But this is public education!”—referring to the cost, of course, but also to the ethos of the restaurant (in a sense of the term this essay will try to explain).

3. Because I am entertaining the question of Adrià’s role as a “master” in a pedagogical context, I will focus on his efforts and leave to the side the function of the team that he assembled in elBulli, which included his brother, Albert Adrià, and Juli Soler, among many others (his wife Isabelle should be mentioned in particular). The waiters and waitresses who instructed the guests in the suggested protocol for each dish (what to taste first, etc.) of course played their own role in the educative process and helped create the conditions of this exceptional situation of hospitality. But those familiar with Adrià will know that there is something quite singular in his function in the overall project.

4. Adrià seeks actively to engage all five senses in the dining experience, all the while attempting to prompt a form of intellectual discovery via sensory stimulation and what is stirred in memory or confounded in expectation. Inseparable from a form of play, the sixth sense involves a “pleasure experienced by the mind.” See the insert “Creative Methods III” in *A Day at elBulli*, by Albert Adrià, Ferran Adrià, and Juli Soler (New York: Phaidon, 2008), 464.

A little birdie told me…  
_Stella Andonoff_

I am from a dead pig’s stomach blown up into a soccer ball.  
I am from a grandpa, a grandma, a grandpa, a grandma who followed red stars.  
I am from a curly-haired little boy who sold pantyhose in San Paulo.  
I am from a little girl with big hazel eyes in a refugee paradise for commies.  
I am from 1946 and 1952 and a back seat romp in 1972—gunshot wedding bells.  
I am from a drunk Algerian man and slipper chases down rue Hutchison.  
I am from that letter I opened that read “marriage certificate”—_merde_.  
I am from an _ahhhhh, ohhhhh_ and a big birthmark on my left, or is it my right, thigh.  
I am from drowning cats for fun on an August afternoon in the River.  
I am from a left ear to right ear scar, moving muscle, then stitches, and staples in my head.  
I am from a man smoking in basements and a woman who hated his paintings and loved his blue eyes.  
I am from a red marble accordion—_A B C D E_—open and breathe—_C D E_.  

I am from the fumes in my father’s nostrils, my grandfather’s lungs from that poisonous white building.

I am from 1, 2, 3 kick kick jump. I am from tight leotards and you’re too fat, you’re too wrecked, you think too much, you want too much, well how about brunch? Nah, no thanks, I’m too strong for your taste buds.

I am from a camp of 20,000 people, 1 kilometer squared and a red woolen blanket to keep my premie daddy alive.

I am from a stolen fruit roll-up on my way home from Ali’s house.

I am from my toes, swollen ankles, hairy legs, wobbly hands and a mommy daughter matching belly beauty mark and one missing molar.

I am from breaking the fourth wall and dates with milk and honey.

I am from a dress factory—my dad’s cutting table and dresses that would be too expensive after the free trade agreement.

I am from a Macedonian Madonna and a Greek Goddess with long black hair whose father made pigeon soup around the fires in Tashkent.

I am from imperfect moments.
I am from perfect components.

I am from the little birdie who changes the critic’s words to songs.
The Open Space of Art-Based Research

Shaun McNiff

Like so many other people I found my way to the arts in therapy through experiences with artistic knowing and healing; the pattern is archetypal. The work grows from our experiences with the intelligences and transformative powers of artistic expression; we get to know it personally and want to bring it to others. As Michael Polanyi (1967) suggested, sometimes we might know things that we cannot tell. I do not disagree, but in my experience it has had more to do with artistic processes being a number of steps ahead of knowing and the reflecting mind.

Artistic discovery tends to emerge through acts of expression; the process delivers the insight, the sense of direction. I learn how to carefully watch, listen, and witness what the expression has to say about itself and the problems I am addressing in my research. And what happens can never be planned in advance or accessed by pre-existing procedures. Of course, we still have to deal with how to tell or present what we learn from the engagement. I will address this later in this essay.

My definition of research is a simple one—a systematic process of inquiry where the methods are designed in relation to the question asked or the problem examined. I define art-based research (ABR) as the use of creative expression in various art forms
by the researcher, either alone or with others, as a primary mode of inquiry – in contrast to the more conventional use of artistic expression to generate data for examination by other disciplines (McNiff, 2011). Art-based research is thus a mode of inquiry used to address situations that can be best explored and understood via empirical artistic explorations. In my experience, virtually everything we do in striving to serve others in the applied arts fields can benefit from this kind of firsthand inquiry, focused on both knowing and perfecting practice.

Creating form or following formats

In the applied arts fields, we tend to lose contact with our “base” when determining how to do research. The major challenge facing art-based research today is its adoption by the fields and people who have the most to gain from it (McNiff, 2012, p. 5). In the practice of formal research, we lose faith in the essential dynamics of artistic knowing that shaped our calling and take on the adjunctive role that we oppose, trying to justify and explain artistic processes through other disciplines.

Professions based upon the arts as ways of knowing universally contradict themselves in the practice of research. A research course in most applied arts graduate programs will exclusively follow social science methods. Within that domain, a one-sided focus on quantification has generated an appropriate support for qualitative methods; where the former separates individual variables from their environments for analysis and measurement, the latter argues that complex environments are better studied within a context of reciprocal relations. Since applied arts professions have been associated so closely with psychology and human service professions, we have been subsumed within this dualistic and restrictive way of thinking about research, and our work has generally been incorporated into the burgeoning area of qualitative methods.

With all due respect for the quantity-quality discourse happening within the social sciences, artistic inquiry cannot be limited to this. When we partner with social science, we need to deal with the tensions that arise, and hopefully in a creative way. But there is a fundamental conflict within the relationship if art is always expected to follow rather than lead when the situation may call for the latter.

My most recent immersion in these issues involves editing the book Art as Research: Opportunities and Challenges (McNiff, 2013) in which I urged contributors to explore and define the challenges we face in advancing art-based research. I asked why the majority of people and institutions in the applied arts fields do not become involved. As reinforced by authors contributing to this issue, a primary factor is a desire for acceptance within the system where one hopes to work. However, I find that even when supported in pursuing art-based research, most continue to resist, so we cannot attribute blame solely to outside forces. While struggling with the questions in an essay for the new book, I crystallized my sense of what may be a fundamental cause when I wrote: “What is unique and perhaps most challenging about art-based research is that it does not advocate set methods of inquiry” (2013 in press).

Art is infinitely variable and this extends to art-based research. No wonder people
hesitate. It is easier to choose from the ever expanding menu of sanctioned qualitative methods than venture into the unknown. Although the way of art may bring considerable chaos and difficulty, it is the only route to the formulation of a truly individuated mode of inquiry. Where some cannot do without this open space of possibility, most avoid it.

Of course I seek a liberating and guiding structure in my work and do everything I can to help others find it in the research that I supervise—structure liberates expression, as I repeatedly discover. But the way of art, and the discovery of the artistic form or structure, requires that we let go of pre-ordained procedures. There are a few cases when everything falls together effortlessly in the creation of an art-based study, but in my experience this is not usual. It is more likely for artistic inquiry to involve a creative crucible, which I have learned may be a necessary condition and a prerequisite for gaining access to the kinds of complex problems and processes addressed through the arts.

We also need to restore James Hillman’s call for critical and ongoing assessment of our professional language. In his words, “A field must have a language of its own; in fact, a field is its language” (1978, p. 203). In calling for more sensitive and imaginative discourse he said, “Although not fashioned in schools, this language will be fashioned and schooled” (p. 207) and he encouraged a closer correspondence to the poetic basis of the psyche—again, paying attention to our art base.

In addition to fields becoming their language, the same applies to persons. In my experience with art and healing I see this repeatedly. I am healed and transformed by what I do, what I see and witness, hear and feel, and read. Disturbances are created in the same way. Thus I encourage the pursuit of research that enlivens and deepens our professional and personal commitments and which corresponds to the dynamics of artistic transformation, healing, and renewal.

Although I have consistently adopted a pragmatic respect for designing research methods in response to particular questions—which can result in studies using conventional case studies, interviews, and surveys, as well as art-based inquiries—I have to say that art-based inquiries have the most potential to shape future practice in the applied art fields. We can embrace the open and undefined space of artistic possibility; shape it through our research projects; and accept the risks of artistic experimentation.

These expressions are telling more than we know—ah, POIESIS

As I read the articles made available to me prior to publication of POIESIS XV and reflect on what I have experienced in art-based research over the years, I envision the vast expanse of art-based inquiry and how this supports infinite methods which guard against the possibility of ever being bound together in a textbook. Art holds a certain anarchy, confusion, and even chaos sometimes, all of which go to the core of its alchemy and freedom (McNiff, 1986). Artistic inquiry rubs against the pre-ordained. It cannot know the end at the beginning—nor even the pathway.

The breadth of essays in this issue of POIESIS is part of a larger continuity of contributions to the journal, which, in my view, is unique in its all-encompassing artistic presen-
tation of form and content. *POIESIS* is the only longstanding publication, together with its precursor *CREATE*, where art takes a refreshing lead in the partnership with psychology and other social science disciplines. During a recent process of organizing my papers I noticed how *POIESIS* was the lone journal that also included many of my paintings – in colour – and poems. Thus, the whole of the journal’s history and future embodies ABR and not just the current issue dealing explicitly with it. I cannot emphasize enough how important this leadership is; how the outward forms of communication need to correspond to the message.

Reversing Polanyi, these expressions might be telling more than we know. Without giving credence to the psycho-diagnostic practices of reading non-conscious statements into everything we do, it can be said that creative expressions and images are like solitary point persons who operate in advance of the reasoning and responding mind and others to follow. This applies to every aspect of art-based research, where meaning and even methods of inquiry tend to emanate from what we do without a clear sense at the start as to what and why. This ability of artistic inquiry to help us discover what we are doing unawares, what we can and cannot see, how we might not be what we think we are, is a primary *raison d’être* for broader application to many disciplines that will benefit from suspending their sense of themselves in order to be renewed.

And perhaps most importantly, this journal welcomes the shadows and darker aspects of knowing that have always been the vehicles for new and important discoveries in my life and work. We all want the angels of insight, but it is usually the demons that start the new work, push at the borders of comfort, and evoke the vulnerabilities of the unknown. The difficult places make it necessary to break apart a familiar structure and find a new direction. Thus I salute the history of *POIESIS* as a community of artistic inquiry.

**Freedom from uniformity in presenting research**

Dealing with and expanding forms of presentation may be one of the most important future tasks of art-based research. We have to expand the free and open art space modeled by *POIESIS* to the campuses and institutions that give a face to contemporary research. Rather than depend on research textbooks, we can do what artists have always done—carefully study the works of those who went before us and foster influences among associates today.

If we are permitted to pursue art-based studies within a particular university, most will be required to follow fixed formats for describing and reporting their research. Sally Atkins has articulated this in her essay, “Where are the five chapters?” (2012). There needs to be more push against the restraints on expression and the standardized forms, as Sally and other contributors demonstrate here. These standardized forms may impede the most effective outcomes of art-based research. Everything about artistic processes and outcomes is connected to modes of presentation. As much as I support the use of discursive language and its inclusion, if only as a companion to an art-based study, I know there are things that they cannot grasp nor translate and which are best conveyed through the particular media of artistic expression.
If art-based research is given the freedom to communicate and present outcomes in its essential languages, we then face the challenges of determining quality according to the values of particular communities of practice, and maybe liberalizing what is acceptable to them. Because the personal is the way to the universal in artistic inquiry, there will be risks in how the work we show will be received by others who are unfamiliar with this approach to research or unconvinced of its value. These risks are worth taking and they have always advanced human understanding and art.

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Endnotes

1. In keeping with the German word Kunst, “art” and “art-based research” include all of the arts and artists in a common purpose (McNiff, 1998). While embracing and studying differences, Susanne K. Langer describes how we reach a “deep level” where “there is only one concept exemplified in all the different arts, and that is the concept of Art” (1969, p. 2).

References


Mowry Baden—A Cappella

Aluminum, styrene, 302 cm x 220 cm x 264 cm. Collection of the artist.
What I am looking for
James P. Lenfestey

My friend George Morrison, artist,
after he retired from teaching, spent
the last decade of his life in his studio
on the north shore of Lake Superior painting
the horizon. He painted hundreds, maybe
thousands of horizons. I have been in a gallery
surrounded by them, each one different
as he tried, and failed, to capture the light. Each
painting a failure, costing his audience thousands
of dollars so he could keep on trying,
and failing, until he died at his easel with Lake Superior,
his divine bafflement, a line of shifting colours
outside his plate glass window.

I thought of George as I stood in the wave break
of the Atlantic Ocean at Delray, watching the waves
roll in, one mountain range after another in predictable
periods, unstoppable and forever,
yet each one different and impossible.
I stood gazing through the clear windows of the waves,
seeing the world below, shifting shapes of sand,
shells of living things, maybe a fish,
a pompano, in and out of sight.
Out past the yachts and fishing boats and tankers,
where sand gives way to darkness, at a depth
and pressure only imaginable, there is
what I am looking for. It is luminescent,
its shape ravenous and terrible.
And it is singing.

Like George, I too keep at it, keep peering
into the waves, listening, trying to capture
the rumble and wash with a frail net of words.
I scratch out failure after failure,
the shells of the living and dead,
tufts of feathers like sails, debris and shadows,
through dangerous offshore currents in which you must swim
sideways for your life, with gulls overhead screaming
for you to give up, to fail utterly.

I lay out in the waves, arms wide, listening,
as their heft shoulders me toward shore where
the white steeple of the Presbyterian church stretches valiantly
heavenward between the Marriot hotel and stacks of condos.
I emerge from the deep dripping with fluid,
past a pregnant mother holding a frightened child.
I see children spread over the beach before me
digging their way back to the darkness.

*They are glistening.*
*And I am singing.*
Knowing Not-Knowing
Rethinking Research as an Art-Analogue Process
Sabine Silberberg

Ray decided to join the year-long photo project early on, in October; we discussed contract, ethics, waivers—the research frame. Three days later, he can’t remember ever having seen the forms, and I explain the process again. Over the next two weeks, he has no interest. Then he walks into my office and explains that he ran out of drugs—that had been the problem. In December, he signs out a camera, and when I do not see him for a few days, I wonder if it is gone—subject to the forces of the street and active addiction. The next morning, he arrives at the Centre for breakfast, and hands me the camera—it is snugly cradled in a waterproof expedition case, a perfect fit. I am surprised and impressed by the care for the camera, and while he eats his breakfast, I check the camera for pictures: there are none. When I ask about it, he seems surprised: “What was it I was supposed to do?”—and I am reminded of the core aspect of my work as a counselor in a harm reduction environment: letting go of agendas. So far what has happened during the first two of twelve project months is—everything but photography.

A week later, he signs out the camera again, and a few days later, it has disappeared. The dealer saw it, the dealer took it, he says.

Although it was easy for me, and part of the preparation for the project, to replace the camera, he refuses to
sign one out again, concerned he would not be able to stand up to others, and out of self-respect and appreciation for our relationship.

We are now using the laptop camera in the office. After several weeks of snapping photos of the two of us, I wonder if there is anything else we could do with the laptop camera—such as choosing a different subject. He raises his eyebrows, and turns toward me: "Isn't this enough?"

The dilemma has always been there. And it had its way with me.

Several theses and one doctoral dissertation later (that is to say: there has been cumulative exposure to this dilemma), neither the field of geography, nor those of art therapy or expressive arts therapy, have made the question of research methodology a straightforward task. How may we capture and communicate the vitality, the liveliness and essence of lived experience? And in tandem with this, as a function of my work and research focus: aren't methodological questions always motivated by concern for the dignity and integrity of the people whose lives and experiences are in focus?

During my master's level research, discomfort arose frequently with research processes and tools that I experienced as less than dialogical and collaborative, and as not sufficiently available to take note of the emergent. This discomfort was deepened by the suggested necessity to assign meaning to the experience of others. Clearly, every approach allowed flexibility. However, the stronghold of positivist templates, and frequent encounters with a tone of psychiatric expertism threaded through case studies, had an increasingly unsettling influence on me. The resulting reluctance to compromise the importance of respect toward the participants in research processes led me down a much longer exploratory road in search of methodological openings when I began to imagine my doctoral research design. This time, facing a significantly richer and longer process of inquiry, the search was fuelled by an intention to reflect the values and principles that guide my day-to-day work as a counsellor in the Day Program of an AIDS Foundation in Vancouver, the site which would become the research environment. These were values and principles founded in respect, resonance, and receptivity toward my project participants, the clients. In a year-long collaborative project in this setting, I was curious to see what the six participants, all of whom identified as living with the effects of marginalization, would reveal about their resources and resilience—through being introduced to photography.

At the Dr. Peter Centre, we take a significantly client-centered approach to addiction-based work, known as “harm reduction.” This approach concerns itself with engaging people living with addiction and the effects of marginalization. More often than not, living with active addiction is accompanied by
the presence of mental health concerns, often marked by poverty, homelessness or inadequate and unsafe housing conditions, and cumulative barriers to social and health services and resources. Within harm reduction literature, people living with and in these challenges are described as “exquisitely complex” (Little & Franskoviak, 2010, p.178), and this pragmatic compassion describes the attitude toward our clients, whose understandably frequently challenging behaviors we nevertheless view as adaptive, and thereby resourceful. It is this combination – the vulnerability and complexity of clients as a result of the mechanisms of exclusion – which requires a necessarily thoughtful clinical approach, and in tandem, the search for a responsive research framework and methodology as an imperative and extension of care.

Strict abstinence is not the goal of the harm reduction approach. Rather, it is “to reduce the harmful consequences of drug use and other high-risk activities that cut across the spectrum from safer use to managed use to abstinence” (Marlatt & Witkiewitz, 2010, p.591). Acceptance and engagement lie at the core of the approach, and non-coercive service provision and, commonly, a reversal of power in the relationship with service providers, are frequently summarized in the popularized notion of “meeting people where they’re at” (Harm Reduction Coalition, 2011). Marginalized populations have traditionally been excluded from relevant care (Tatarsky & Marlatt, 2010); here, the cumulative challenge of living with HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, histories of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and neglect, extensive experiences with the sex trade and time spent in prison, varied gender identities and sexual orientations, and of course, the stigma of living with addiction and (un)treated mental health issues leaves most clients with less than hope. Most are initially without the willingness to trust, any sense of self-worth, or the capacity to negotiate the high thresholds of supposed support systems.

There are many intricacies and implications of working with harm reduction principles on both the micro and macro levels. An implicit human rights agenda rests on the fact that all people have a right to dignity, respect, and care; it thereby challenges the dehumanizing image of substance-using people, who are frequently described as “weak, criminals, lazy” (Tatarsky & Marlatt, 2010, p.120). The political nature of the work means that we challenge stigmatization. We support clients’ strengths and resources through collaboration, and clients’ availability and interests necessarily lead the process. Mandatory participation or prescribed treatments do not work in this environment. Clients would simply not return to the Centre or might avoid the clinician. In more than a decade of experience, I have learned that the path toward connection arrives with acceptance, flexibility, and the capacity to let go of preconceived agendas. Humour and play are clinical assets in each moment, for each relational opportunity. Next to transparency and swift boundary-setting skills, clinicians draw just as much on sensitivity and detection of strengths and resources to guide their work. The fragility of the emergent – whether that be connections, personal resources, or a renewed sense of self-worth – made abundantly clear to me that my methodology would necessarily have to mirror the clinical approach. I would need to follow what may, or may not, emerge in the relationally-oriented process.
Billyjoe is all about play, and that is what lies at the core of our connection. Despite multifaceted compromises to his quality of life due to active addiction, Billyjoe has a great capacity to emerge from intense drowsiness, and to find beauty in the very moment. After he joined the project in October, he showed interest in photography whenever states of sedation allowed availability.

Billyjoe loves gadgets, and I have witnessed his talents as a finder of discarded items many days; he often arrives at the Centre with impressive finds and detailed plans of how these items would be put to good use in the near future. Many cameras, in diverse states of functioning, have arrived with him, soon never to be seen again—the street economy ebbs and flows through my office.

Many months into the photo project, he arrives at the Centre with a medium format camera—and bursts with pride and glee. Upon closer inspection, I realize that he does not know how to operate it, nor does the camera contain film; however, what matters to him, right now, is what appears in the viewfinder—he is overwhelmed with the beauty of his composition of a friend, in the sunlight. I run to my office to get my own camera and capture what he framed. “This is the photo it would take right now,” smiles Billyjoe.

His joy is contagious, and it does not matter that the camera is a complete mystery to him—he loves the moment, revels in the imagined potentials, and poses for a portrait. A quick print of the portrait (it is not particularly important to him), and he is out the door; I never saw the camera again.

As unsettling as it can be to a habitual wish for predictability and stability, it was important to remain “true” to these chaotic processes. How to build a research framework congruent with clinical practice shaped by an improvisational attitude? Matters were complicated by the fact that I chose photography.
Processes of marginalization create invisibility, as a side-effect of mechanisms of exclusion (Vasas, 2005). Urging project participants to become visible for the sake of research, and thereby potentially risk repercussions as a result of the very real existence of the stigma of HIV/AIDS, as well as of being identified as “addicts,” was far from my intention. Those very aspects gave the search for a receptive-enough methodology the flavor of an ethical quest. As I wrote in my dissertation:

Shedding light, or illuminating matters, plays a central role in both photography and the dissertation-writing process. Light is associated with attention and presence, and thereby with connection, an act of joining, and a quality of being-with. Light is also used as a metaphor for truth, knowledge and sense-making, and therein lie the challenges for this project. The participants, setting, methodologies and researcher involved with this process share a predisposition toward complexity and the in-between, a preference for nuances and grey zones. Light can be relief and revelation; light can also be intrusive to what is comforted by the dark. The setting here is in the borderland between these two poles. Given the unpredictability of the life-circumstances of the participants in this research, my experience suggests that I enter this process with curiosity, and let go of any outcome expectations. Refining my understanding will require respect, an ongoing availability to adapt to circumstances, and my own “photo-sensitivity.”

In searching for an appropriate means of researching, even phenomenological applications made me suspicious at first. As the default method of the expressive arts, I was concerned that here, too, the operationalization into procedures would override the ambiguous and the nascent. Would I be called back into the known academic territory of linear processes, designed to excavate hard facts as valid contributions to rightfully established knowledge, after first allowing excursions into thick rich juicy poetic morsels received by deep listening? My concerns were eased. What I found, among the diverse philosophical strands and applications, were openings into resonance and nuance. Inspired by van Manen’s words, “writing creates a space that belongs to the unsayable” (2006, p.718), I accepted the invitation to “research as a poetizing activity” (van Manen, 1990, p. 13) and extended it beyond the unsayable – to photography, and the potentially invisible. What I found were descriptions of a phenomenological perspective as an entering of the ambiguous, and as an understanding of research as a mere approximation of meaning, not leading to the sure bet of truth science often likes to claim as a result of diligently following prescribed steps. This desire to move toward the edge of insight, or “darkness as the method” (van Manen, 2006, p. 719), stimulated my capacity to imagine a responsive photo-based research process designed to shed light on what may or may not become visible. Research and the desire to truly understand were viewed as an act of care, and as a serving of what we
love. This research method is then informed by attitude, rather than technique, and “as a manner and style of thinking” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.viii; van Manen, 2006, p. 720). The phenomenological intention to speak the world rather than about it (van Manen, 1990), and the call for research as a poetizing activity drawing on evocative expression, led me down the path of making space for original voices. I understood it as in invitation to carry forward the language and expressions of the research participants—people who are not usually listened to. Rather than subjecting the results to my abstractions and assigning of meaning early in the process, the participants represented themselves, visually and verbally, far into the discussion.

Encouraged by phenomenological thoughts, I ventured further. With photography at the core of this particular arts-based research process, my intention was to scan the qualitative research realm for related expertise, and to inch toward an understanding of the edge—a respect for the emergent—in the current discourse. What would it have to offer to this particular project? What I found was methodological richness, and at first something that appeared familiar—namely, suspicion toward the image and its acceptability as a way of knowing (Prosser, 1998), and in particular, the idea that the image is often perceived as distorted, and “skewed by the socio-context of ‘making,’ ‘taking,’ and ‘reading’ and summatively images are so complex that analysis is untenable” (Prosser, 1998, p. 99). As a photographer, or arts therapist utilising photography, and as a researcher, this intrigued and amused me. Why suspicion of the image, but not of the word? For visual sociologist Prosser, the image or photograph makes us alive to uncertainty. It evokes the “irksome complexity of traveling through contested territory” (p.116) in a search for “data uncontaminated by idiosyncrasies” (p.123).

Working with marginalized populations calls for “an ongoing process of negotiation, reflection, and experimentation” (House, as cited in Clark, Prosser & Wiles, 2010, p.89). This applies equally to research. How can one engage in a responsive—and thereby emergent—process in order to satisfy qualitative research criteria? Harm reduction may offer guiding principles for the research process. Working responsively, flexibly, and reflexively are essential criteria for the quality of this work, and now searching for appropriate and sensitive methodology led me to photo-based approaches, as an additional method in an art-analogue process that would help me understand nuances of resilience in people living with the effects of marginalization.

The photograph, because it is understood as both subjective and objective, is regarded with suspicion (Pink, 2007). Its use as a vehicle of evidence, in juxtaposition with recognition of the subjective and imaginative, has given rise to a lengthy discourse; its contingent “truths” led to observations such as Berger’s (Berger & Mohr, 1982), who viewed the photograph as a “meeting place where the interests of the photographer, the photographed, the viewer and those who are viewing the photograph are often contradictory” (p. 7). This conceptualization of the image as subject to perception was followed by a shift in attention to the process of investing meaning—in short, to the question “How does the image mean?” (Weber, 2008, p.50) rather than what does the image mean. This is emphasized by Pink's understanding of images as intersections of meaning, which are
made known in intersubjective processes—and therefore evoke multiple meanings, which change over time and are highly context-dependent (2007). Photographs are thought of “as a practice, rather than a representation, as taking part in the world rather than reflecting it” (Crang, as cited in Pink, 2011, p.93). This dynamic notion of the photograph enhances a research design intended to invite the emergent: an inspiring and appropriate methodological frame in a harm reduction environment. Finally, I felt prepared to begin the research project, and to invite six individuals into a process of being introduced to photography.

Rob decided to take his health actively into his hands a few months after the photo project began. In particular, he decided to decrease the prescribed amount of methadone opiate substitution, and to quit cocaine. The camera became his companion and crutch in the process—following chosen themes was his focus for the day, and he endured months of withdrawal symptoms, depressive states, and much anxiety throughout the project duration. Literally looking for “light” and beauty opened an avenue of not surrendering to the winter depression he usually experiences in gloomy Vancouver—in brief: he faced numerous steep challenges. His relationship with addiction, HIV, and mental health diagnosis threaded itself through the photographs, as well as a keen sense of social justice. Rob is motivated to seek out his community as a social documentarian from within, he offers this voice now to peers who ask for his eye and support.

Rob has remained committed to this process, and managed to wean himself off all substances after a year. When he relapsed a few months after, it motivated me to seek an extension for the research time frame from the ethics board, and Rob went into a second process of withdrawal, again with support by his engagement with the camera.

Our sessions were marked by rapid picture downloads with no time for discussion—hundreds of images at a time. However, selecting images for an exhibition offered an incentive to him to slow down enough to make careful choices—which were enthusiastically received by his peers. Over the past years, the camera remained with him at all times, perpetuating his subcultural photo-celebrity status.
The initial activity in the research project: a lot of nothing. Although uncertainty is a marker of my daily work, the particular attention under the magnifying glass of research lenses, time lines tied to ethics board approval, and the fact that hardly any photos were taken for the first few months made me acutely aware again of what I thought I had learned to embrace as one challenge inherent in harm reduction based work—the terror of letting go of agendas. Once I learned to reframe “nothing” as one expression of what emerged, I was able to renew my appreciation for the improvisational attitude underlying the work. Then, the liveliness of six process narratives unfolded, and the particular expression of collaboration and support translated into supporting each person in finding an entry point of interest, with an aim of committed engagement. The narratives and accompanying images communicated the undercurrents of meaning, and, for the first time in my own experience with research trajectories, the congruence of intention, content, and process design was affirmed by the continued involvement of the participants, on their own terms, and within their own rhythms of connection. The images reflected their processes vividly, also varying in expression from flooding the session with hundreds of photos, to weeks of absence. Whether their attention was captured by relational evidence, by the promise the camera may hold for imagined photographs in the future, or by utilizing the camera as a documentary tool of a social justice perspective from the margins themselves—their engagements were acts of taking part in the world, a desire to participate in meaning-making for themselves and others. While my role has been to create conditions by project conceptualization, and collaboration as a partner in creative play, they took the opportunity, shaped it, and with this, a poetic, personal, and political process was set in motion—one of becoming participants in their lives, while being aware of the effects of mechanisms of exclusion—stepping stones toward a change in self-determination.

Responsive research design in a process involving people living with the effects of marginalization is informed by an “art analogue” attitude (Knill, Levine & Levine, 2005, p.135), each step calling for reflection, for a stepping back, and for
a response to a newly changed shape, which in turn shapes the next step, rendering research a creative process by necessity (Silberberg, 2012). Limitations and challenges are aspects of shaping, and tools for transformation. This responsive and deeply relational approach, which found a reflection in the continued participation and the practice of visual expressions of the six photographers, affirms the importance of emergence and improvisation in arts-based research processes. The confluence of these elements as core aspects of harm reduction, the expressive arts, and the research methodologies chosen contributed to the at times nerve-wrecking endeavor of charting new territory on my map of arts-based research. Beyond this, the project did not seem just to have added to the lives of the participants, but also left me changed by the experience, with a renewed and deepened appreciation for their ability to live in the present, to be moved by beauty. Their ability to face profound obstacles, to find humor and play in unlikely places, and to risk relationship once again, is nothing if not inspiring and a testament to their profound resilience.

Sabine Silberberg, expressive arts therapist and registered art therapist, lives, works and plays in Vancouver, BC—largely in the inner city and with so-called at-risk populations, remaining at risk of inspiration and learning. Her recently completed doctoral research focused on photography to illuminate clients’ resilience.

References


Three Poems by Marc J. Straus

Rice House

In response to Wolfgang Laib’s Rice House, 2007 (opposite page).
Black Indian granite, black smoke, sunflower oil, and rice,
7 ½” x 8 5/8” x 46 ½”.

Black stone I found in a little Madras quarry, which
Mr. Ravikumar owns, such a bright laugh, only half
his upper teeth, through which he says that I always
select a fragment that is unsellable and therefore

it is forbidden for him to charge me anything, with which
I cautiously remind him that I am an alchemist, I will take
his forty-six inch long, nine inch wide, seven inch high
uneven stone and blacken it even more with thick black
cobbler’s oil, that I will set it down and layer it around
with coarse uncooked rice and then pack it in my studio
in a fine crate and ship it to New York where a gallery
on West 29th Street will sell it for more money than most people

make in a year, so as for this bitter rock that nobody else wants
he is obliged to charge me to recirculate its worth, to feed
his family and workers and perhaps something left over to thank
his Gods for my Rice House, for finding this rough but

necessary stone, for reminding me of my roots, a medical
student from a quaint village in Germany, a surgeon, Herr Laib
expected me to be, and my mother, always tired to the bone,
her youth extinguished in a terrible war, a war in which Germany’s

soul was lost, after which she gave birth to me six years later
in a quiet vacant room, wanting no worldly clamor, only
a place to soak up acrid memory, and then one morning
back just after my medical studies, she served me breakfast:

an empty plate, an empty bowl, a white porcelain coffee cup
set down perfectly and nothing inside and when I walked out
that day the sun full and yellow on the fields, I went to
India—two years in silence and then I returned
and slowly gathered fresh beeswax—it was everywhere, tiny droplets like earth's breath, and I shaped them into small mounds, and then pollen, every day out in the fields, a month's journeying to fill a plateful, and then milk stone, and rock like this, and eventually I placed them on floors, stone floors, oak floors, concrete floors, bowls of pollen, staircases made of pure wax, wax mounds up on trestles, rocks with hand-sprinkled rice about the circumference, whispers, prayers, the rock and the pollen and the wax perfectly still, the puffing of millions of bees, the mating of sunflowers, the remnants of a volcano, atoms of carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen grafted from trees and living and porous things from millions and billions of years ago, new life and sustenance, and here we are in an angstrom of time and it is only we who have the capacity to reorganize what God set down, gently and quietly, a ceremony, so that and in our brief journey we are timeless too, an uneven rock left behind, perfect and magisterial, set down, oiled, surrounded by a few grains of rice by hand.
Yellow Couch

In response to Marin Majic’s Bild, 2012 (below).
Oil on canvas, 72.8” x 88.6”.

The fabric maker slept here
while the bird perched on its pedestal
and the black cat licked her paws
listlessly near the yellow couch—
yard goods, tickings, and flounces
piled high, gone now, looted
during Kristallnacht, youths
with no use for them except
to tell their friends,
and this photo by one of them
who has returned at age ninety-one:
silence, rafters, coruscating light,
the yellow couch still there, and the
bird, perhaps even the same black
bird with a memory of that fabric maker
so many years ago.
The Great Divide

In response to John Newsom’s *The Great Divide*, 2005-6 (below).
*Oil on canvas, 90” x 120”.*

If there is sky or ground then it is all orange blaze slashed with cords of white, a mid-afternoon July gleaming and bright, great burning globes of red etching our retina, spiders black and brown, lithe and playful, caterpillars, larvae, cocoons, and flowers, lots of flowers in full bloom, and finally in this miasma of effortlessness, an absence of a wheat field, river sluice, windmill—nothing made or grown purposely, and, perhaps that’s it, this is the great divide, an unabashedly brilliant world unsullied by man.
Seeing Art as RAW DATA

Artistic Transformation

Koenig, Schild & Hufschmid

Sonnet L’Abbé, performing her poem *Untitled* 2012, as a response to David Khang’s artwork. In the background: Randy Lee Cutler, *The Vast Majority* 2012, print on aluminum.
What does it mean to be artists-in-residence at a sub-atomic physics lab on the Pacific West Coast of Canada? Two artists from Berlin and one from Vancouver have been navigating the landscape of theoretical physics, encountering the startling ideas shared by scientists, creating a field (an encampment) for artist-explorers, swimming in the turbulent metaphors of particle collisions.

One can easily say that science enters contemporary culture with great impact these days. In the winds of ever increasing discoveries, news like the existence of the so-called Higgs Boson particle spread like wildfire around the world last summer. (Predicted over fifty years ago, this particle could finally explain how subatomic particles acquire their mass.) The news resonates well beyond the field of science, the unknown becomes “visible,” it becomes part of a collective story, and changes the shape of how contemporary humans understand the universe. The complex landscape of scientific knowledge gains momentum to inspire those outside its stratified boundaries. Beyond those perimeters, the inherent language also transforms.

When physics is transported into the field of metaphors and analogies, the overlap of theoretical physics and arts becomes a potential ground for new ideas. Significantly, the terrain opens to thinking of new ways to regard a problem or an idea. In both disciplines one can say that the “artful mind” processes information through intuition, associations, and emotions. A multiplicity of views forms a
space from which new ideas can be drawn, as “the imaginative intellect knows no borders.”

For some discoveries in science, a theory would first be thrown into the scientific community for discussion, a theory drawn from years of scientific research but also based on the imagination and creativity of the scientist. The “artful mind” of the scientist, while using the inherent language of mathematics, may also seek metaphors as a means of communicating complex and abstract correlations in her respective field. Experiments would later – sometimes after a very long time – prove a theoretical implication right or wrong.

**RAW DATA**

If there is an overlap – a common ground – between physics and art, the question is: to what extent can this creative field become a subject for reflection and research itself? How does this shared space function as a platform for a dialogue between physics and arts?

The arts and science project “RAW DATA. Artistic Transformation” contributes to the generation of a collective, creative field with a strategy that ventures to bring arts and physics into a joint creative process by weaving both disciplines into a fabric of associations and images, from which new ideas spread.

The strategy, called “Artistic Transformation,” is here considered as a specific art practice which facilitates the interaction of different protagonists across disciplinary boundaries; a number of participating artists are organized into a sequence and asked to produce works that draw upon those of their

Artists David Khang, Ben Reeves, Randy Lee Cutler, and Stefan Smulovitz listen to the lecture on Neutrino Oscillation. In the background: Jennifer Gagné, TRIUMF communications, Sept 2012 at TRIUMF laboratory, Vancouver.
predecessors. The gesture of give and take from one protagonist to another, as well as the process of translation from one work into the next, are the central momentum of this creative process—new works derive from another discipline and the work of another artist.4

RAW DATA, which started out as a pilot project by TRIUMF Artists-in-Residence Koenig, Schild & Hufschmid5 in Vancouver in 2012, initiates a process of transformation between artists and physicists. A chain reaction of works is generated—a concrete problem from physics is translated to four aesthetic media: sound, body, text, and image. In this way, diverse forms of artistic works are developed and artistic “raw data” is provided, which in turn is to be re-translated into the scientific realm. Is it possible for physics and art to work together in order to discover new ways of understanding physics (problems)? If yes, what is discovered, and what kind of knowledge is produced?

When the RAW DATA transformation process was launched in September 2012, four artists from different fields met physicists at TRIUMF—Canada’s National Laboratory for Particle and Nuclear Physics, Vancouver. Artists were informed about a specific quantum physics problem to which they responded with an artwork. In an all-day workshop held at TRIUMF, artists Randy Lee Cutler, David Khang, Ben Reeves, and Stefan Smulovitz were involved in a contemporary physics research project on “Neutrino Oscillation”6 to gain knowledge of what is a current “hot topic” in the physics world. Within the following three weeks the artists each developed an artwork as a response to the specific problem and

Physicist Dr. Kendall Mahn explains the topic of Neutrino Oscillation to the artists, Sept 2012 at TRIUMF laboratory, Vancouver.
passed it on to the next round of artists, who were not allowed to know what the original topic was: Dennis Burke, Ingrid Koenig, Sonnet L’Abbé, and Suzi Webster. The presentation of this particular physics problem set the pace for a spread of inspiration, leaping from one creative mind to the next, resulting in a net of artistic works, all referring (knowingly or blindly) to the same initial subject.

In a joint endeavour, the curators, physicists, and artists met in a “translation hub” workshop at the end of the process. A group of physicists, who had been kept from knowing the original physics topic, viewed the art works in regards to their potential for carrying relevant information. Following their readings of the work, the original physicists who had presented the topic of “neutrino oscillations” reacted both to the artworks as well as to their “blind” peers’ readings.

**Artistic Transformation**

The practice of Artistic Transformation offers a special form of collaboration, utilising the inspirational momentum of the predecessor and finally resulting in an outcome of interconnected works. This is basically the condensed form of creative work: it is a process of “give and take,” a process of mutual inspiration and rejection. The course of the game serves as a tool of quick motion since “what takes place in the history of art, music, and literature over far greater periods of time happens here in one swift exchange.” Thus, collaborations, working in outcome interdependencies, and the conscious process of “taking” inspiration are not just marginal phenomena in artistic contexts—nor are they exclusively reserved for social or participatory projects. They actually represent the core activities that, in more or less varied form, address and reflect what is happening in the arts already:
the process of referring to other people and what they create. But in this case, the processes do not remain hidden within an invisible and anonymous net of references, because the practice of transformation formalises the production process of art and renders it, at least in part, (more easily) observable. This reflexive aspect opens up possibilities of application in various contexts of research and teaching that go far beyond artistic creation.

Referring to artistic games such as “Cadavre Exquis” (“Exquisite Corpse”) or “Chinese Whispers,”¹¹ the setting of specific rules supports a playful approach to the production of new works. Similarly to other creative associative methods such as “mind mapping” or creative coincidence techniques, the playful procedure carries the activity of idea generation by limiting conscious decision-making processes. Given each project’s time constraints (e.g., RAW DATA’s time frame of three weeks), this procedure allows for spontaneity and intensive focus to elaborate new concepts and thoughts.

In RAW DATA, artists and physicists pass on their works to each other, and in turn transform the implicit ideas. Simply stated: it works because inspiration trespasses the boundaries of disciplines in the form of metaphors and analogies. The practice of weaving disparate disciplines into a fabric of associations and images is based on the assumption that associations never emerge singularly but always exist in relation to something similar. This “similarity relationship”¹² appears to be a specific quality of the artistic results produced in a creative chain reaction. Associations that seem to emerge by chance are based on the mind’s capability for analogous thinking: apparently unconnected phenomena are connected according to principles of similarity. This process does not require an “understand-
ing” of the material, nor is it bound to language. To put it in another way: interpretations are based – at least in part – on the fact that the artists adapt their own experiences, memories, and their knowledge to the material of physics by detecting or constructing similarities. “Fabricating similarities is not kept within any limitations. In principle, everything can be set into a correlation of similarity with everything else.” The “shared space” between art and physics, mentioned earlier, becomes apparent: it is a relational space of similitude which allows for the development of associations, from which in turn an artistic work is generated. This ensures a connectivity (content-wise) between far-distant protagonists.

If we consider the transformation process as a mind map, we see the graphic presentation of works in relation to each other. Similar to mind maps, the course of associations can be tracked. The links created by the persons acting one after the other become visible in the result. The recipient, being the last link in the chain, is able to put the individual artistic results into context. References to the predecessor’s work can afterwards be (re-) constructed by the recipients, regardless of whether they are negative, continuative, or corresponding. Recipients are enabled to approach a chain and the individual works it contains inquiringly and to compare, look for differences and similarities, trace the course of reaction or “infection” by going back or, if they follow the chain in the opposite direction, trace the course of topics, forms, and contexts and situate them in relation to the initial subject. Therefore, the outcomes of the individual transformation steps represent not only a communicative act on a pictorial level, but also point to a specific characteristic of the transformation process: the protagonists practice a collective form of art that generates a narrative overall result. In other words: “The map moved by association becomes an animated mind map that, like a Petri dish, makes visible the cognitive processes between inspiration, exertion of influence, differentiation, processing, adaptation, quotation, and innovation.”

As a result of this tracing, the aspects of inspiration and influence that usually remain obscure in other artistic creative processes are focussed on and can be questioned: what was referred to? Where does an idea run all the way through? Where has a subject been dropped? How does an idea expand? And, looking back at the original subject: what was its impact?

Thus, several artists acting sequentially, each referring to a predecessor’s work, generate a complex result more profound than just multiple approaches to interpretation. The resulting outcome of interdependence, be it in the form of a chain or net, allows the recipients to detect the progression of topics and to witness a possibly dramatic composition of changing perspectives.

Furthermore, the links allow us to detect unconscious meanings in the works as well as those that are consciously perceived. This is because “in particular the ambiguous and vague parts of an artwork are suitable for transformation by other artists. [...] Particularly these characteristics of something partly undefined appeal extremely well to artistic continuations.” This is what Walter Benjamin called the “cloudy spot” in a work “that points towards something inconceivable and articulates the most virulent questions.”
As cultural theorist Katrin Busch states: “... [the artwork] meets its own relevance through the reactions.”19 When we look back at the original work within a genealogical line, insight regarding the subject is inevitably heightened. Meanwhile, the original topic can be seen in a different light at the end.

In RAW DATA, the original research topic fans out through the body of produced artworks into different representations, always losing content and gaining information at the same time by paraphrasing, re-phrasing, and re-shaping the respective starting point. This variation process places the initial research topic into a new context, questioning and reflecting on the existing notions while enabling new ideas to emerge. Artistic Transformation builds on the exploration and discovery of formerly unknown spheres, remodeling parameters of what we thought we knew.

The cosmos may be “inherently unstable”20

On many levels, RAW DATA is an experiment that resonates through various realms and presents both challenges and unexpected results. The possibility for inquiry in the overall structure shows two aspects of Artistic Transformation: as an art practice, it is collaborative and relational to the core, and as a research tool, it provides insights on “impacts”—showing cause and effect with regard to a content processed through different creative minds.
We discovered that experimental physicists did not draw strongly from the transformation process to help their own research, whereas theoretical physicists saw the artworks as possible impulse triggers for their complicated thought experiments. The discussion revealed another fascinating difference: generally, art is made in relation to other disciplines serving as inspirational triggers, or generators of associations. Most often, artists work individually, and references to their sources of inspiration are more or less rare. Art – unless it utilizes an explicit conceptual practice – doesn’t cite.

Physics, in contrast, is a collaborative discipline. Results are achieved in a joint endeavour. The imperative of proper citing in science applies to physics as well: the naming of references to what others have created is mandatory for good practice.
Art as a legitimate source for ideas and inspiration is a rather rare phenomenon in physics up to this point. (On a lighter note, during discussions one of the artists voiced this specific question: Will you cite me or share the Nobel prize with me if you get it?)

The net of artworks offers insights that might change our understanding of a specific problem, but will not necessarily explain it. Although artworks are able to visualize and communicate a certain topic, they probably cannot “solve a problem,” but can contribute by “surrounding” it.21

In contrast to other approaches of scientific research – where a plausible theory is developed in a logical and linear process of intervention and inquiry that builds on what we already know – artistic research is based on concepts that embrace the probable, plausible, and possible as an investigation or an open-ended process. Research responds here to issues and problems by interpreting them...
in different contexts. It assumes that new insights can be revealed through creative and critical practice. “Creative inquiry is therefore a reflexive form of research that emphasises the role of imagination, visualisation, representation and action.”

RAW DATA is an experiment. One could even say it is a thought experiment that was publicly performed and that continues to exist as a reverberation, leaving us with knowns and unknowns—that will continue to unfold over time. The hypothesis that knowledge could arise from the transference of physics to art is being pursued, and whether practical applications arise cannot be known yet. But this does not mean they will not come to fruition. What is known as a result is that fruitful and inspiring dialogues can occur between the arts and physics. What is clear is that the exhibition of this process, which included the opportunity for the public to view the physics problem, incites great interest in these ideas. And just as art can exist as a relational work, so too physics can enter the public realm of art to prod a great many non-scientific “viewers” to enact changes of consciousness, and to convey knowledge in roundabout, indefinable ways. In the larger, ideal, move to democratize knowledge, this encounter in RAW DATA activates the permeability between different bodies of knowledge. A democratization of knowledge is possible, but the outcome is uncertain. At the end of the “translation hub” event, one of the physicist collaborators, Tim Meyer, made the following observation: what artists wrestle with here is like doing science—trying to approach the underlying “theory.” He went on to say that when scientists attempt to access an underlying theory, they are trying to extract a “signal” out of the static. And they try to separate out the human element in this process. In contrast, he said, the artists in RAW DATA brought the human element back into science.

The experiment of RAW DATA functions within relational aesthetics as a way to bring together fields of experience that have been held apart. Artworks become the linking elements. The question of what knowledge is produced, as if there could be a dominant answer, is perforce discovered to be the wrong question. The expectant perspective of a landscape of knowledge arising from these linkages offers the view of transformations, and the possibility of new paths—that is certain. But – true to the inevitable link to quantum reality – the knowing remains unpredictable, open-ended, in flux, and necessarily, (if surprisingly to a world that wants the concrete), uncertain, in order to continue this experiment of transformation – this moving – between different worlds.

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Credits
All photos by Koenig, Schild & Hufschmid, if not otherwise noted. Some parts of this article are excerpted from a text by Schild & Hufschmid “Eine Genealogie von Wirkungen,” published (in German) in: Jäger, Dagmar; Franke, Vera; Schild, Margit; Hasselbach, Julia v.; Hufschmid, Elvira et al. (eds.): Künstlerische Transformationen: Modelle kollektiver Kunstproduktion und der Dialog zwischen den Künsten, Berlin 2010.

An unpublished reader on Artistic Transformation (in English) is available on request from margit.schild@gmx.de.

Endnotes


3. ibid.

4. “Artistic Transformation” serves as a definition of a specifically initiated transformation process within the context of an artistic project where participants take their inspiration from the work of a predecessor to create their own work. The process is marked by the strategic application of rules and restrictions, for the reception and transformation of predetermined works within a fixed time frame. A number of steps defines the artistic activity pattern and generates an intentionally transforming form of art production. The participating protagonists are systematically organised into a sequence provoking a series of artistic-creative actions that in turn result in a combination of works.


6. “Neutrino oscillation” is a term used in physics, describing an extraordinary behaviour of subatomic particles called neutrinos that occur in three different “flavour” varieties. On their way from the sun to the earth (or in fact whenever they travel) they frequently change their “flavour” and can arrive at earth very different from how they started. Simply stated, we don’t know why that happens. And the answer may hold the key to the origins of the universe itself! (Tim Meyer, TRIUMF)

7. The RAW DATA process finally resulted in a public “translation hub” workshop with physicists and artists after a two month process. The artworks were reviewed in the context of the “AICAD Remaking Research Symposium” at Emily Carr University of Art & Design, Vancouver, in November 2012.

8. The physicists pursued a “cold reading” of the artworks—they described what they perceived and noted their immediate associations.

10. ibid.

11. ibid.


13. ibid.

14. ibid.


19. ibid.


Three Poems by Thomas R. Smith

The Andromeda Galaxy

Looking up past immense grandfather pines at midnight, I glimpse the Swan on her diamond-dust flyway. From an open field I can see all the silver Mardi Gras beads the sky has strewn about her black room.

It’s so hard to grasp each for what it is, a single body at the center of its own immensity! The mind insists on threading them together in shapes that seem to have something to do with our lives here on earth.

So it is with all lost travelers at sea encouraged by some distant glow. Even so, I can’t explain the excitement I feel out here on a side-arm of our galaxy, staring up through its Milky center, having for the first time located that incomprehensibly more distant galaxy, Andromeda, represented by the merest smudge of spectral fuzz in the lenses of my binoculars.
The Shoes in the Wastebasket

At the laundromat, unwilling, 
for reasons unclear even to me, 
to throw the holey sock in the garbage 
but instead taking it home 
to throw away there (as if such 
intimate items require 
appropriate home burial), 
I suddenly remember 
the pair of chocolate-brown 
suede Land’s End slip-ons, 
loose and dusty and thin- 
soled with wear, I left 
behind in a wastebasket in 
a dorm room off Victoria 
Station in London in September 
’08, the day the financial collapse 
hit the front page: 
it now strikes me as unaccountably 
strange that I should have 
deposited those two companions 
who walked every step of my 
travels as near to me 
as anything could possibly be 
consigned to a fate generally 
known yet utterly unknown 
in its particulars, no doubt 
contributing their double quanta 
to the wave of landfill 
braking in slow motion 
at a billion tonnes a day 
over what we used to call 
our world, infinitesimal 
pieces in an interlocking puzzle 
in constant, accelerating motion, 
mixing and remixing endlessly 
the effluvia of our increasingly 
manic consumption, farther 
and farther away from some 
ideal original purity 
to a confused mingling only 
God himself could sort out.
Taking Off My Glasses

So much of life now lived
in this house of correction—
correction of vision, that is.
I take off my glasses,
climb out the window,
make my getaway. Lenses
create a deceptive clarity,
resolve lines to a cleanness
untrue to nature.
Up close, it’s gaps and
fractals all the way down.
I remember the revelation
of mescaline at the Skycrest
Motel in 1969,
the mint cinder block walls
riddled with irregularities,
whole mass somehow curdled
(green cottage cheese, we called it),
the fire retardant tile ceiling
in motion like sea grass,
not a straight line in sight.
Now it floods back,
the illusion again dispelled,
as I walk naked-faced
this winter street
down which is rolling
the yellow
bowling ball of the sun.
It is almost too much,
instantaneous
direct hook-up with reality,
gone the definition that misleads
us into separateness, the avalanche
of glacial luminosity revealing
perhaps more truly in its
vast blurriness the world
as it is, its enormity
soluble only in light.
Pullen intentionally shifts her work between the everyday and the esoteric as she pursues projects that give structure to the essential uncertainty and randomness of the universe. Drawn to quantum theory as a discipline that embraces these notions, Pullen collaborated with engineers and astrophysicists to create sculptures to house devices that detect cosmic rays as they pass through our earthly environments. The Cloud Chamber was one of the results. Cosmic rays are invisible, omnipresent, energetic phenomena that originate in outer space. In order to see them, specific environmental conditions must be established and maintained; analog technology of the physics lab from the mid-twentieth century rests inside Pullen’s sculptures. In The Cloud Chamber, a sealed, windowed compartment contains warm isopropyl
alcohol that evaporates above a cold plate refrigerated at -96° F. When a cosmic ray passes through this super-cooled mist a contrail is formed.


Colour [is] ubiquitous and immersive. Talking about either is like describing water to a fish.

Maps, Flesh

& the Radicant

Figure 1. A/r/tography Board. Emily Miller, 2011, mixed-media collage on Masonite board.
Mobilizing the Expressive Arts and Arts-Based Research to do a Conceptual Translation of “Science-as-Usual”

Kelly Clark/Keefe
Jessica Gilway
and Emily Miller

Introduction

In 1991, feminist philosopher and social scientist Sandra Harding forwarded her detailed argument about the crucial role feminism had in disrupting what she and others at the time referred to as “science-as-usual.” Hers was a critique made within the context of a call for “better science, including providing more empirically adequate and theoretically less biased and distorted descriptions and explanations of women, men, gender relations, and the rest of the social and natural worlds, including how the sciences did, do, and could function” (p. 1). Indeed, since 1962 when Thomas Kuhn’s landmark text, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, was first published, historians and postmodern philosophers of science have held the central mission of “ outing” science as non-objective, and proclaiming every scientist as always already working within relations of power.

One grouping of alternative social science designs and methods that have been set in motion by postmodernity’s critique of science-as-usual finds its particular force and rhythm at the apex of one of research’s most enduring dichotomies—art versus science. Variously defined and highly diverse in application and approach, arts-based research has, for the past two and a half decades, been sweeping across the social sciences. Hailed as “a milestone in the evolution of qualitative
research methodologies” (Knowles & Cole, 2008, p. xii.), arts-based research functions as nothing less than a provocation, opening-up previously un-thought considerations and responses to such common-sense questions as: “What counts as data?” and “What makes our research valid?” Researchers all over the world demonstrating and/or theorizing the arts as a mode and subject of scholarly inquiry, as well as a method of representation, have, in the wake of these debates, found ample avenues for growing a diverse field of arts-oriented social inquiry and engaging interdisciplinary audiences. In 2008, the first detailed edited Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research (Knowles & Cole) was published, marking a watershed moment for arts-based researchers interested in expanding and legitimizing their interests surrounding the use of the arts in social and human inquiry.

Simultaneous to postmodernity’s march across the social scientific landscape and the emergence of alternatives such as arts-oriented methodologies, scholars and practitioners in fields formed in the service of understanding and helping people – namely, psychology and psychotherapy – have been engaging in their own field-clearing efforts. Revolutionary new human services fields have surfaced, challenging the entrenchment of modernist Western worldviews that hold fast to a priori categories of what it means to be human and to experience reality on the basis of a fundamental split between mind and body, culture and nature, self and the material world. The field of expressive arts therapy, as the readership of this journal can attest, is one such revolutionary arrival (Atkins, 2002; Knill, Levine & Levine, 2005; Levine & Levine, 1999; McNiff, 2004; Rogers, 2000). For almost three decades, its founders have been putting to work lessons learned from postmodernist arguments about the role of art-making, discourse, power, and the material world, including the body, in analyzing the very premises upon which understandings of and pathways for healing the human condition have historically been formed.

It is at the interstices of the parallel movements of arts-based research and the field of expressive arts that this article is situated. The three authors of this article have each been engaged in the study of expressive arts principles and practices, and all are arts-based researchers. Conversations about our independent as well as collective engagement across these two domains have helped us see where they touch; where a mutual set of aims and purposes could be generative of a whole host of new possibilities.

The work invites readers to consider the limitations of thinking and doing “science-as-usual,” of holding to only common-sense conceptualizations of what counts as research, evidence, validity, and the like. It does so by bringing into dialogue the two perspectives of expressive arts and arts-based research. Each
of these perspectives is mobilized to conduct a conceptual translation of a specific set of terms – data, analysis, and representation – that, taken together, coagul and constrain what we understand to be scientific inquiry. A translation-in-action follows, whereby the three authors each take a turn at describing and illustrating specific ways in which they enfold an expressive arts social science into their research process.

Emily’s “Data” in Translation: Mapping “Woman,” “Craft,” and the Influence of Metanarratives with (C)A/R/Tography Boards

Conventional wisdom surrounding the term “data” implies a collection of objective truths later analyzed and eventually presented for academic consumption through traditional representation. When thought through expressive arts principles and practices, data challenges these traditional notions. The clear lines between data collection and data creation begin to erode. Our reality is constructed and held hostage by metanarratives or grand narratives, which are bereft of complexity. To collect data in the midst of a grand narrative serves only to reproduce the narrative. The postmodern condition requires that we reject and deconstruct these hegemonic narratives (Lyotard, 1984). As we abandon our singular grand narratives, we must engage new methodologies to map our research territory. Researchers must find ways to sort out the “altermodern” web of experience, which does not easily lend itself to inquiry (Bourriaud, 2010). I use an adaptation of Knill’s (2005) architecture of the therapeutic experience to engage the arts and help broaden the inquiry field. Toward these ends, I create a/r/tography boards centering on individual subjects, questions, and issues, yet not separate from my research or even my research identity as a whole. Many new insights, threads in the tapestry of my research projects, become available through these boards.

A/r/tography boards emerged for me out of desperation. I had set about trying to complete a piece of writing and was experiencing difficulty in sustaining a/r/tographic thought. I would characterize a/r/tographic thought as a type of thinking that is engaged through a web-like, shifting, impermanent structure of reality. Processing my inquiry project through an a/r/tographic lens enabled me to shift out of a mechanistic, Newtonian, truth seeking,
I began with a piece of Masonite propped against the wall next to my writing station. I pasted a/r/tographic language to the board (e.g., entangles, rhizomatic, interstitial, blurs, liminal, troubles, etc…). The board facilitated my suspension of knowing and thereby sustained a non-conclusive, web-like mode of thinking and analysis. Data and analysis are not quite separate in this process. The board is a practical reminder to meander through my topic. I wrote and pinned things to the board at the same time. As I ran across language, I did Google image searches for corresponding images. I encountered ideas in my writing and looked for ways to express them on the board. The writing slipped over into the board and the board slipped over into the writing. The pieces began to reverberate and allow for a multiplicity of meaning and form, which is appropriate for postmodern fracturing and reforming, deconstruction and reconstruction (Figure 1).

After finishing the piece of writing and the a/r/tography board, I created a second piece of writing in which I explored what the board had to offer my research project. The process became heavily worded and cognitive at this point. I began to analyze how the images and language took shape on the board, what the symbols meant for my subject. The knowledge which sprung from that first a/r/tography board shifted my way of knowing the world, reframed my research project, created new lines of flight, and connected disparate notions. The a/r/tography board became a map, a cartographic representation of the issues I explored. This artistic process helped yield knowledge that could not have emerged from traditional scientific methods in which we can only study what we think we already know.

Qualitative researchers put great effort into recognizing subjectivity in data collection and analysis. Arts-based inquiry provides a path to bypass personal narratives about the nature of the world. Arts-based research methods don’t abandon subjectivity—instead, they amplify it in such a way that we tap into a suspension of knowledge. We put our knowing on the shelf and move into an epistemology that does not rely on a linear narrative of knowing. We cease to privilege cognitive thinking and in so doing bypass the narratives which frame our reality. This disruption of a linear or grand narrative enables us to supersede, or at least account for, the history-laden metaphor of language in poststructural analysis. Further, arts-based research creates avenues for the merging of research identities, for multiplicities.

A/r/tography boards enable a more adequate cartography of our position
as nomadic subjects so that we may be able to think with/in and outside the hegemony of metanarrative discourses, “modes of representation and forms of accountability that are adequate to the complexities of the real-life world” (Braidotti, 2006, p. 7). Arts-based research moves data collection into the realm of data creation, and in so doing, enables the possibility of change, a flight from the limited narratives that construct our reality.

Kelly’s “Analysis” in Translation: Attuning to Material-Discursive Data and Attending via Poiesis During Somatographic Inquiry

It is well known that in much traditional social scientific research, coding functions as the cognitive tool by which researchers analyze or think through previously collected data, identifying “chunks” of mainly narrative or survey response data that have been determined to be salient, discrepant, or meaningful in some way. A progressive process of sorting, categorizing and defining, the goal of this type of analysis is to make comparisons, establish connections, generate themes, illuminate findings, and otherwise converge on a set of explanations as to what data mean. For the past 15 years, I have been experimenting with analysis practices that place emphasis on the sensorium or the fleshy, sensory register of data, including out-of-category or transgressive data (St. Pierre, 1997), such as dream and emotional response data. In 2010 (Clark/Keefe), I began referring to these analysis practices and their productions as somatography: a methodology grounded in an intense attunement to the deep noticing and noting of the bodily as well as discursive elements of subjectivity, and to the poiesis, or creativity, of subjective emergences. With an affinity for the principles and practices of decentering from an expressive arts perspective, somatographic analysis practices involve mobilizing body-based and arts-informed techniques that help researchers follow, trace, ride or otherwise come into deep relation with the palpating forces of the data themselves. More rather than less divergent in its aims, somatographic analysis seeks to transpose the ego-indexed representational impulse circulating through the conventional analytical question “what does the data mean?” into a relationship with data that is instead grounded in the question “what does the data do?” Data and the process and relations by which it becomes meaningful is extended and attended to via poiesis. Borrowing from philosopher and expressive arts theorist Stephen K. Levine’s (2012) investments in the term, “poiesis implies the possibility of new beginnings and, in particular, of the possibility of the arts playing a central role in what is to come” (p. 7). Through foregrounding poiesis during somatographic research, I begin to see the work and worth of shifting the conventional term “analysis” away from its habitual moorings as something signifying the cognitive act of categorizing, translating it instead as a term that signals the creative thresholds through which the data are becoming expressive; a translation I believe is worth pursuing.

In practical terms, somatographic analysis has involved a) attuning to material-discursive data (data of bodily, spoken, and other natural as well as cultural features emerging in the field of inquiry) through deep noticing and visual/textual noting and b) attending via poiesis, or creativity, to data’s provocations and the inquiry process itself through making art. I am trained as an ethnographer and often begin fieldwork by observing the phenomena
of interest, utilizing a split-page approach as Glesne (2012) and others describe. This means I “split” my field log page in half vertically (I most often use a 9”x12” sketchbook), noting on the left-hand “descriptive” side, concrete details about who is present, what activities are underway, how the physical space appears, and so on. Resisting the impulse to begin making connections or links to what I think I see and know, I hold open and eventually begin to enter the right-hand “analysis” side of my split page by tracing the data’s influence. More specifically, on the analysis side of my field log, I follow an embodied register of what the data are doing, making textual and visual notings (through, for example, gestural drawings, tonal variations, handwriting, and so on). Mark-making follows the bodily as well as voiced features and the effects and affects of discursively-material subjects—of me in relation with others and in relation to the cultural, physical, and social-environmental flows in the inquiry event. The image on the left (Figure 2) provides an example from my field log of what emerged under analytical conditions while conducting a recent research project among a group of university undergraduate art students (see Clark/Keefe, 2012). The guiding question for this project was: How is it to be in the process of becoming artists and becoming educated?

Figure 2. Artist Statement's Antagonisms
Kelly Clark/Keefe, 2010, 9”x12”, mixed media on paper.
giving an oral presentation of their artist’s statements; an iconic and notoriously demanding exercise of encapsulating and sharing aloud what a given artist’s intentions are for a specific body of work. In my field log/sketchbook, I worked to follow the event of students’ presentations. In other words, in a preliminary analytic stance toward attuning to what the data were doing, I engaged in tracing, through line and form, the sensation of how students’ attempts to articulate their written “statements” related to their largely ineffable art practices and beliefs were becoming an entangled set of corporeal and inter-corporeal performative antagonisms for them and for me watching/listening to them. Mark-making on the analysis side of my split field log page while in this dynamic inquiry fold involved getting out of the way of recognizing and categorizing what each student was saying and instead meeting through analytic art-making the how it was to be coming into meaning.

Attuning during observations grew more intense as I began attending to the data during later analysis via more elaborate art making. Working with all collected somatographic data (narrative and visual noticings, reflective memos from dream, emotional, and other physiological response data, etc.), I began to gravitate to specific art media because of their physical possibilities for creatively meeting and holding open a space for the form and force of (in the case of this artist statement fieldwork event) speech-centric bias, transient precariousness, and the picked and stitched-passageways of language’s ordering effects on art and life’s multiplicities. I began tearing specific pages from three texts (Gawain’s Creative Visualization, 1978; DeSalvo’s memoir, Vertigo, 1996; and Northrup’s Women’s Bodies, Women’s Wisdom, 1998). These pages were then manipulated and pasted onto 9”x12” drawing paper. Nepalese rice paper skin arrived as the most sense-able layer to enact a series of thresholds through which further material/bodily incitements and alterations could emerge.

The challenge of analysis in somatography, then, becomes to make observable the active body-with-mind passageways that are the phenomenon under study. Observable not in the sense of achieving an objectivist’s gaze, but in the sense of something a researcher-artist is able to share by way of occupying a gap between acts of certain translation; between what is known and what is becoming known, where things aren’t so clear. I view this as akin to what Knill, Levine, and Levine (2005) describe in their accounting for artistic making, as is understood within the framework of a Dionysian poiesis:

The role of the artist or poet is not to impose a pre-existing form upon senseless matter but to allow material to find its own sense. What is primary is what is given, a chaos of meanings, which demands assistance in order to come-into-form. (p. 40)

Somatographic analysis, as an act of engaging the arts, challenges and subverts conventional wisdom about the researcher’s role in making valid connections and passing along systematically arrived at “truths.” It is analysis as a co-implicative and deeply relational process for creatively holding data’s material-discursive nature and incitements, buffering the humanist impulse to rush to judgment, and for enlarging the imagination of what could be rather than what is.
Jessica’s “Representation” in Translation:
Becoming the Radicant through *Choreopoiesis* as a Way to Share What Emerges

Choreopoiesis

Dream, drum, dance, then ask
responding to heart and soul
with grace, smile, and hope

journeywork, my path
to peace, and sustaining self
in collective space

research? grows from heart/
soul work. Affirming we/me,
re-presenting breath

risking all to dance
dissonance boldly as
scholar, artist, self.

This radicant dance
reaches out to re-present
leader with beauty.

Conventional wisdom surrounding the term representation implies the convenient mapping of relationships between variables. When thought through expressive arts principles and practices, research representations become a merging of variables into a collective whole. While I recognize that there is value in representing “data” in charts and graphs and thematic “findings,” there is equal value in recognizing the kinds of knowing that happen in the arts. In thinking representation through the arts, we grant ourselves the unique opportunity to re-present our own and/or our subjects understanding(s) of the work as it unfolds, unfurls, and elaborates itself into multiple, creative iterations of a collective journey. Through this re-envisioning of re-presentation, a translation occurs where the collective (subject/topic/researcher) “translates itself into the terms of the space in which it moves” (Bourriaud, 2010, p. 51). What space does this re-envisioning of representation move in? For me, it is a creative space; a movement space, an embodied space, a collective space, and a generative space where the artful journeywork of scholarship takes root. In this space, I am a *radicant* artist/researcher, setting her forms of nomadic scholarship into motion – spinning, dancing and twirling – and
using expressive forms emerging from my inquiry. Bourriaud (2010) invokes the radicant as the researcher who finds her/himself situated as an artistic, ecological “individual… (who) resembles plants that do not depend on a single root for their growth but advance in all directions on whatever surfaces present themselves by attaching multiple hooks to them, as ivy does” (p. 51). In conceptualizing myself and my work through the image of the radicant, what I come to know emerges less as representations of something I recognize or know and more as provocations; as what Bourriaud (2010) attests are the aims of the radicant, to “generate journeys by which [data and the author] elaborate themselves as subjects even as the corpus of their work takes shape” (p. 53).

Translation of the term “representation” commenced for me as a series of haikus that were created in reflexive response to using movement as a form of re-presenting my own understanding of the role that educational leaders play in the current socio-political landscape. School leaders (principals or directors) are traditionally represented in Western nations in a highly conventional way. Ubben, Hughes and Norris (2011) frame the conditions by which school leaders are expected to operate as follows; “First, principals must be accountable for the academic progress of all of students entrusted to their care. Second, they must facilitate the social and emotional development of all students” (p. 3). However, through both a conceptual analysis of the term “leading subject” and from my own experiences as an educational leader, I have discovered that some arts-based educational leaders (like me) literally and figuratively find themselves dancing dissonance and avoiding the temptation to ascribe to such binaristic thinking: right/wrong, responsibility/accountability, manager/leader, inspirer/director, artist/scholar.

Poems, such as the one used to open this section, have often arrived as a freeing form for representing my analysis. According to McNiff (2009), “The poem is a glimpse catcher, holding onto something that would be lost” (p. 216). As a practicing educationally leading subject and researcher, I often find myself at a loss to convey my experiences. With McNiff’s (2009) image of the “glimpse catcher,” I translate through intermodal lenses my analytical thinking, where meaningful representation through poetry helps me represent the embodied and partially ineffable essence of the struggles I face as “leader” on a daily basis.

In addition to poetry, I have experimented with how to use dance as an expressive arts-based form of research representation. Both musical arrangement and interpretive dance were utilized in these efforts as reflective and generative tools for better understanding, dislodging and expressing the tensions between different philosophical perspectives on what it means to be an educational leader. In exposing these tensions, this work explored the value of a positive, emancipatory shift in educational leadership juxtaposed with maintenance of the status quo. The use of dance to represent my thinking created for me an intersection between the scholarly, practical, and methodological discourses engaged to elucidate my journey toward becoming a leading subject. This intersection was, and still is, the place where the scholarly tensions that emerge in dialogue with each other are brought to light and then danced into life.
In practical terms, representation of what I had been studying by way of dominant discourses of “leadership for excellence in schools” (Ubben, et. al, 2011) emerged in a set of choreographed movements intended to reverberate with the discourse’s paternalistic and colonial nature. These elements of analysis-through-movement were then elaborated and put in direct bodily dialogue with feminist and critical theorist leadership discourse—which together formed a type of *choreopoiesis*. The objective of this productive dialogue was to help me self-reflexively deconstruct my own narratives in relation to all-too-common ones about educational leaders.

Engaging in choreopoiesis in this figure meant taking musical scores from one genre—Mozart’s Symphony #38 in D Major (Prague), listening to it call for the tones and rhythms from other diverse genres, such as Celtic (The Chieftains) and African/Afro-Caribbean drums and vocals. The dialogical dancing between the musical discourses became more heated and tense as the tempo picked up and the movement piece progressed. The piece ends with no visible point of romantic closure or resolution; the viewer knows only that the discordance and dissonance were *danced*.

The combined use of dance, music, poetry, and photography creatively animates discourses that are disparate and often do not come into contact in meaningful ways. One might even argue that these discourses are intentionally kept at a distance from each other to prevent this rich and generatively danced discussion from occurring. The feelings of irresolution, rupture, and fissure that inspired this piece still persist,

![Figure 3. Dancing the Dissonance Resonating from my Nomadic Subjectivities. By Gilway, 2012, photo collage.](image-url)
as the purpose was not resolution. The only way out seems to be to move and to move into deep affiliation with the rupture; a place where a third way leaks out and a new pathway for journeywork begins.

**Opened Endings**

In Chapter 2 of Levine and Levine’s (1999) edited volume, *Foundations of Expressive Arts Therapy*, Paolo Knill writes:

> Realities and their distinctions are a matter of the historical and linguistic discourse we are in. Any distinction, however, does not necessarily make the experiential effect of one reality more “real” than the other… It is in the degree of opening to each other in communal engagement versus aloneness that makes all the difference, as the world coming forth will always be also hidden and concealed. (p. 41)

The very important and complex set of ideas and challenges that Knill invites with these three sentences leads us to the belief that our experience of reality, our ability to distinguish one thing or effect from another, is at least in part due to the narratives, the various discourses we encounter and their very real material effects. Knill also helps us understand that as much as we recognize the world (and ourselves in it) as “reality,” there are always already excesses, hidden elements, and secrets to our experiences. In this work, the discourse of “science-as-usual” is placed in productive relationship with expressive arts and arts-based research discourses. In so doing, we see a powerful translation of data, analysis, and representation ensue, opening each term so that we may better, and through art-making, see its hidden elements and ride on its possibilities, its empowering secrets and excesses. Bringing the perspectives of expressive arts therapy and its practices into dialogue with arts-based research methodologies and approaches has meant, for us, a deep desire in communicating a mutual set of aims and purpose; namely that we need to work, together whenever possible, to press open the discourses in which we find ourselves, explore the meanings they have come to hold for us, and then co-construct and put to work in an intermodal language of imagination to see and experience how they (the discourses of science-as-usual and their very material effects) and we in the process could be more positively and productively otherwise.

Jessica Gilway is a dancing scholar, arts-based researcher, and educational leader involved in doctoral studies at Appalachian State University. Her research explores the embodied nature of leadership using poetry, movement, and Expressive Arts Therapy. Jessica engages in the “job of journeywork” as she dances dissonance in
search of sustainable leadership.

**Emily Miller** is an artist, researcher and teacher engaged in doctoral studies at Appalachian State University. She has spent the last several years exploring the intersection of human production practices, economics, and well being. Emily’s dissertation research is deeply informed by Expressive Arts Therapy and Arts-based Research Practices.

**Kelly Clark/Keefe:** is Associate Professor and Doctoral Faculty in the Reich College of Education at Appalachian State University. An arts-based researcher, she uses material feminist and poststructural theories to examine the role of bodies, subjectivity, and creativity in education and in social scientific research. She is the author of *Invoking Mne-mosyne: Art, Memory, and the Uncertain Emergence of a Feminist Embodied Methodology*.

**Endnotes**

1. See especially Barone and Eisner, 2012; Cahnmann-Taylor, M. & Siegesmund, R., 2008; Finely, S., 2003; Knowles, J. G. & Cole, A. L. (Eds.), 2008; and Leavy, P., 2009 for developmental perspectives on and comprehensive overviews and examples of the arts in qualitative research. For earlier discussions shaping the arts-in-inquiry movement and the debates surrounding mergers between social scientists and artists see: Barone, 2001; Eisner, 1995, 2002; Sandelowski, 1994; and Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005. Tom Barone, Elliot Eisner, Karen Finley, Maggie MacLure, and current and former members of the Canadian-based Centre for Arts-Informed Research (http://www.utoronto.ca/CAIR/air-chome3.html) have explored with vigor the contentious and fecund space where aesthetics, embodiment, and communication of social meaning overlap. See also Irwin & de Cosson (Eds.), 2004; Springgay, S., 2008, and the A/R/Tography homepage (http://m1.cust.educ.ubc.ca/Artography/), where comprehensive lists of relevant publications, conferences, communities of scholars, and other resources are compiled.

2. One of the authors (Kelly) has been conducting arts-based research mainly in educational contexts since the mid-1990s and has been at the forefront of scholars studying and writing about its power and promise in understanding concepts relevant to the study of subjectivity and to the study of the social sciences themselves (Clark/Keefe, 2006a, 2006b, 2009, 2010, 2012). Kelly has been in dialogue around the potential of the expressive arts in relation to arts-based research since first being introduced to the field of expressive arts research by her colleague and friend, Sally Atkins, at Appalachian State University. This introduction was extended and deepened immeasurably by being invited into the European Graduate School community last summer, where she delivered the community lecture and visited with students and faculty during their research coursework. The remaining authors (Emily and Jessica) both engage arts-based research as a methodology for their dissertation work at Appalachian State University in conjunction with the Expressive Arts Therapy program and as an inquiry practice in their professional lives.

3. In 2006, two German researchers, Stefan Beck and Jörg Niewöhner (2006), used the term somatography in an article published in
the journal Biosocieties to describe what they viewed as three sets of issues compelling the need to develop investigative strategies for “symmetrical” investigations across epistemic cultures. Briefly stated, these issues included a) looping effects or influences of differentiated pathways between, for example, medical diagnosis and what they describe as “self-hood,” b) advancements in the understanding of epigenetic regulation, and c) the incorporation of the social into medical domains more generally. Their chief interest in this work was in calling for further investigations into the importance of integrating the perspectives of medical/socio-cultural anthropology and science and technology studies. While I remain very intrigued with their agenda and share their desire for more transdisciplinary studies that move us away from either over-essentialized conceptualizations of the body or the absence of biological markers and agency in social explanations, my use of the term somatography seemingly departs from Beck and Niewöhner’s on the basis of one key point; I am not invested in epistemic practices and aims which continue to re-install the dominant conceptualization of unitary ‘identity’, which equates consciousness, rationality, and individualism as the engine for human development.

References


McNiff, S. (2004). Art Heals: How Cre-


Love Letters, Notes and Post Cards
About Pedagogy, Ways of Knowing, and Arts-Based Research

Vachel Miller
Katrina Plato
Kelly Clark/Keefe
John Henson
and Sally Atkins
Dear John,

I am having the most amazing time at EGS. In a moment I will be giving the community lecture here and I am nervous, but also exhilarated, having met so many of the students, staff, and faculty associated with this magical school in the Alps. I want to write more, and will later, but for now I just wanted you to know that I am carrying your question about the role of creativity and the arts in inquiry into my lecture. As with all things art, I intend to go into the lecture expecting the unexpected and hope I will come out the other side with new insights.

Mary soon, Kelly

To: Master John Person
App State, NC

John,

I love so many things; inquiry, collaboration, creativity, artistic expression, binaries, starting from the middle, multiple representations of truth!

Kelly

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT? While I am deeply moved by thoughts of creative forms of inquiry, I am also burdened with thoughts of needing to create a credible dissertation. Shoulde I be concerned with conforming to the socially accepted forms/discourses of writing and research that dominate the world of academics? Isn't a dissertation designed to provide doctoral students with an opportunity to conduct research and formal writing in a way that will prepare them for the type of work they will likely be asked to do in when working in higher education? If I am seeking employment at the university level, shouldn't I stick to socially/professionally acceptable forms of inquiry?

- John

To: Kelly Clark, Keefe
Lofty Land of Academia
College of Education
Boone, NC 28607
Dear John,

In many ways, I feel as though you are carrying the questions of so many, perhaps most, graduate students who have dared enter into this conversation about arts-based research—questions of legitimacy, transferability, and the like. I wrote in my own arts-informed dissertation, completed in 1999, that engaging creativity while doing research was not for the faint of heart. When last we met, you wondered with a bit of worry: “Shouldn’t I be concerned with conforming to the socially accepted forms of writing and research that dominate the world of academics? Isn’t a dissertation designed to provide doctoral students with an opportunity to conduct research and formal writing in a way that will prepare them for the type of work they will likely be asked to do when working in higher education?” I think you are prudent to ask these questions, John. I also think, alongside you, that it is important for graduate students to understand and become skilled at what most would recognize as conventional academic research and reporting prose. And yet I am halted by the words in your query: “that will prepare them for the type of work they will likely be asked to do when working in higher education.” It is precisely what has become “likely” in higher education—a climate of having to do “science as usual”—which compels me to introduce and encourage arts-based alternatives. It is the less likely that I hope to foster. Do you think engagement in the arts can bring forth what we currently cannot recognize by way of positive affiliations and peaceful solutions to social and human problems? Do you see potential value in learning and practicing creative approaches to research, despite or perhaps precisely because of its marginal status in the academy? Still, it may be too much, too risky. I am anxious to hear what you believe.

Love, Kelly
I am simultaneously bursting with excitement to explore creative forms of expression; multi-modality potential, video production, eBooks, as well as physically tangible forms of creative expression.

Academic research can become locked in concrete reference to a specific time, place, and event. I feel that artistic expression has the potential to shed this concrete baggage in exchange for a mode of communication (or a language) that transcends the specific moment in time to connect the reader’s mind, body, and soul thus creating a more compelling, perhaps more generalizable, text.

- John

John.

Dr. Sally Atkins has just published an article about mentoring arts-based dissertations. Be sure to take a look. I believe it will inform our methods of research project.

- Katrina

On Wed, Oct 24, 2012

Katrina & John,

It’s wonderful to see your energy around arts-based research and alternative inquiry. A couple of years ago, I drafted an article about alternative dissertations which is now gathering electronic dust in my computer. Would you be interested in expanding this piece together? Perhaps it connects with Sally’s article.

Let’s play.

Unconventionally yours,

Vachel

I ask, is pleasure worth an A?

An educator who wrote his dissertation in the form of a novel, Jason Lukasik, argues that a publicly accessible form of scholarship invites dialogue with a broader audience. Writing in the form of story enables the scholar to produce more animated work. Lukasik reflects on his own motivation to write a novel: “I seek to move beyond the iron bars of traditional academic writing” (2010, p. 86).

By moving beyond those bars, Lukasik is able to “fuse the literature of the mind with the literature of the soul, the language of scholarship with the language of spirit” (2010, p. 91). This brings us to a root question: is there space for soulfully engaged scholarship? In a radical moment, I imagine new criteria for evaluating the quality of a dissertation: is it intellectually provocative and enjoyable to read? Is there pleasure—including the pleasure of uncomfortable questions—waiting to be found in the encounter with this text? Or non-text?

Vachel

Dear Katrina, John, and Sally,

Well, Vachel has done it again. Did you three get his last note? Incitement this time comes in the form of questions about pleasure in relation to dissertation scholarship. He wonders about soulfully engaged scholarship and begins imagining new criteria for evaluating such work. Incorporating pleasure into a rubric for deciding quality and worth in doctoral studies? Revolutionary maybe, but shouldn’t we be concerned about inviting a moral panic? Michalinos Zembylas (2007) asks a similar question, installing an enduring caution as well as a note of hope along the way: “Can desire be pedagogically useful as that which produces and seduces imaginations instead of being associated simply with repression and coercion?” (p. 332) Mobilizing desire may be risky. Grading pleasure may be only nearly possible and certainly quite radical.

Yours in desire, Kelly


Post Card

Kelly & Sally,

Danger ahead. Opening spaces for creative, integrative inquiry in doctoral programs may place faculty “at the edge of incompetence” (Saks, 1996, p. 412) — a place many of us would rather not go. How do I evaluate and support aesthetically-oriented work that I don’t have the talent or training to produce myself? Can I stand on that edge with any scholarly confidence? Arts-based inquiry, as much as sophisticated statistics, reminds me how narrow the bandwidth of my competence is. I need to stick to text, even while I hope you can go beyond it.

LImitedly yours,
Vachel

Dear Vachel and Sally,

I wanted to write and tell you that in my courses, I am witnessing Katrina and John, along with several other doctoral students, as deeply creative souls who are beginning to soar with the possibilities of doing inquiry and writing in the academy anew! You two and I have seen this before; the arts take hold and a transformation of sorts is set in motion. As you know, I am with you in terms of opening spaces for creative, integrative inquiry in doctoral programs. I am also, though, asking similar questions as you both are about whether we should be encouraging students to work at the edge of incompetence. What responsibility do we have in warning students (and protecting ourselves) from the naysayers; the many, many others who would deem efforts toward non-traditional approaches as mere play or worse, as irresponsible counsel?

Love, Kelly
At a symposium a few weeks ago, a graduate of our program recalled a children's book from the 1940s that admonished a young locomotive to "Stay on the Rails No Matter What." For doctoral students, to stay on the rails means to complete a dissertation, using an established methodology and organizing one's work in the conventional five-chapter format.

"Staying on the rails may be expedient for completing a degree, but how does it constrain our students' analytic courage and creative spark? How does it limit the kind of knowledge that matters in the world, the kind of people who can create scholarship, and to whom our scholarship speaks?"

Going off the rails,

Vachel

Is a dissertation a good assignment? Why write the thing? Why do we continue to require a form that has limited circulation and limited usefulness? Duke and Beck (1999) point out that the dissertation, as a genre, has no generalizability for the writer, i.e., the writer is unlikely ever to write a dissertation again. The only similar genre with such limited generalizability might be the writer's last will and testament (Duke & Beck, 1999, p. 32). Is a dissertation a poor investment of student and faculty effort, since the learning does not transfer fluidly to future academic/professional writing? Why not offer an assignment that is more authentic to students' work in the world?

A few doctoral programs have opened alternative models for the dissertation, including policy papers or consulting reports. Despite their relevance, such alternatives remain rare, indicating the caution graduate faculty feel about maintaining traditional standards of rigor encoded in the dissertation.

"We guard the tradition, and so how do we open a deeper epistemological diversity in the nature of inquiry and presentation of insight? What about forms of inquiry that throw empirical convention to the wind? How do we know what constitutes good work?"

How do we ensure a student has done the work to earn the degree? I'm stuck in these tensions between safeguarding legitimacy, enabling relevance, and liberating creativity.

Help me out,

Vachel

Friends,

This is what I see as the core argument for deep rethinking of the nature of knowledge production available to doctoral students. When professional educators experience legitimacy, even passion, in the integration of spiritual insight, poetic awareness, creative expression, and rational empiricism, they may feel emboldened to valorize, and themselves encourage, such integrative being and knowing in their own work as educators.

In short, doing the dissertation differently holds a key for a broader transformation of educational purpose and practice.

This is bigger than us.

A narrowly objectivist mode of knowing causes humanity to lose our sense of communion, our belonging, with the world (Wilshire, 2006). We no longer experience other inhabitants in the world as “fellow subjects” who co-participate in the life of the planet. The cost of being modern, for Wilshire, is the loss of a lived experience of interbeing with all that surrounds us. Wilshire explains the effect of an exclusive reliance on objective knowledge:

The enwombing cohesiveness of the sights, sounds, smells of the place one is in, along with the enticements, opportunities, responsibilities, the cohesiveness of the place – the elemental – deserts us. I mean the cycling continuities of Nature actually going on in every place: the humming of crickets in the warm night air; the methodical hooting of owls at midnight; the rustling and whistling of elk; the splashing of fish as one assembles the fishing rod; the age-old freshness of the dawn; the inexorable appearance of the sun (2006, p. 103).

In his poetic evocation of the wonders of awareness, Wilshire is not advocating for a return to a “primitive” mode of being. Rather, he calls for integrative knowing – having the capacity to engage multiple modes of knowing – to narrow our vision for the sake of objective knowledge, with all its uses, while reinvigorating our capacity to “dilate” our knowing, to experience our surroundings as a humming whole. An inclusive approach to knowledge does not deny the importance of objective knowledge, but places it within a broader appreciation of multiple ways of understanding and being in the world. As Wilshire says succinctly, “There are many ways of speaking the truth, and we need them all” (2006, p. 110). Integrative knowing involves an openness to multiple forms and fonts of knowledge: empirical observation, wisdom traditions, self-reflection, and the fleeting moments of intuition—the stuff of poetry, receptive contemplation, and dwelling in a larger field of interconnection with the world.

What if we asked our students to widen, widen, widen? Not to widen their questions to an unmanageable scope, but to widen their awareness, to widen the span of their ways of knowing, to widen their ways of presenting meaningful insights, to widen the possibilities for engaging their audience?

Yes, This is bigger than us.

Vachel

Response to “Dilated Knowing”

Thank you, Vachel, for sharing the ideas with us. His poetic words resonate with me and with many other writers in the fields of ecotherapy and ecophilosophy. Our objectivist mode of knowing, along with our western economic metanarrative, I believe, lie at the heart of our current ecological crises. And we are participatory in teaching the superiority of this way of knowing in higher education. I want a lived experience of belonging in the world, a sense of communion that such writers invoke. I want an epistemology of the senses.

Love, Sally

Vachel Miller
Open Door College of Education
Boone, NC
28609

YES! To all your questions! And YES! to all the beauty and love you bring to education, the arts, and alternative ways of knowing this world and knowing each other. A deep bow, Sally, for being such a real human being. I think that’s what you’re talking about...why can’t we be embodied sensory poetic dancing discovering broken-hearted human beings becoming belonging-in-the-middle of all we do as researchers/teachers?

Why have we let ourselves be less, why have we let education become less, all dry and shriveled, with the false hope that narrowing our scope of being will make life richer? Perhaps all the measurements just bring us closer to bankruptcy.

Life flows through you, and adores your presence. A great big hug of crazy epistemological comradie!

Your friend, Vachel

Vachel and I are inspired to facilitate an art-making experience on research methodologies with our cohort. We believe an arts-making experience will best demystify the often non-discursive arts-based method of gathering and interpreting data towards a new way of knowing.

Following your invitation, we will adapt Laura Rendon’s (2009) research box project as a practical exploration of arts-based research. We hope the research box project will be a successful means for individuals to discover the nature and value of arts-based research for themselves.

My box example describes my journey down the rabbit hole of research. Rabbit ears filled with photos of those I’ve interviewed represent my love of ethnography. Outside the box, the contour portrait represents myself as the researcher. Inside the box, a brain image symbolizes my interest in researching how the arts facilitate the processes of acquiring knowledge.

In Gratitude for the Opportunity,
Katrina

Dear Cohort:

Tonight will be the last time we gather around this table. This weekly assembly, this late and tired Tuesday, where you come for your credits, and I, for my contract, but in that meeting, we find something else emerging.

What is our work here? This work — actually, this serious play — is about opening. The opening of ideas that were closed to us before, the opening of a space where we can claim love of inquiry, love of the world, and a certain love of each other as our purpose.

Committed lovers lay claim to each other’s lives. I don’t want that much, nor do I offer that much. I only want you to know that you are free to proclaim what you most deeply believe — properly cited, of course — and call it legitimate knowledge: free to explore the world in ways that are most life-giving to you; free to represent your knowing in ways that don’t fit in those five chapters that Dr. Creswell told you about. Because that’s what friends do for each other. They help each other believe in themselves, and remind each other to play.

The risk, of course, is that you will realize how little I really know: that I don’t speak with a French poststructural eloquence; and that all that qualifies me to be your teacher is that I got my degree just a few years before you, not by virtue of being any smarter or having read all the books on my shelf (I haven’t: I just keep them there, because my house is full of children.)

What else could we call this, besides critical friendship? One of my patron saints, Parker Palmer, talks about knowing as a form of love that seeks intimacy while honouring otherness, drawing in to a relational community (Palmer, 1998). I’ve long believed that teaching and learning is the reciprocal flow of love, that deep affirming YES we say to each other, that field of shining regard in which I want to hold you, and how I long to be held.

So how shall we name what happens around this table together? Perhaps it is not to be named, only felt. Not knowledge to be discovered, or constructed, or deconstructed. But two hours to enjoy each other’s company; as companions, not one leading the other, just holding each other, and in the holding, opening the world.

Epistemologically yours,

Vachel

All postcards and notes were designed by the authors, with additional design work by Emily Miller, Susan Reed, and Kristin Briggs.
You are cordially invited to add your voice to our conversation.

Please seal all the open edges of your postcard to ensure being accepted by the postal service.

Many thanks.

U. S. A.
28608
Boone, NC
Appalachian State University,
ASU Box 32075,
C/O Dr. Sally Atkins
Love Letters: Reader Response
Sally Atkins is a poet and core faculty at EGS. She is Professor of Human Development and Psychological Counseling at Appalachian State University where she teaches expressive arts therapy and serves on the doctoral program committee. Her most recent book of poetry, with Margo Fuchs Knill, is *And When We Speak*.

Kelly Clark/Keefe: see page 102.

John Henson brings a background in professional photography, video production, technology integration, and curriculum design to his work as both a doctoral student and instructor at Appalachian State University. He is working to incorporate media production and design elements into his research to create texts that are both creative and academically relevant.

Vachel Miller is an Assistant Professor in the Reich College of Education at Appalachian State University. He teaches courses in research methodologies, leadership, and globalization in the doctoral program in educational leadership. He worked as a research/policy specialist on a regional child labour project in East Africa from 2005-2008.

Katrina Plato is an art therapist and art educator. She is presently pursuing a degree in Educational Leadership through Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, as well as the doctoral program in Expressive Arts at EGS. Katrina is passionate about creative arts-based community collaborations in education research.
Accounting for Love
(for Greer)

Wes Chester

What could be more romantic
Than December's credit card bill?
That begins on the second with dinner alone
And ends on the thirty-first with
Champagne for two from Ralph's

In between—
That outfit you wore, stepping off the plane
And into our mutual journey.

Renwood Merlot in Blowing Rock,
And that little statue of liberty we have all wanted
To hold since September.

Dinner at Mama Lena's in Charlotte
With a trunk full of Christmas presents.
And the twelve hundred dollars for an empty box
We filled for shipment with everything I owned.

Here is wine from Harris Teeter,
for our impromptu ceremony.
The crushing of two stemmed glasses
After a toast to the journey
That we are drinking still.

A hotel room in Memphis.
Breakfast in Oklahoma City.
A tank of gas beginning at the
Murrow Federal Building memorial
and ending in Arizona.

Dinner in Santa Fe
The southwest rolling by like a slow motion film.
From the wind-rocked driver's seat of a crowded car.
Bending north towards San Francisco at the California line,
We find a room in
Button Willow,
And Christmas in San Francisco.
Here, we ate, drank and tried desperately to rest.

Cracked Dungeness Crab from the Tower Market
And Cioppino and EXP Syrah,
Enjoyed in Gwen and Christian's tiny dining
Room with a view from Bernal Heights,
Down across the slumped shoulders of San Francisco
Towards Candlestick Park and the South Bay.

Breakfast in San Francisco.
A dinner on Highway One.
Film we will not get developed for months.
Robbed blind for a bed in Carpenteria.

In the morning gasoline, on the edge of the
Driving hell that is LA—
San Diego draws little closer for three, then four hours
And then suddenly we are in the county.
In the city. On the street. At the door.
Home.

Six months later,
I enter the last figures in the accounting program.
You are due from work soon.
Tired, and no doubt
Ready to collapse.
But I have seen 3000 miles today
And a lifetime of goodbyes.

The bookkeeping is done.
And I am happy
And in love
The road still rushing under my feet
The journey continual
Each day some new decision;
An accounting to be done.
How will we
Spend us?
Sing or Sink in the Mud

Judith Greer Essex

It was the Poetry Intensive at the Expressive Arts Institute, San Diego with Elizabeth Gordon McKim. Nine muses, students of the oral tradition, sat in a circle. A large lump of gray river clay went from hand to hand while Elizabeth chanted, sang and spoke *Mud Matters in the First Circle*, her original creation story performed in music and spoken word over decades with her performing partner Paolo Knill. We joined her in the chorus and hum. The rhythm of the hands pounded, patted, pinched and pulled form from the formless clump of clay. What might emerge? For a while it looked like a baby in swaddling. Once the clay had gone ’round and ’round, a timeless and mysterious figure of a woman emerged out of the shapeless clump in all its roughness. We all began to write, starting with the words *I am the one*.

Here are my words:

I am the one who came out of your fingers,
Out of the mud and the inchoate chaos.
I am the one who came from unknowing,
Out of the mystery. Out of the clay.

Out of my solitude—cloak of dank darkness.
I lived a long time in the bank of that river—
Clawed from my formlessness, now captive clay.

You are the women who conjured this mystery.
You are the makers who prayed with your hands.
You sang me into form. Your hands in the shaping,
Your chant in the calling. I came. I am here.

Now I am here. Here in your presence.
Don't act surprised. Do not take this lightly.

I am the one who comes with a belly full;
I come with a promise. I come with a curse.
I come with a blessing and also a warning...

You wanted to know me. So now...
Here I am!
In *Golem*, Thomson’s process includes the 3D printing of sculptures developed through the formation of “monsters” created from found ephemera. Generational loss through reprinting is the mutations’ gain, and a documentation of the process is incorporated to affirm the connection between the artist and his evolving Golems.
The Beauty That Sustains
An Arts-Based Research Exploration of Expressive Arts Therapy with Children

Ellen G. Levine and Stephen K. Levine

Stephen K. Levine: The following is an edited transcript of the first session of an arts-based research (ABR) project for Ellen G. Levine's new book on expressive arts and child therapy. The session was an experiment to see whether the “architecture” of a therapy session as outlined in the book, Principles and Practice of Expressive Arts Therapy: Toward a Therapeutic Aesthetics, is also a good structure for doing ABR.

The “architecture,” or structure of a typical session, is described in that book as being composed of four parts:

1) Filling In—discussing what the client is bringing to the session

2) Decentering—moving away from the issue presented into the alternative world of the imagination through play, art-making or ritual

3) Aesthetic Analysis—reflecting on the Decentering in a phenomenological way by describing what happened and how the client experienced it

4) Harvesting—stepping back and asking what the Decentering might have to do with the issue that was presented in the Filling In
**Stephen K. Levine:** Let me begin by asking you, what's on your mind for this book project right now?

**Ellen G. Levine:** I'm trying to bring together some of my work since I wrote my last book, *Tending the Fire: Studies in Art, Therapy and Creativity.* Sometimes I've used case materials in articles, but I want to pull together my thinking about working with children in one volume. I’m looking for a theme for the book. I can write up all the different cases but I need a theme that helps the book hang together—a through line that makes it cohere.

**SKL:** You are also wondering whether ABR can give you some clues for a theme. Is that right?

**EGL:** Yes, and I’m interested in exploring what happened in my work with all of these children and situations—how the children were affected, how I was affected. I want to explore this at another level than simply writing about it.

**SKL:** Before we go more into that, I’d like you to talk about your understanding of ABR in general.

**EGL:** To me, it is a kind of research that requires a different way of thinking; it is not the normal way of inquiry. When I use the arts, I get to be much closer to the subject. But at the same time, the art-making creates a distancing as well. There is a closeness and a distancing at the same time. By making art in relation to the subject matter, I go into a different realm—not sitting at my computer writing about it or thinking about it. This is a way of working with materials that gives me access to a way of knowing that is not discursive.

**SKL:** It sounds like you are talking about what we might call imaginative knowing.

**EGL:** Something new might come from this. Something more surprising. Something that I didn't already know about.

**Filling In**

**SKL:** OK, it’s good to hear some of the background. Let me ask you about the particular session that we are doing now. You are going to be inquiring about working with a child who you’ve just written about in narrative form for your book. What's your objective for the session today? What would be a good outcome?

**EGL:** A good outcome could be that I would play around with some art-making, get closer to the child’s experience of what she was going through at the time. Perhaps to see what the art-making could tell me, coming up with a message about my work with her and her experience.

**SKL:** And how would you characterize your understanding of that work right now?

**EGL:** Pia (as I call her) was going through the dying process and the eventual death of her father. She was seven years old, and was trying to metabolize this experience in her own way. She was actually able to talk about it pretty well, and our work was focused on building up the resources that could sustain her through this experience. Also, I was working with her mother to help her become more of what I would call a “play partner,” since her father was primarily the one who played with her, and she was losing him. I felt that it was important to help her and her mother engage
at that level in order to build up her own immune system, as well as their immune system as a mother and child together, through play.

**SKL:** Having worked with Pia and written about it, what are you curious about at this point?

**EGL:** I’m curious about how the metaphors that she used were able to help her get through. I understand it on some level, but there is something that I am not quite getting in my own thinking about it.

**SKL:** How the metaphors were helping her get through. And those metaphors were?

**EGL:** The main metaphor came from the movie, *The Lion King*—especially the story line of the relationship between the father and son in *The Lion King* and the importance of this story throughout the twenty-three sessions in which we worked together. I was interested in how it all worked together: the music, the characters, the narrative. She was quite obsessed with it at the time we were working together.

**SKL:** Is there anything else that comes to you before we move into the next phase of the session, the “decentering” into the world of imagination?

**EGL:** Am I being clear about what I am looking for? I’m not too clear myself about it.

**SKL:** Well, maybe that’s OK not to be totally clear. One of the goals could be to clarify what you are looking for, not only in this case but in general. So far what I am hearing is that you are interested in gaining an understanding of how metaphors work in helping children to move through difficult situations, emotional disturbances, in their lives.

**EGL:** Yes, that is a good way of putting it.

**Decentering**

**SKL:** I’m going to make some suggestions to help us get into the decentering phase, the phase where we move away, or “decenter,” from talking directly about this child and instead move into an exploration through play. One thing I want to mention for our readers is that we are working in your studio in our house in Toronto, and we’re surrounded by art materials and paintings that you have done. I see behind you a painting you did that contains a photo of a young child behind a door, poking his head out. In front of the door is a soldier. The soldier is pointing his rifle at the young boy. (Fig. 1, page 132)

**EGL:** Yes, it’s a photograph that I found five or six years ago in the newspaper. (Fig. 2, page 125)

**SKL:** And you’ve done many paintings with photographs in them, elaborating on them, framing them with backgrounds so that they stand out or are significant in a certain way. So this is one of those.

**EGL:** Yes.

**SKL:** Let’s work with that because it’s so obviously here.

**EGL:** OK.

**SKL:** Take a moment to look at the painting, letting it act on you in any way that it does. See if you have an “aesthetic response”
to it, something that affects you on an emotional or bodily level. See what comes up for you.

**EGL:** What comes to me is that I want to say (standing behind the soldier and addressing him): “STOP! What are you doing? You’re aiming your gun at this little boy! Why are you doing that? What are you doing? Stop right now! Put that down!” Like the soldier is a little boy and I am the mother and I’m trying to get him to stop doing something bad.

**SKL:** What else do you want to say to him?

**EGL:** “This little boy is not doing any harm to you. This little boy is just looking at you. What do you think he’s seeing when he looks at you? What do you imagine he is seeing? This could be your little boy. This is completely wrong.”

**SKL:** One thing I’d like to do right now is to move into a method developed by Shaun McNiff called “dialoging with the image.” So what I want you to do is to face the painting, close your eyes for a moment, and then imagine that you are that little boy and that Ellen has just asked you what is going through your mind and what are you thinking and feeling at this moment. What would you say?

**EGL:** “Wow!! Look at that! That’s a big gun. Whoa... what’s happening?”

**SKL:** (to the little boy) “Are you scared?”

**EGL:** “No, not so scared. I’m really curious and I’m wondering what this guy is doing here.”

**SKL:** Do you want to ask the soldier any questions?

**EGL:** As the little boy?

**SKL:** Yes.

**EGL:** “Mister, what are you doing here? Are those real bullets in your gun? Are you real? Is this a movie?”

**SKL:** OK, now turn around and become the soldier, answering the questions.

**EGL:** “I’m here to protect you. Your father is behind the door. Does your father have a gun? Your father might shoot me. I’m not aiming at you, I’m aiming at your father.”

**SKL:** Now switch roles and become the child again.

**EGL:** “My father doesn’t have a gun. My father is peaceful. He’s a peaceful man. I don’t think my father has a gun. Why are you here?”

**SKL:** Tell us about your father.
EGL: “My father works in a garage. My father fixes cars. He doesn’t have guns. My father is here, home with me and my brother. My mother is working. It’s Saturday. It’s a day to take a rest. We are going to go out now and play. We play football. We’re waiting until my father is ready.”

SKL: (speaking as the soldier) “How do I know that what you are saying is true?”

EGL: “I don’t know. My father is a peaceful man.”

SKL: “How do I know I can trust you? I might get hurt. I am frightened.”

EGL: “I am only 5 years old. I cannot tell you.”

SKL: “Come out from behind that background.”

EGL: “OK. Can I look at your gun?”

SKL: “You can look at it but don’t touch it.”

EGL: “Why not, why can I not touch it?”

SKL: “It’s dangerous. Something might happen.”

EGL: “But you know how to use it, right?”

SKL: “Yes, I do.”

EGL: “OK, can I come out now?”

SKL: “Yes, come out please.”

EGL: “OK. I’m coming out. But can you put the gun down?”

SKL: “I can lower the barrel but I can’t put it away. I have to be ready in case your father has a gun.”

EGL: “Oh, OK. But just put it down so I won’t be scared.”

SKL: “OK, it’s down.”

EGL: “OK, I’m coming out now. What is your name?”

SKL: “My name is Mordechai.”

EGL: “And where do you live?”

SKL: “I live in Haifa.”

EGL: “Oh, where is that?”

SKL: “It’s in Israel. Do you know where that is?”
EGL: “Oh yeah. That’s a bad place.”

SKL: “No, that’s not true. Somebody’s been telling you lies.”

EGL: “That’s a very bad place.”

SKL: “No that’s not true. It’s just a place where people live, just like everyone else.”

EGL: “But my father told me it’s not a good place.”

SKL: “That’s because your father has never been there. He doesn’t know. He just knows what people tell him.”

EGL: “Do you have any children, Mordechai?”

SKL: “Yes, I have a young girl, she’s three years old.”

EGL: “Oh. What do you do with your little girl? Do you play with her?”

SKL: “Yes, we play a lot. I like to throw her up in the air and catch her. She really likes that. She screams when I do it but in a good way. It doesn’t hurt her. She goes very high and she goes ‘Whee! Whee!’”

EGL: “My father does that with me too.”

SKL: “Does he? You’re pretty big to be thrown up in the air.”

EGL: “No, no. He is very strong.”

SKL: “Tell your father to come out.”

EGL: “Father, father, come. It’s OK. Come.”

SKL: “Tell your father I am here and you are with me. Nothing can happen as long as he is peaceful.”

EGL: “My father says ‘No.’ He doesn’t trust you.”

SKL: “Tell him to come out or I will come in after him.”

EGL: “This is terrible. No, no, you can’t do that.”

SKL: “Then tell him to come out.”

EGL: “Father, father, come out. It’s OK, he won’t hurt you. He has a child too.”

SKL: “Is he coming?”

EGL: “Yes, yes, here he comes.”

SKL: (to the father) “Alright, put your hands up in the air. I won’t hurt you, I just
want to make sure that you don’t have a gun. “

Now switch roles and become the father.

**EGL:** (As the father) “What is happening here? What is going on?”

**SKL:** “We are looking for terrorists.”

**EGL:** “I am not a terrorist. I’m a peaceful man.”

**SKL:** “That may be but we can take no chances. Someone blew up a station.”

**EGL:** “Oh, I heard about that.”

**SKL:** “Do you know anything about it?”

**EGL:** “No. I know nothing about it.”

**SKL:** “Do you belong to any organizations?”

**EGL:** “No, I do not.”

**SKL:** “Were you ever in any organizations?”

**EGL:** “No, I am a peaceful man. I don’t get involved in those things.”

**SKL:** “Is there anyone else in the house right now?”

**EGL:** “No, no. My two sons are right here.”

**SKL:** “Where is your other son?”

**EGL:** “He’s there. Can you not see him?”

**SKL:** “I cannot see him, he’s almost completely hidden. Can you ask him to come out as well?”

**EGL:** “Yes. Come out. Both of you come out with me and show this man that we are peaceful people.”

**SKL:** “OK. I will put down my gun now. I can see that you have no gun. I will leave the house. I am sorry that we disturbed you.”

**EGL:** “Thank you. Please leave us in peace.”

**SKL:** “Yes, peace be with you too.”

**EGL:** “Thank you.” (pause)

**SKL:** Ellen, we did a little dramatic play there where you and I entered into the personalities of the characters. And I am wondering where you are with it right now?
EGL: I think we’re not finished. There’s another part of the drama. Just after the soldier leaves.

SKL: OK, let’s see what happens.

EGL: What the father says and what the children say. Do you want to play one of the characters?

SKL: Would you like me to?

EGL: Yes. You be the boy, the little boy.

SKL: (as the boy) “Father, father, what happened? I don’t understand.”

EGL: “The soldier came and he was thinking that maybe I was a terrorist. Do you know what that is?”

SKL: “No.”

EGL: “A terrorist is someone who hurts innocent people because they believe something. They think that violence is the only way to get something done.”

SKL: “But we’re not terrorists.”

EGL: “No, no. We are not terrorists.”

SKL: “I was a little scared of the soldier.”

EGL: “Yes, it was very frightening. I was scared too.”

SKL: “My brother, I don’t know. He hasn’t said anything. What do you have to say?”

Ellen, I’d like you to change physically where you are in the room when you become the brother and get into it in your body. He’s a little older and bigger and maybe he has a different attitude.

EGL: (As the older brother) “I saw you talking to that soldier. Why did you talk to him? He’s a soldier. You can’t talk to soldiers.”
SKL: (As the younger brother) “I had to talk to him. He talked to me first.”

EGL: “But all the boys in my street, they say don’t talk to the soldiers. Just try to do things to them to make them go away. Like throw things at them. That’s what we should do, when the soldiers come, we should throw stones at them.”

SKL: “No, I don’t want to throw stones. I don’t like stones.”

EGL: “But it’s the only way to get the soldiers to go away.”

EGL: (As the father) “Son, this is wrong. Do not do that anymore. Do not go to the street. I tried to teach you that violence is wrong. You must not throw a stone because maybe they will shoot you. They will shoot you if you throw a stone.”

SKL: (As the younger son) “What will happen father, if someone shoots you. If you are dead, what will we do? We will be lost in this world.”

EGL: (As the older son) “But we will be right. We will win.”

SKL: “I don’t care. I want my father.”

EGL: “Oh, you don’t know anything. You’re too little.”

SKL: “No, no. I want father, I want father!”

EGL: “Father is not with the times. Now we have to fight back.”

SKL: “I don’t care. I want father! I want father!”

EGL: (As the father) “I will not use violence. I will not throw stones. This is not the way to peace. We must talk.”

SKL: “Father, you won’t leave me, will you?”

EGL: “No, I will not leave you.”

SKL: “Ever?”

EGL: “Never will I leave you.”

SKL: “Ever ever?”

EGL: “As long as I can, I will stay with you. And mother too.” (pause)

SKL: OK. Ellen, does that feel finished?

EGL: Yes.

SKL: I don’t want to start the reflection for the aesthetic analysis yet. Let’s stay in the decentering for a moment.

If you were to step back from the family as if you were a great distance away, what would you say to them?

EGL: “You are in a difficult situation. You are torn between reacting to aggression that is coming toward you and trying to maintain your integrity and not fight back with aggressive violence. You are trying hard not to use violence and you are teaching your children not to use violence in their responses. But there is a conflict with the next generation. This is difficult.”

SKL: What is your message to them?

EGL: “You are in a difficult situation. You are torn between reacting to aggression that is coming toward you and trying to maintain your integrity and not fight back with aggressive violence. You are trying hard not to use violence and you are teaching your children not to use violence in their responses. But there is a conflict with the next generation. This is difficult.”

SKL: What is your message to them?

EGL: “Stay calm in the storm. Don’t react back but still be strong. Gather together with others. The other side has so many weapons. So much power. There is no point in fighting back with weapons. Stay steady and do whatever you can not to resort to violence.”

SKL: What do you have to say to the older son?
EGL: I would say—“I understand your anger and I understand your frustration. But it only will lead to bad things if you fight back with violence. You will go to jail and have to stay there for many years. It’s not worth it.”

SKL: And to the younger son?

EGL: “You are very smart and you ask many good questions. You are not afraid. Stay with the family and do not be afraid. Never be afraid.”

SKL: Does that feel finished? The situation is not finished, but does this part of our work feel finished?

EGL: Yes.

Aesthetic Analysis

SKL: Now we are going to step into the reflective phase where we look at what happened in the decentering and describe it. You start, and maybe I can help. How did we begin?

EGL: We began by looking at the painting here, which is not quite done, and you focused me in on the photograph at the center of the painting.

SKL: I realize now that I didn’t pay any attention to the rest of the painting and that that was a resource we didn’t actually use.

EGL: Although I think maybe in looking at it—this is the first photograph that I have put into a painting that so clearly has the theme of war and conflict in it. My other paintings with photographs leave it more open in terms of what is happening in the photograph. This one is very direct and you get a clear sense of what is happening there: a soldier is pointing a gun at a child’s face. What else would you get from that? You might ask yourself: “Why is that soldier about
to shoot the child? What is going on here?” But the fact is that soldiers do kill children and innocent people in war. Of course, that is what really happens. But I have placed the photograph on top of the sea. There is something that holds it on the sea. There is the landscape and the photograph is floating there. That reminds me of what I was talking about in the decentering: the idea of calm.

SKL: There is something calm in the sea, with the blue color.

EGL: Yes. There is an immensity there. There is something below too.

SKL: Yes, there is a big gold form below. Now that I step back and look at the whole painting, it’s very strong. What do you see there?

EGL: I don’t really know what that is. It’s an undersea construction that’s very special because it’s gold, and it’s sitting at the bottom of the sea. I’m trying to see whether it’s going to get connected to the photograph above it. I think that it will.

SKL: I suggest you take a photo of the painting at this stage and another one when it’s completed. So then you can go back to it. I also want to pause for a moment because I feel that I missed something there by not seeing the rest of the painting earlier. Not seeing the whole picture—maybe that’s a metaphor for the whole situation that the photograph depicts. And part of it is the immensity and the depth of the blue sea and part of it is this golden shape that I can’t help imagining as some kind of beautiful treasure, something that is precious underneath.

EGL: Definitely, yes. It’s open. It’s got holes in it so that you can see into it. That’s why I chose that material (paper used for packaging). I like it so much. It conceals and reveals at the same time.

SKL: When I look at the bottom half of the painting, I’m no longer caught in the immediacy of that situation, and I have a sense that there is more to our existence than this violent confrontation. And that we have to remember that.

EGL: That’s right. That’s what’s on the surface. There is always something else going on that you don’t see. You know, your conclusion in just looking at the photograph could be: good little child and bad soldier. But things are much more complex.

SKL: For me, the conclusion would be insoluble contradiction leading to violence and suffering. But below that there is beauty and something...

EGL: Something that sustains.

SKL: Yes, something that sustains, whatever we call it.

EGL: I can’t help but go back to the littlest child’s attitude—which is curiosity.

SKL: Innocence and curiosity. It reminds me of the child in the Haggadah of the Passover Seder who really wants to know what it is all about—the wise child. (pause)

SKL: To continue the description—we went into dialoguing with the photograph, not with the whole painting. Then we enacted the roles of the different personae and took it imaginatively a step further—imagining that the father was there and what would happen
if they came out from behind that wall. How was the experience of all that for you?

**EGL:** I liked it. It was an opening up of the picture.

**SKL:** Was there a moment that touched you, that gave you an aesthetic response?

**EGL:** I think it was this little boy who was not going to be afraid at first. He wanted to engage with the soldier and was curious about his gun. He wasn’t locked into the struggle so much, just looking at things on the surface. Saying: “Oh, look!” and asking: “Who is he? I don’t understand.” He looks really curious. That is what I love about his little face. He’s not angry, he’s not worried. At least I don’t actually see those emotions on his face. I see curiosity.

**SKL:** Were there any obstacles that you were working with imaginatively?

**EGL:** The father was a bit of an obstacle: how to portray him.

**SKL:** What was an obstacle about him?

**EGL:** Whether I wanted him to actually be a terrorist or whether I wanted him to be a peaceful man.

**SKL:** Was that a conscious choice?

**EGL:** No, I went back to the original photograph where I cut away the image of the father. In the full picture, he’s just sitting on a step and looking incredibly blasé with the soldier pointing his gun at his two sons.

**SKL:** So you were familiar with the back story.

**EGL:** I’m not sure whether it’s the back story but it’s one that I am making up. The photo has the father sitting farthest away on a step. Next the older son is there – I cut away his face – and then the little boy emerged.

**SKL:** OK. What title would you give to the dramatic play that we engaged in?

**EGL:** Something about the wonder of the child.

**SKL:** “The Wonder of the Child.” Anything else?

**EGL:** Things are not always what they seem.

**SKL:** “Things Are Not Always What They Seem.” Is there a message that comes to you from this work? A message that the imaginative play gives to you?

**EGL:** Just remember that things are not always as they seem. What you see there is always up for interpretation. There is always more than what you see.

**SKL:** To me there is a message about taking in the whole picture. Not only focusing on the difficulty or on the trauma but looking at what sustains us.

**EGL:** That’s a great message!!

**SKL:** Is it mine or yours?

**EGL:** It’s yours but I’ll take it!

**Harvesting**

**SKL:** OK. Good. Now, if this session had anything to do with your initial question,
about using metaphor to work through difficulties and about this particular little girl and how she used metaphors to work through her experience of the death of her father—if this session had something to do with that, what might it be?

**EGL:** You could see the loss of her father as the most tragic event that ever happened to her in her life. On one level, that might be true. But at the same time, there is a much bigger picture going on in the life of this child, the resources that she has, the way that she is able to use available metaphors, available possibilities. It was just extraordinary and it really needs to be celebrated.

**SKL:** I have a sense that another child in that situation might have gone the way of the older brother in our dramatic play and reacted with anger and rage.

**EGL:** That’s right. She was never angry. She was sad, no question about that, and she said so. She said things like: “My daddy is never coming home again.” It was hard for her, no doubt. But she played her way through it, using all kinds of resources to help herself, as I describe in the chapter I wrote about it. She also used resources that I helped to provide, setting up certain situations where she could actually work through some of this.

**SKL:** That feels important to me. I hope that my role as a guide was also helpful to you. One of the things that seems to be emerging is the sense that we need guidance in using our imagination and the metaphors that are available to us to help us get through the difficulties.

**EGL:** Absolutely. I think she was already using stuff and then I would just pick up on what she brought into the sessions. But at the same time there were crucial moments where I framed things in ways that were very helpful to her.

**SKL:** You were helping her find the resources that would enable her to go in the direction that she needed to go.

**EGL:** Yes, I think so. These were always experiments. I didn’t know for sure if she would do it. But they were successful experiments.

**SKL:** And you had to enter into the play fully for it to work.

**EGL:** Yes, to be a play partner. And to engage her mother in it too. It was the three of us that were often doing this work together.

**SKL:** I’m realizing now that the situation in the drama that we were enacting is somewhat parallel to what you did with Pia, that is, that there is a father and a young child and the father is threatened with death.

**EGL:** Yes! That’s interesting.

**SKL:** I actually had that in mind during the decentering. In *Principles and Practice*, we talk about theme-near and theme-far decentering. And certainly this seemed like a theme-far session in that we were talking about something that wasn’t connected directly with the story of the child you had worked with, but rather with something I know you are concerned about: the Palestinian and Israeli conflict and particularly how it affects children and families. So that seems quite distant from the case; it is an ongoing preoccupation of yours. But at the same time, the theme of the child faced with the possible loss of the father recurs.
EGL: I did not expect that.

SKL: For me, what particularly stands out from the session is the discovery that there is more to the picture than loss and that the child has resources, something that sustains her. Personally, I found it very touching, that there is something beautiful that she can draw upon, that lies underneath the surface.

EGL: Yes, we need to hold on to this perspective. Beneath all the pain and the suffering, there is a beauty that sustains. The effective reality of the metaphors we use depends on this aesthetic relationship to the world and others, a relationship which is given to us as a resource and which we can draw upon with the help of another person. Our work with children and adults can only be successful if we hold on to that insight.

Note: Fig. 3 (page 134) is the finished painting which was completed several weeks after this ABR session was conducted.

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Three Poems by Norman Minnick

The Duties of Fatherhood

*Man thinking must not be subdued by his instruments. Books are for the scholar’s idle times. When he can read God directly, the hour is too precious to be wasted in other men’s transcripts of their readings.*

—Emerson, “The American Scholar”

This morning I started Harold Bloom’s *The Art of Reading Poetry*. I made it to page 24 before the duties of fatherhood came calling. Standing over the griddle watching for the little bubbles at the edge of the batter to tell me it was time to flip the pancakes I got the feeling that all the blood had been drained out of me. And what about those poets who had become ingredients in Bloom’s kitchen? Those poor poets, he had drained the lifeblood out of them. What did I expect? And why did I feel as if these poets who have been raked through countless scores of deconstructive analysis suddenly needed defending? There’s that word I can’t stomach: analysis, from *analis* “of the anus” + *lysis* “a loosening” = you do the math. How easily I was caught up, for a few pages, with Bloom’s strand of allusions from Shakespeare to Dante to Pope to Blake to Wordsworth to Whitman to Yeats, which had me getting up from my recliner to pull down my Shakespeare, Dante, Pope, Blake, Wordsworth, Whitman, and Yeats in order to mark passages for future reference, only to sit back down again. Then the kids. And pancakes on red Fiesta Ware topped with strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, raisins, and artificially flavored maple syrup, sprinkled with powdered sugar—was this a bit over the top?—all in order to counter the blandness of boxed pancake mix. Then a drive to the bus stop to see my daughter off to school and on to daycare for my son.

On my favorite radio program, “Exploring Music,” the host Bill McLaughlin couldn’t decide which version to play of C.P.E. Bach’s cello concerto in A: Janos Starker’s or Anner Bylsma’s. So he decided to play the first movement of the Starker and the second two by Bylsma. I was swept up in the music.
The sun was rising. It was January. And since this is Indiana, the strawberries were from Mexico, the blueberries from Chile, and the raspberries from California. It had been raining for nearly a week. I thought of nothing during this moment. It wasn’t until I was on my way back to the house that I remembered Emerson in “The American Scholar.” God was in that sunrise and in that sweet music and in the sticky kiss my three-year-old son left me with at the daycare. I never finished The Art of Reading Poetry.

Painting

By the time I got around to it there was a hole in the canvas from my children peeking into the next world.

An Attempt to Sing Being into Being

_The world hates a thing too pure._
—Li Po

Earlobes: the sculptor’s leftover material.
Dry flecks of blood on a hawk’s beak.
A child learning to tie his shoes.
Fingerprints and cuttlefish: the only signs of intelligent design.
She is almost home and the page is still blank.
Chris Cran—The Space It Takes

Ink and acrylic on foam core, 12" x 10". Collection of the National Gallery of Canada.
Playing with Auschwitz
A Liminal Inquiry into Images of Evil
Lisa Herman

Is there a place for “playing” the Holocaust in Holocaust remembrance?1
—Ernst Van Alpen

At the turn of this century, I visited Auschwitz for the first time. The evening before, wandering in Krakow, I chanced upon a stall selling small carved wooden images of traditional Hassidic Jews playing instruments. I purchased a Klezmer musician, the one with a clarinet. A few years later, in Prague, I bought a Hassidic marionette from an Israeli in the Old Jewish Quarter. He had him dancing in front of the Jewish museum that houses objects gathered throughout Europe by the Nazis to record a vanished race. Some time passed, and then a friend and I made a music video with the marionette in an abandoned building site behind her apartment near Seattle. This is my research area: how images affect the non-participant in an evil event.

I have always been interested in the images of evil events and, in particular, the images connected to the Holocaust. I want to know how they affect non-participants in such events. I want to know more about what we learn from people’s representations of our vast creative capacities for cruelty, and about our experience when we engage these images. How do they affect those of us who weren’t there? I have come to believe we, the non-participants, need to stay creatively engaged with these (fortunately) mediated experiences in order to help prevent their continuing occurrence. We must not become complacent, believing naively that we have learned our lessons and it will not happen again. It is happening again.
In order to transmit historical knowledge of evil events to future generations – knowledge that stretches our capacities to acknowledge and remember our human potential for self-destruction – we need to engage embodied attention. We must be, as Jill Bennett notes, affected in a literal sense, “stricken with affect.” Images – visual art, words held by poetic language, theatre, film, dance, song – provide a wide range of affective access points for non-participants. We must educate to incorporate this important data while staying fully present with all our capacities, educating ourselves to know we will not emerge “unscathed” from these encounters with evil. Bachelard claims “…it is always more enriching to imagine than to experience.” Even if it is only sometimes so, we can learn and teach others to encounter evil through imagination, play, and the arts. We can play with what horrifies us so that we may engage creatively with it. This is the basic assumption for what I do as I attempt to break the helplessness and despair that threaten to paralyze me.

It is through the arts that I also remember we are capable of beauty and love. We learn to contain our forays into the “shadow side” in their proper realm of the imagination and bring forth our potential to enhance life. We can choose to use our creative abilities to foster relationship, discussion, and diversity. Within the frame of the arts, there are those who have learned to bring the shadow into the light and transform hate and despair into cries for recognition and inclusion. Through artful presentation, sometimes these cries have been heard.

My research with the images of evil events speaks to the images that won’t leave non-participants alone: the ones that are so powerful that we are left holding them inside of us. When we non-participants “experience” genocide, we are neither the survivors nor the perpetrators nor the bystanders. We are the ones who are affected by the monuments, the front-pages of the newspaper, the websites… and we wrestle with our own responses of rage, despair, and identification with all those involved. Our research participants are the images. They inform us. I count myself among a third iteration of engagement with the Holocaust, among those whose vicarious experience of evil is a subject for investigation. The site of our inquiry into the images is the liminal space between history and our own imaginations. If we want to know more, we know we must develop our imaginative capacities to enter this site. Such research needs a methodology that will allow imaginative encounters with the images to facilitate the inquiry and bring both the event and the response into the public domain for discussion and action. This methodology would allow play with images in the liminal space between the evil event and our own and others’ experience as non-participants.

How do we play with an image?

To appropriately research an image, we need to allow it to affect us. To affect us, we must be able to play with it—to suspend disbelief and enter its world. The image is an imaginative toy, calling for encounter. Something shifts in us when we participate playfully with an image. We the “spectators” enter unknown liminal space/time. This is the site where the images live. When we fully engage and play with a powerful image, we come into a moment where our customary ways of thinking and being are challenged, and we must make meaning differently in
order to stay present to our experience. We must employ different modes to express what is happening to us, so we turn to the old/new practice of the arts. Artists know that play, allowing new imaginative forms to emerge and be expressed, is the most appropriate way to participate with any image. We take our cue from them.

As I work to explore these ghosts of the past, I understand the ghosts – the images – to be my co-participants in my own arts-based research. Ghosts live in the in-between of liminal space. I approach my engaged play with the images that call to me in two ways: one from “inside” towards “out” and the other from “outside” towards “in.” Below is a description of the arts-based methodology I used in my dissertation.

Outside to In

Sometimes I receive a photo from Auschwitz itself, most often around Holocaust Remembrance Day in the Sunday New York Times. Sometimes there is a review or an advertisement of another show or book about the attempted genocide of the Jews. My clients, students, friends, and family bring me suggested reading and Internet sites about their experience with Auschwitz. I record these disturbing images by pasting the articles, ticket receipts, and other memorabilia into a scrapbook, sometimes with a written reflection. When I cannot paste (as with a CD or DVD) or write words, I draw with colored pencils.

Inside to Out

I do not rely only on the synchronistic occurrence to engage my data. I also find access to the images of evil events through consistent and planned artistic practice. Once a week, I spread a blanket on the basement floor and light a candle. I have safety-pinned xerox copies of the photos I took at Auschwitz. I have collected things from my visit there: a broken piece of railroad tie, rocks, porcelain from a shattered teapot, electric circuit casings… I kept a journal there, writing and drawing. I open the wooden box where I keep the totems (they are always cold) and feel what calls to me: where my hand and eye and felt sense take me. I hold a tangible piece of the camp, or my scrapbook, or let my eye stray to a photo and observe my thoughts and experience. When I feel a shift inside and outside me – often it is a warm gush of current, a different vibration in density of the space – I understand I am in liminal space. Then I draw, write a poem, play a drum, move, depending on how the image wants to be expressed.

How artistic engagement leads to transformation

Denzin and Lincoln claim that artful findings produce shared experience and empathy.7 When we engage artfully, we are moved to a liminal state, between us and the other – the image – and the possibility exists that we will be moved by the encounter. Our experience ideally will engender further creative responses that will in turn evoke shared experience and empathy for others. Engaging and performing images of evil through the arts, we are permitted affective states without succumbing to them. We can remember we are in a liminal space and are witnessing a mediated event while at the same time remaining deeply engaged. We can be moved to pity and fear for what humans have done and also be moved to creative action. Artful presenta-
tion of research appeals to us. We need to stay engaged and thus experience an “aesthetic response,” defined by Paolo Knill as “…a distinct response, with a bodily origin, to an occurrence in the imagination, to an artistic act, or the perception of an art work.”

When engaging evil, the aesthetic response is not one of pleasure, but still calls us to attend. Presentation produces a moment (or moments) of disturbance in time and place – an experience of the liminal – where things presented do not make sense in the way they are normally known, where perceptions are changed. We return to everyday reality knowing we have confronted an event outside the bounds of personal and cultural identity, and we feel a sense of the “uncanny”: something was wrong in a distressing way. This is performative presentation, discussed by Denzin and Lincoln as writing “… that angers and sorrows the reader, writing that challenges the reader to take action in the world, to reconsider the conditions under which the moral terms of the self and community are constituted.”

The intent of arts-based research in liminal space is to both engage with and distance from the physicality of the experience. Shaun McNiff calls it a “way of digging deep into avoided depths” while helping us to elude the “shadow power” the images may have over us: the power of unaware influences. It is a way of looking at disturbing images of evil within and outside of us, acknowledging their powerful animated existence. This is a process of recognizing the vitality of the images and realizing, in Arnheim’s words, how “…animation flows from the image and affects the lives of viewers […] [and that the] essence of the engagement is not what we do to the image, but what it does to us.” I have learned I must gather data with respect and care for the images of evil as well as include and safely contain my own felt responses. I concur with Stephen K. Levine:

To base our research in the arts means to engage the imagination in the forming of our concepts and in the carrying-out of the project itself. Not only may the initial inspiration come in the encounter with the image […] but the conduct of the research may itself be imaginative. We must have faith that the imagination can inform us, that art is not non-cognitive but that it binds together both feeling and form in a way that can reveal truth.

When we choose to follow a Bachelardian phenomenology of the imagination, our co-participants, the “others,” are the images, and they are “…allowed to speak for themselves.” This artful engagement is for those of us interested in allowing images of evil to inform us physically and to be able to “…get more direct reports from the phenomenon we are studying, asking the subject matter itself to comment on or teach us about itself.”

Affect as a source of knowledge

Artfully playing with images, we find visceral information in liminal space. Whether we take direct accounts from survivors or gaze at a photo, we enter this space of mediated representation and receive our own embodied images. When researchers play authentically with written testimony, photos, music, poems, and artifacts that have been generated by an evil event, we move into that same liminal space where writers, visual artists, theatre, dance, and music performers ac-
cess material to create their work. Here, in the space between the event and our imaginations, the images engage us, and we are called to respond through a coherent sensibility and methodology: a playfully felt response. We find that inquiring from our physical being and shaping our experience artfully is appropriate for the development of “…moral discourse […] and sacred textualities.” When images affect researchers as a personal, embodied experience, we are moved to take action and create, with the intent of engendering further affect.

The embodied researcher of evil is compelled to make art. Linear discourse is inadequate. Images ask us for artful representation. The researcher cannot truthfully record a physical experience of engagement with the image other than artfully. We need multiple art disciplines as we research, since the images do not come through in one form. They arrive in music and in a felt sense, through theatre and clown. They are found in words in print and words that we sometimes feel in the air that touch our scalps and send chills down our spines or cause acid to rise in our throats. Sometimes we sense images that arise from the sidewalk and sometimes we sense them through other images that we see and hear on a movie screen. Sometimes they are thoughts that drift through our minds or someone else’s words left hanging in a room. When we allow ourselves to fully sense these images in our bodies and minds, we may then write a poem or dance or shape a sound in response. When researching images of evil events, if we collect and shape our data within the container of art, we can find a way, inspired by writers in the Holocaust itself, “to struggle against despair,” a way to create from a sense of hope.

Arts-based fieldwork is conducted individually and in collectives. Like the sculptor in her studio or the theatre troupe in its rehearsal space, the researcher begins with the image(s) she wishes to explore and paints, moves, makes sound, writes, talks… Artful researchers follow the image as it transforms, noticing how we respond in our bodies and our minds. We are “nomadic inquirers,” described by E. A. St. Pierre as she worked on her computer:

I did work in this smooth mental space. I found it occasionally if only momentarily, and I would like to return there to do more fieldwork. I am there now sometimes as I write this, and that is encouraging for one who likes to speed along across the steppes, galloping willy-nilly, hooting back at the deep, somber warnings pulsing from the logos.

This researcher allows the image(s) to move her. She does not look for linear engagement. She brings her mind and body into appropriate alignment with her co-participant(s). She allows herself to be guided by these disturbing images as she experiences them with all her senses. She lets herself enter the smooth liminal space and collect with all her capacities the data the images present to her. She pounds out words on the computer, crouches her body into a ball-shape, allows sounds to escape from her belly, as the images inform her. She records her process, shapes the material, and performs it for her community.

I conclude with the following, a poem from my own research playing with Auschwitz.
Digging

Digging dead bodies
Who might prefer to be left
in buried pieces
I yearn to join them sometimes
I keep digging
picking
at old scabs until they bleed
red flames warming no one’s heart

We are all decayed
still born to a time of no joy measured
on any known scale.

Why try? What for?

I keep digging deeper obeying unheard orders
from beyond the grave
somewhere out of earshot where there are
still some small shivering strings of sound
Where hands still write.
Mind still questions.
Still digging
Digging digging out of the light

Wet muck closes inside of me
Filling my cavities begging not to know
anymore

Digging digging out of control
I cannot stop digging
I will die digging

Note: This article was originally published online in 2010, in a somewhat different version, as “Toying with Auschwitz” in Against Doing Nothing: Evil and Its Manifestations (eds. S. Smith & S. Hill). Oxford, U.K.: Inter-Disciplinary Press. ISBN: 978-1-904710-63-9

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Endnotes


6 A. Boal, The Rainbow of Desire: The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy, Routledge,


10 Y. S. Lincoln and N. K. Denzin, op. cit., 1054.


17 Y. S. Lincoln and N. K. Denzin, op. cit., 1048.


Rowesa Gordon—*Looking Again*

*Photocopy process with acrylic paint on clear acetate, 8½” x 11”.*
The Buoys of Fasaay’Il (excerpt)

Emily Fiddy

The only detainment I know:
To be shut into a room being measured for new curtains
With ten plates of food
My Montreal friend and I are crowned
Tenderness is our necessity
As the lines blur
To the heart of
Commiseration
They paint and build and clean and
Pray and wait
Their piety
A honey sweetness
Life
Oh Palestine,
To the hearts of the land
All the rich land
Where fences erode
And the night
Swallows the ode
And finally the moon
Listens
Eulogy for Hossein Blujani, 1981-2012 (excerpt)

Carrie MacLeod

Author’s Note:
After years of seeking refugee protection in Canada, Hossein Blujani died falling from a bridge on December 1st, 2012 in an apparent suicide. From June 2010 - June 2012, Hossein lived as a resident of the Kinbrace community in East Vancouver during the time I lived and worked in the community house. He was a documented UNHCR refugee, and we saw Hossein being pushed to the edge of society and existence in Canada. In his own quiet way, he talked about his experience of feeling less than human. Through the days, weeks, and months of his legal proceedings, we journeyed with Hossein, working, waiting, and hoping that soon he would finally experience the freedom of being fully human. That day never came.

Vancouver was a mystery to you
You asked why people stayed indoors
And wondered why
We shelter ourselves from ourselves
With curious eyes you wanted to know—
Where did everyone go at night?

You lived into your answer
As the East Hastings streets
Became yours just past midnight
You found names of the nameless
And caught the light in the eyes of those
Hovered over street side fires

One day

We may come to know
What it means
To open our doors
And welcome one another

Home
There has been a mistake again. Someone has double-booked the community room in the basement of the housing complex. As youth arrive en masse, threads of panic run through my body. The newcomer cooking class has taken over and the room is too small to share. This dislocation couldn’t be more ironic – the “Re-Inventing Home” performance project is about to conclude for this youth group who intimately know the consequences of forced migration. Exasperated voices cry out, “Not again!” Finding a new space to rehearse at this late hour seems inconceivable to us all. One of the youngest ensemble members suggests that we move into the entrance adjacent to the laundry room to resume rehearsals. I hesitate as I imagine the chaos of people passing by with loads of laundry. My internal dialogue is quickly interrupted by a lone voice, “Listen to the rhythms of the washer and dryers! This is the back-beat for our spoken word performance!” The discovery is palpable and the whole group rushes over to the humming washers and dryers. Spontaneous dances spiral out from laughter as the sound of spinning laundry gives a new life force to the verses being spoken. As beat-box rhythms filter through spin cycles, poetic riffs are crystallized into a multi-modal performance. The space is inverted into a living laboratory, and we decide to stage our culminating community performance here amidst the laundry loads. Neighbours, parents, and siblings are all invited to witness this homespun narrative in a familiar site. As actors, dancers, poets, and musicians take their places, the audience is warmly welcomed next to the washers and dryers in the inaugural performance:

“Cycles of Home”

(Press the spin cycle to begin. Lights fade in.)
Performing Research

When I became lost in performance, I found my home in research. After years of probing for the “right” questions to colour the unprimed canvas of arts-based research, the stage re-claimed what I had been looking for all along. With an awareness of the responsibility that surrounds research, I intend to be inclusive, politically correct, action oriented, and collaborative wherever possible. Binders on anti-oppression research frameworks, methodologies from the margins, and participatory action research curricula line my bookshelf. Despite this pursuit to maintain a sense of integrity from every possible angle, the act of research has puzzled me and I have often come away with more questions than answers. What was I looking for and where was my gaze coming from? Perhaps even more importantly: Who was looking back at me and where were the questions coming from? During the time that I’ve worked with people in Canada’s refugee protection system, these simple questions have become poignant in a much larger dilemma between invisibility, vulnerability and voice. Recording inexplicable experiences of violence, trauma or risk cannot easily be captured by an outside researcher. Perhaps this is the fundamental shift that is needed in research. The point is not to capture research but to inhabit it, live from it and for it with all of one’s senses. A lived inquiry is one that moves freely in between the search, the searched, and the silence. On the other side of silence there are barely audible voices waiting in the wings to be heard.

One challenge has been to relocate myself in a matrix of knowledge networks that are in flux, especially within transitional newcomer communities. My roles have shifted between community facilitator, producer, director, performer, spectator, ethnographer, arts-based facilitator, education coordinator, and doctoral researcher. When I recently lived “on site” in a settlement house with families seeking asylum for a year, domestic life accompanied the other roles. Was I too close to home to “objectively” understand the sociopolitical realities of refugees? In between the multiple arrivals and departures, an unsettling aesthetics was emerging. Can I contribute to a field of knowledge if I, too, am still looking for a home base for research? To my utter surprise, the research was actually researching me all along. While I wasn’t looking, I was being found by the findings and shaped by the shaping. I completely underestimated the extent to which I, too, was being pursued by an alternative gaze that was provocative, inhabited, and performative. An undeniable pattern was emerging in the flux of displacement. Performative happenings were consistently taking centre stage in between shifting identities and displaced ideologies.

The impulse for performance among newcomer groups was independent of my own agenda. Even when performance wasn’t integrated into the work-
shop design at the outset, I have seen groups gravitate towards performing of their own volition. Inasmuch as performance derives from the Greek root meaning “to furnish forth,” “to carry forward,” “to bring into being” (Jackson, 2004), it makes sense that displaced communities would be drawn to a mediating life force that offered infinite possibilities with clear limitations. Entrances, exits, curtain calls, blocking, lighting, and the action held within the proscenium arch all serve to crystallize chaos. In referring to performance here, I am not viewing it as a discrete discipline for trained actors. I build on Richard Schechner’s (2006) notion that performances mark identities, bend time, re-shape and adorn the body, and tell stories. He calls performances “restored behaviors,” and I will add an active stance that includes a re-storying of behaviors. From a dynamic interplay between form and fantasy, the mundane spheres of the day-to-day can be re-storied in the performative realm. Lives are not passively preserved “as is,” but are actively excavated. What has been negated off stage can be re-located, re-dressed and made visible on stage.

Youth who had lived through years of forced migration continually insisted on performing their dreams of home despite their tenuous status of exile. Their vigor and vulnerability could find a home in the ritual framework of performance. Fels (1998) builds on this and states that to entertain performative inquiry as a (re)search vehicle is to recognize the risk, the unexpected, the stop embodied in action and interaction through a performance that opens us to possibility. This is a study between the known and the unknown, between the “real” and the “not yet real” worlds. This in-between inquiry is particularly relevant for those who have been forcibly removed from their homes and are precariously poised in between borders, cultures and worldviews. Research cannot be another force that steals or takes up space, but should rather create spaces of possibility through the imaginal realm. Performative research ought to become its own form of rupture, as uncertain longings are given permission to surface without apology.

While exploring refugee “issues” in Canada for the past two decades via the arts, I have often unconsciously positioned myself as the one looking into research instead of one looking out from research. These constructed lines of demarcation were recently disrupted when a group of newcomer youth keenly asserted that I would certainly be performing with them. This was put forward not as an invitation, but as a declarative statement. They challenged the notion that my involvement would stay at arms length, and vehemently reinforced their stance with an interlocking of arms. I was literally and symbolically hooked into their plotting. I silently wondered whether blurred roles between researcher and performer would create further complications. Could I let go of the desire to obtain some sort of outside perspective while immersing myself in the unknowns of a performance process? Settling deeper into this prospect was proving to be unsettling. Proposed bodies of research were becoming bodies to research, and I too would be one of those bodies! I contemplated whether director’s notes could ethically accompany actor and researcher’s notes if written by the same hands. As new sight-lines emerged through a series of performative acts, these questions gave rise to their own answers over time.
Performing Identities

We begin rehearsals with the simple question: *What moves you?* We improvise our way into the answers.

*Lights Fade In*

*(Set spin cycle for one minute. Delicate wash. Four actors enter stage right and four actors enter stage left—each whispering the first words heard upon arrival in Canada. All stop and freeze and continue to whisper at a higher and higher volume until a crescendo is reached. Then all find another position and all become silent. Pause. Each actor enters into the chorus at a different time until a common rhythm is found.)*

*Rhythm moves me to you.*
*But I ain't no-body to you.*
*An' you ain't no-body to me.*
*But don't you worry*  
*’cause we’re just on d’ move*  
*tryin’ ta find another groove.*  
*We’re always on d’ move... on d’ move*  
*on d’ move....*

*Fade Out*

The challenges of working with refugees, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable populations are multi-faceted and cannot be addressed simply by the development of a research methodology (Pittaway, 2010). There are multiple exiles that unmake lives in the aftermath of forced migration. Border crossings are multi-faceted and continuous as linguistic and cultural divides contribute to estrangement. Resettlement does not happen in one culminating moment, but rather involves a series of adaptive responses over time. The poietic act of reassembling lives is multisensory and begins with a destabilization of binaries between “us” and “them.” On a tacit level, the multi-vocal language of performance demonstrates that “exile is not only a double life, but one of multiplicity” (Hamid, 1999). It therefore makes sense that people in exile are drawn to engage in multi-vocal performances. Re-centering the margins while de-centering dominant narratives calls for a reflexivity that dares to disturb monolithic identities.

Most people who are seeking asylum seem to adamantly refute the “refugee” label. Although the legal term serves an important role in judicial realms, the associated stigmas of “illegal alien,” “bogus refugee,” or “human cargo,” only con-
tribute to further isolation. Youth in particular tended to sense this underlying subtext of fear more than I would have ever imagined. They were keen to recast themselves first and foremost as performers and asked if I would write about them in this way. As world fusion rhythms, urban hip-hop, and spoken word poetry were layered into repetitive feedback loops, their re-sounding identities filled the spaces that no one else was filling. Their lyrical rhythms support Trinh T. Minh-ha’s (2011) sense that “[h]ome then is not only in the eye, the tongue and the nose, but it is also, as in my case, acutely in the ear.” Stepping into the performative realm made it possible to inhabit “…multiple and simultaneous elsewhere, always a step or more behind or ahead or to the side, watching through open windows being watched, performing [them]selves performing or being performed” (Schneider, 2011). A sense of safety was found in the fleeting nature of performance’s own bounded impermanence. Staging the improbable became a window into what could be possible. They could bear witness to one another’s stories in symbolic realms without reiterating traumatic events again and again.

Staging Research at Home

(Press spin cycle for two minutes. Actors enter stage left. Lines are delivered in unison.)

Came here with my ma-ma
crossed the sea to Ca-na-da
and forgot one leetle thing—
I left me-self in Abbb-FREE-ca
I left me-self in Abbb-FREE-ca… (Refrain x2)

(Fade out)

Amidst complex social, political, and cultural intersections, an unanswered question remained: Is home portable, disposable, or performable? Performative spaces offer a generative framework for constructing inquiries that are not confined to the personal testimonies of the fixed past. Narrative arcs can be held within the dynamic range of poiesis—“the act of making, and artistic making in particular” (Levine 2011). The “liveness” in performance particularly thrives on remaking, remixing, and re-storying. A performative inquiry does not promise resolution or restitution, and rather manifests as an awkward collision course between constructed identities in the imaginal realm. New contracts can be established on stage in ways that cannot take place off stage. Relations can be re-mixed and re-matched into new social configurations.

One of the percussion leaders offered his insight after a culminating perfor-
mance, and claimed, “On stage we can dream with our enemies.” Conflicts surrounding divergent worldviews could be held on stage as racial standpoints transformed into pivotal dance points. Non-verbal choreographies honored multiple dispositions without the pressure to find a contrived harmonious homogeneity. The stage also served as a mediating bridge between my various roles and the communities I worked with. Envisioning how to sketch one another into portraits of home became a precarious dance of animation, collaboration, and co-creation. Performance spaces created a visible score for the sheer awkwardness of trying to find rhythms of belonging on foreign soil. Identity claims on one side of the border were bound to cultural roots on the other. In transitional housing communities where country-of-origin enmities amplified separation, working towards performance became a third task that uncovered capacities for interrelatedness rather than fear. Such spaces of exchange have never promised resolutions, but do create the necessary space to find common ground on foreign soil. It wasn’t always clear who was setting the stage for whom.

**Performatif Terrain: Multi-Vocal Negotiations**

Research needs to make sense for all involved, and relocating the sites of inquiry often needs to spill over into the rhythms of daily life. We strategically re-located after-school rehearsals into the housing complex because the youth were expected to assume domestic roles at home. As parents learned English or needed to take on odd hours of shift work, youth stepped into the roles of caregivers, family language translators, and cultural informants. Interruptions became a natural cadence in each session, as untimely arrivals and departures reflected a larger meta-narrative of upheaval. In response to this ongoing cacophony, the youth renamed the weekly sessions “In the House Jams.” When performance spaces became primary translators between the past, present, and future, settlement tensions that were previously addressed in isolation could be confronted collectively. Their codes for acculturation were based on creative assets rather than projected deficits, and insider/outsider dynamics could be played out in between lines of fiction, fact, and fantasy. The performative frame offered key insights into how entry and exit points are chosen, how unanticipated encounters are addressed, and whether habits can be shifted when multiple agendas converge.

When we stepped back from strategizing and entered into the imaginal realm, we all began to make ourselves at home. The desire to “show” became a natural distilling process as non-negotiable issues were brought to the forefront. The dramaturgical process created a visible baseline for determining the community indicators that were valued. Performance ironically unmasked what remained hidden from public view. The ingenuity and resilience required to transform a laundry room into a performance space did not go unnoticed. The fictive Canadian dream slipped through the thin veil of the “fourth wall” as parents and siblings often stopped by to offer poetic lines for their concealed struggles and triumphs. When on-lookers spontaneously assumed the role of actors, the imaginary wall between performers and audience members disappeared. This pull towards performance became an act of necessity. When one dancer was called to fulfill a domestic task in the middle of rehearsals, there was vehem-
ment resistance, and a bold retort followed, “But I can’t come! They need me!” Indeed, the performance needed him. In the midst of so many inverted roles, he also needed the anchor of performance. This mutual necessity was unmistakable. The stage provided its own source of traction in the transience, as performances became something to grasp in a visceral sense. Weeks after the performances, youth would point to nondescript locations and exclaim, “That’s where we performed!” Staging frictions and differences made it possible to reclaim their sense of place with one another.

Who will bring it all home?

Performance inherently generates a range of seen and unseen researchers. Audiences play a pivotal role as researchers, and their receptive role is as vital as the performative act. The audience-performer relationship creates the possibility to be faced with alterity from both sides. This is counter-intuitive to research trends that rely on a reductive approach—one that depends on a one-way mode of seeing. The spaces generated between performers and audience members invoke an unlimited number of responses. With improvisation and disruption as an ally, a performative inquiry moves beyond an essentialist frame into a living framework that is relational, reciprocal, and visible. In “decentering” (Knill et al. 2005) the locus of research from an expert-client model into an actor-audience relationship, stigmas and knowledge claims can be dispersed into many hands. A performative approach can reposition unseen lives into a visible domain. Even the most fleeting moments can be crystallized and “held” in time. For communities in transition where so many facets of life are literally and figuratively swept under the carpet, this visible frame shows what has been both lost and retained under the weight of transience. As audiences carry the affect of performances out into the world, the effect of meaning systems may actually begin to take “hold” in new ways. A comprehensive staging of community research can go on long after the curtain closes.

Since a coherent sense of reality often dissipates in the wake of perpetual dislocation, this lived research focuses on how performance is always accountable to the “thing gone” (Patraka, 1999). For those who have been displaced for years, memories can never fully archive the enormity of losses. Societal pressure to get over the past and resolve the unresolvable prematurely can leave entire communities in a perpetual state of fragmentation. Exile often dislocates memories to the breaking point until they become ungraspable in the present time. Such blurred lines between truth and memory cannot be solely understood through a disembodied research analysis. The multiple viewpoints available through performance offer more than just a single homogenized version of history, suggesting that when history is not nameable, it can still be malleable. Performing what is forgotten retrieves memory in an alternative form, making it possible to collectively re-member past predicaments through embodied translations. When the world is unmade by inexplicable actions of injustice, poiesis comes home to itself through ritual acts of meaning making.

Performative inquiry has dislocated my own positioning again and again, and I am continually surprised by what unfolds in center stage. In breaking the fourth wall of my own limited viewpoints and pre-conceived agendas, I have become aware of how shared vulnerabilities (mine included!) can be staged with dig-
nity. Practices of home-making across cultural boundaries are taken to new limits as performance attunes us to the embodied presence of the other. Performance spaces serve as roving mediators, as entrenched positions often remain frozen until the “arriving third” appears in another form on stage (Knill, 2005). Rigid standpoints become fluid launching points when the locus of knowledge is cast in a new light. In this sense, coming unhinged plays a key role in coming home.

Performative research offers courageous scripts for place-making amidst displacement. Finding our places with one another is a precursor to finding home. Where else can “nowhere” rightfully claim center stage? In spite of this, the repercussions of such inversions cannot be ignored. In socio-political systems that relegate newcomers to the wings, not everyone will welcome encounters with alterity. However, for many the risk of performance is worth pursuing since it generates its own social reordering. When the assumed refugee experience is disrupted both on stage and off stage, imposed victimhood narratives are challenged and even transcended. This tacit exchange between performer and spectator offers new points of departure for reconnection and recognition. In the end, performative inquiry re-calls those who have been waiting in the wings and boldly recovers the voices that have been silenced for far too long.

(Set spin cycle for one minute. Actors and musicians enter stage right. Fade in.)

I am not me here.
I am not me there.
Who can I be?
But when the world falls apart—
we are still we…
yes WE are still WE. (x2)

(Fade out. Turn spin cycle to power off. In silence, the ensemble members return to their places one by one. Once settled, all freeze and face the audience.)

Curtain.

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References


Newtown / Mill Fire Ash

Elizabeth Gordon McKim

1.
Wet cold pre-Christmas Sunday
We cannot find the ruby red heart of joy
We are advised to keep close to family and we do
We stay in the hearth in the heart
Away from the troubles / away from the rumble
We are forest animals in outlandish clothes
We are not fierce we do not tremble we are waiting can you feel us
Inside our hut of straw and wheat
Inside our ice dome our yurt our roundhouse
Inside our cave our café but never oh never
In the first grade classroom soundless and still
No chalk smudge on blackboard
No marker on white board
No construction paper no cut-outs no colouring
No yellow paper with blue lines
No presents for teacher no fish no hamsters no seedlings
No red Christmas flowers no wrappings no silvery rustle of tinsel
No decals no stickers no glue sticks
No books about reptiles
No books about stars
You want to feel
Only something asunder and unutterable
Only the shrouds where real cocoons were waiting
To catch caterpillars in spring so butterflies
Can come again it’s so quiet here
Where only days ago
The children pushed together letters to make words
And words to make worlds those unknown sentences
And out of that the stories burst unattended
Life-sized bigger than anything the big people had in mind
The children their mouths swollen and overwhelmed
With songs and stories and poems

Carry carry the children
Carry the children along
Out of the deep heart of sorrow
Out further to the deep heart of the world
And in every street back alley country lane
Mountain trail avenue and thoroughfare
Let the people up/rise and act as a people
Let the people up/rise and act as a People

2.
Two nights later I went to the Walnut St.
Coffee Café in Lynn Massachusetts
To be with my family of friends
Mill Fire Ash¹ playing Christmas songs
Sparkling lights and candy cane posts and
Red fleece stockings by the door
Tiny lights creeping up the dart board
And trailing over the stacked books and way up
High to the boxed game called LIFE
We are here
We are here to be here
All at our tables / our stations /
Players and people all one
And held by our love of the work
And our love of each other
And outside snow
Jon Waterman and Nick Zaino and Adam Zampino
And his wife singer Michelle
And Dickey Kraus on the harp
And all night the Christmas ache and Chanukah chants
The outpouring of chestnuts roasting as usual by the usual fire
What can we do what can we say
All at our tables close breathing letting in / out
In the ways that we do
When we need each other
To hold / tight and / lightly / light and tightly

We sing our stunned heads off
We speak our broken hearts out
Till nothing is left of us
But the scent and residue
Of Newtown Mill Fire Ash

¹. Mill Fire Ash is the name of the band led by musician Jon Waterman, which often appears at the Walnut St. Coffee Café in Lynn, Massachusetts.
I never had an interest in research, nor did I see myself as a researcher. My perception of research was that it was statistical, boring, full of charts and graphs, static numbers and quotas, flat, methodical, objective measures that had no relevance to my life. Schooling failed to advance my understanding of research, but rather reinforced the idea that research was comprised of controlled experiments, hypotheses that could be tested and proven, the domain of science, not art. Thus, when I found myself engaged in doctoral studies in the expressive arts at the European Graduate School I questioned how or if I could actually be a researcher. Was there a place for the artist or the expressive arts therapist in research? Could the disciplines of art-making, expressive arts therapy, and research coexist?

During the time that I was living these questions, I founded and directed an expressive arts therapy studio. At the Art Life Studio, I offered individual expressive arts therapy sessions, women’s expressive arts therapy groups, expressive arts workshops for women and men, and clinical arts-based supervision and expressive arts therapy trainings for professionals within the fields of counseling, social work
and art therapy. Group work at the studio, which included intermodal expressive arts therapy classes and workshops, was the preferred choice of my clientele, far outweighing the interest in individual expressive arts therapy. Women, many of whom participated in multiple groups and workshops, were my primary clientele, composing 96% of all studio participants.

Working in a studio environment and responding to the interests of my female clients for more group work challenged me to re-envision my practice. Moving beyond the private consulting room and towards a studio-oriented approach, which emphasized women engaging in individual therapeutic and artistic work within a group format, I became interested in how art-making in community supports individual healing and transformation. I was curious about why women, in particular, were drawn to expressive arts therapy; and I was intrigued to know more about what kept some women engaged in continuous group work at the Art Life Studio and how they were being shaped by their experience. I also wanted to investigate the connections between my own personal work as an artist and my professional work as both a therapist and a teacher within the field of expressive arts. Essentially, my desire was to (re)search all aspects of my engagement within the expressive arts while investigating the question: How does the practice of studio expressive arts therapy support women in re-imagining their lives? Expanding this inquiry, I aspired to explore how I was re-imagining my own life while living the multiple identities and roles of artist, researcher, therapist, and teacher.

To re-imagine, which can be thought of as the process of imagining again or anew (or the process of forming and/or creating a new conception of, such as in re-imagining one’s life), requires the courage to break out of the limiting or narrow narratives we have become familiar with, in how we define or perceive anything, idea or encounter (Leake, 2012). For me to become a researcher, I had to re-imagine research as an artistic endeavor that has “the smell of the studio, stays close to the practice of art and the statements of artists, respects images, and allows them to present themselves in ways native to their being” (McNiff, 1987, 291). Research, in this context, is reflective of expressive arts therapy, whereby the arts are at the center, or he(art), of how we practice. I call this an artscentric approach to research (Leake, 2012), locating art and art-making at the center of methodology, analysis, findings, and presentation of findings. This aesthetic approach to research calls for “living inquiry in and through the arts” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, xix), wherein the arts are not adjunctive to research, nor reduced to il-
lustrative means to communicate or validate an idea or concept. Rather, arts-based research is lived, animated, examined, shaped, informed, and discovered through rigorous and continuous art-making practice.

A/r/tography: Exploring New Frontiers in Arts-Based Research

The following is an example of art-centric research within my studio practice, intended to convey the possibility of living *nel mezzo*, Italian for in the middle, of art-making, researching, teaching, and therapy in the expressive arts. A/r/tography, an emergent form of arts-based research, provided the methodology of this endeavor. "A/r/t" refers to the multiple identities and roles of the artist/researcher/teacher, and the contiguous relationship between art-making, researching, and teaching, while “graphy” refers to writing (Springgay et. al., 2008). A/r/tographers can be thought of as practitioners who seek to integrate the identities and practices of a/r/t in both their personal and professional lives (Pinar, 2004).

A/r/tography has been shaped by the theoretical underpinnings of feminism, action research, post-structuralism, hermeneutics, visual methodology, and other forms of postmodernism (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Irwin & Springgay, 2008). As a practice-based methodology, a/r/tography breaks away from positivist science and Cartesian rationalism, placing research and meaning-making in a relational context whereby knowledge construction is in a constant state of becoming (Irwin & Springgay, 2008). In this context, subjective and intersubjective interpretations are seen as valid ways of knowing, and interpretations are always evolving and becoming something new and different, never “fixed into predetermined or static categories” (Carson & Sumara, 1997, xviii). As Irwin and Springgay (2008) explain, a/r/tography is “concerned with creating the circumstances to produce knowledge and understanding” as opposed to other forms of research that focus on “reporting knowledge that already exists or finding knowledge that needs to be uncovered” (xxiv).

In a/r/tography, conditions that contribute to knowledge creation and understanding include self-study, being in communities of practice and artful inquiry in any modality (Irwin & Springgay, 2008). Art is seen as a transformative force as well as a necessary condition for agency, change and meaning-making (Springgay & Irwin, 2004; Springgay, Irwin & Kind, 2005). Art-making, researching, teaching, and writing become avenues for engaging in ongoing living inquiry, whereby a/r/tographers essentially live their questions. In this way, a/r/tography is seen not only as a methodology, but as a “way of Being in the world” (Irwin, 2008, 73). Through rigorous reflective and reflexive practice, a/r/tographers explore their creative practices, present their emergent understandings and deepen their perspectives as they integrate *theoria* (knowing), *praxis* (doing) and *poiesis* (making). In this way, a/r/tographical research does not focus on coming to conclusions but rather on discovering new insights and questions that invite further contemplation about the phenomenon being studied (Irwin & Springgay, 2008).

A/r/tography and expressive arts therapy require practitioners to engage in multiple roles and identities, to work intermodally and with an “aesthetic responsibility” (Knill, 2005) while being present to the emergent in artistic practice. Honouring an aesthetic orientation to life, both disciplines employ the concept of *poiesis*. In a/r/tography, *poiesis* is a method of inquiry,
of data analysis, a way to render findings in artistic form, and an opportunity to deepen understanding of one’s self, one’s practice and the subject(s) of one’s research (Irwin, 2004; Springgay, Wilson & Kind, 2004; Springgay, Irwin & Kind, 2007; Springgay et al., 2008). In expressive arts therapy, *poiesis* can be thought of as the capacity of human beings to shape their lives and respond creatively to the world (Levine, 2005, 2011). In so doing, art-making becomes a transformative process whereby we deepen our understanding of our place in the world, calling forth our capacity to re-make the world through our creative actions (Levine, 2011). Thus, by integrating elements of a/r/tography and expressive arts therapy in arts-based research, there is the potential to shape new forms of inquiry, to respond aesthetically to the questions we live, and to embody the complex and interrelated practices of art-making, researching, teaching, and therapy (Leake, 2012).

**Curating a Dissertation**

As a/r/tography invites the exploration of other roles/identities beyond that of the artist, researcher, and teacher (Irwin & de-Cosson, 2004; Springgay et al., 2008), I extended the “t” in my dissertation study to include therapist. Therefore, I designed the first a/r/tographical, expressive arts therapy study to date that looked at the intersections between the roles of an artist/researcher/teacher/therapist as well as the practices of art-making/researching/teaching/therapy in a community studio environment (Leake, 2012). Since a/r/tographical research often engages a group of research participants in collaborative arts-based inquiry processes (Irwin, 2008; Irwin &
Springgay, 2008), I invited six women, who had been involved in expressive arts groups at the Art Life Studio for one to three years, to be co-researchers, whom I refer to as artist/participants. Since “all participants bring an equal voice to the conversation and make a valued contribution to the work” (Atkins & Williams, 2007, 7) in expressive arts therapy, my research focused on the art/life experiences of my clients as well as my own experiences as a practicing expressive arts therapist.

The 8-month research period involved 1 1/2-2 hour interviews with each artist/participant; a 4-hour intermodal expressive arts workshop, in which artist/participants became a “community of a/r/tographers” (Irwin & Springgay, 2008) while researching their individual/collective experiences at the studio through art-making and writing “graphy”; and the creation of an art exhibit, vernissage, and performance ritual that conveyed the women’s personal stories of transformation as well as the role of community in healing. Throughout, I explored my life and work in a/r/t/t through painting, videography, dreamwork, poetic writing, and journaling.

All phases of data collection, analysis and presentation of findings involved art-making and elements of expressive arts therapy practice. For example, individual interviews were transcribed and then shaped into individual poems, using the actual words and phrases of each artist/participant to encapsulate each woman’s experience of expressive arts therapy. Poems were given as gifts to artist/participants in the form of aesthetic responses (Knill, 2005) and later incorporated into a performance ritual that the women collectively designed.
sentations of women re-imagining their lives through art. These renderings are presented as both findings and works of art (Springgay, Irwin & Kind, 2005). As such, “renderings are not simply static images or words captured on a page; they are visual, aesthetic, and textual performances that play alongside each other” (p. 908). Intermodal in nature, this “double imaging” (p. 899) throughout my dissertation evokes encounters and conversations within and between artwork and writing, inviting the reader to empathetically and imaginatively participate in women’s experiences of expressive arts therapy.

Inasmuch as the art and text are enacted in relation to each other, so too the viewer/reader figures into the process of meaning making, adding layers of inter/textual dwelling. Each informs and shapes the other in an active moment of lived inquiry (Springgay, Irwin & Kind, 2005, 899-900).

In a/r/tographical style, the dissertation interweaves art and graphy, moving back and forth between photographs, paintings, video, poetry, and reflective and theoretical writing to conceptualize and (ART)iculate (Leake, 2012) significant findings from the research process. The printed, bound copy is published to resemble a catalogue from an art exhibit and comprises over 80 images, beginning with one of my paintings on the cover. An “installation on paper” braids together photographs of artistic works and poetic/reflective writing that were created during the community a/r/tography day. As an aesthetic rendering of findings, the installation reveals individual/collective expressions of both a/r/tographical and studio expressive arts therapy practice. A “Vernissage on Paper” displays an assemblage of artwork and writing from artist/participants, inviting the reader to a private viewing of the art exhibit. A DVD of the performance ritual, along with photographs and video footage from the vernissage accompany...
the text. My own a/r/tographical journey is told through the pages of a “visual journal” that juxtaposes paintings and poems to tell the story of my a/r/t/t experiences within the study.

The aesthetic format of the dissertation is intentional, as I sought to invite the reader into a visually rich experience of studio expressive arts therapy (Leake, 2012) while also adhering to Patricia Leavy’s (2009) criterion of arts-based research as a piece of art, able to stand on its own, that simultaneously imparts information. Thus, my a/r/tographical inquiry captured a moment or moments in time, including reflections from the artist/participants on how expressive arts therapy has impacted their lives to date, the temporal nature of the Art Life Studio, and my emergent understandings of living nel mezzo—in the middle—of art/research/teaching/therapy. As such, the dissertation I created can be thought of as a “living document.” The ideas and renderings within are not final outcomes or conclusive statements about women’s experiences of expressive arts therapy or of how art-making supports re-imagining life. Instead, they offer a standing invitation to the reader(s), to the artist/participants and to myself as an a/r/tographer to continue a “living inquiry” process, one that calls for the on-going contemplation of the images and writing within the text as well as the creation of new art and writing in response to the text.

Emergent Understandings: A/r/t/t as a Relational Aesthetic

For the artist/participants in my dissertation inquiry, studio expressive arts therapy gave rise to five significant areas of transformation, which can be thought of as re-imaginings of life (Leake, 2012). These five areas included: 1) coming home to self, or reclaiming one’s capacity to be and to express one’s self freely; 2) art as companion: pleasure, sustenance, and guidance in everyday life from contemplating and living with one’s artistic creations; 3) making visible, or coming to see oneself in a new way through art-making and sharing in community; 4) belonging to community, or a sense of place in community and/or connection to community, and 5) arriving in a new place: transformation in life; significant life change and/or shift in awareness. However, it was impossible for artist/participants to separate out one aspect of their studio experience from another or deem one occurrence as more significant than the other. Instead, the relational aesthetic (Moon, 2002) with/in and between art/community/therapy/poiesis provided the fertile ground for transformation. “The expressive arts therapy experience [was] a succession of creative acts, expressions, and responses, all working together to foster well-being” (McNiff, 2009, 145) and re-imaginings of life (Leake, 2012).

A/r/tography challenged me to view research and expressive arts therapy as personal, relational and artistic practices. By attending to the emergent, I discovered that research, like art-making and therapeutic practice, is “not done, but lived” (Irwin, 2004, 33). During my dissertation study, I came to appreciate the ways in which I live nel mezzo, navigating my interconnected and sometimes conflicting positions as an artist/researcher/teacher/therapist in the practice of expressive arts therapy. I experienced myself as an artist, curating a dissertation through art and writing while simultaneously engaging in my personal art-making practice; a researcher, curiously inquiring into the complex, artful
relationships between a/r/t/t as well as women’s experiences of expressive arts therapy; a teacher, engaged in relational inquiry with artist/participants as we collectively became a/r/tographers in the study; and a therapist, holding a safe, supportive space for artistic expression and personal reflection. My initial doubts about whether I could be a researcher or if the disciplines of art-making, research and expressive arts therapy could coexist have now been replaced with a desire to be continually engaged in a life-long journey of living inquiry that is grounded in aesthetics and integrated a/r/t/t practice.

An Invitation to Expressive Arts Professionals

Living inquiry, as its name suggests, is “alive.” Researchers in the expressive arts might consider how to live nel mezzo, integrating art, life and work, while opening to the animating nature of our practices. By attending to the relational aesthetic of our discipline (Moon, 2002), we can curate research that explores the interwoven connections between therapist, client, artwork, and community (Leake, 2012). As we (ART)iculate our practices (Leake, 2012), presenting art with graphy, we can contribute aesthetic research that invites others to vicariously inhabit expressive arts experiences, which in turn may evoke aesthetic responses or enhance understanding of the phenomena being studied (Barone & Eisner, 2012). Thus, a/r/tography invites expressive arts practitioners to be actively engaged in continuous arts-based discovery over the course of a lifetime/career, re-searching and re-imagining our work as we go along. By keeping art and art-making at the he(art) of our practice, we can generate artscentric research that evokes further inquiry, contemplation and conversation about the unique nature of our profession.

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References


Map as Theory, Theory as Map

Meditations from the Middle of the Journey

Kathleen Vaughan

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
ché la diritta via era smarrita.

In the middle of the journey of our life
I found myself astray in a dark wood
where the straight road had been lost sight of.

I am in the middle of creating a body of visual art that explores walking in urban woods, using textile maps and written texts. Some of these texts are the work of others: theories of walking, of making, of meaning, as well as Dante’s Commedia, the first line of which gives my series its name and flavour. I use Dante’s Italian in titling my series: much of this project investigates the particularities of form – landforms, forms of mobility, languages, visual and material media – and the challenges and pleasures of translation between them. I see translation as the building of meaning and respectful relationships between forms, with exact equivalencies never possible.

Image 1 (right). Nel mezzo del cammin 1: Bois Summit Woods: 31 Walks (detail)
SUMMIT WOODS

is a reserve, bird sanctuary and managed by the City of West...
Some of the texts in question are those I write myself, such as this one, as part of my own way-finding through the work of making. This text takes its structure from the three modalities essential to my work: the circuitous walking in urban woods, step by step; the juxtaposed piecing of quiltmaking and embroidery, stitch by stitch; and the rocking, interlaced rhyme sequence of Dante’s terza rima, foot by foot.2

Like all these expressive forms, this text is something of a meander, a looping wander through the consideration of how theory and making entwine in this current body of work. And so in the associative manner of a walk in the woods – tree by tree, step by step – I explore the intentions and processes of this work, its contexts of creation, and the considerations of map-making and translation embedded within it.

I write with reference to two textile maps, each an interpretation of multiple walks in a specific urban wood in Montreal, Quebec, a way of invoking and embodying the experience of coming to know a naturalized terrain through repeated walks throughout the seasons of recent years. The maps can be construed as a means by which I find, and show that I have found, my way through the woods, these being the actual treed terrains I navigate as well as, Dante-esque, a metaphor for life’s complex and varied challenges. Of course, mapmaking – however metaphorical – is irrevocably about demonstrating and sharing knowledge about place and belonging, about safe trajectories, about mobility and transmutability: “It is hard to look at a map without sensing, in our bones, private hopes and secret fears about change.”3 My maps both reveal and resist recent changes in my life, described later in this text.

But mostly, the maps of Nel mezzo del cammin are about joy and gratitude. These works bring together two aspects of life I love. One: I offer a representation of my delight in walking, in feeling my body move through this terrain, strong and capable, through weather and landform challenges and shifting seasons. I offer my gratitude for having regular and ongoing access to these particular urban woods, in coming to know and understand something of these corners of the planet through repeated, regular encounters with the lands and their plants and creatures. I bring with me my delight in having my dog as my walking pretext and companion, for his exuberant, bounding joy in these walks is a reflection of my own.

Two: I offer my love of art and making, of the sensual richness of materials, the glory of colour, the deep pleasure in devotional making. Typical of most textile works, these pieces represent a considerable investment of time, skill, thought, and care over hours of mindful work. The maps also reflect the centrality of fibres to human comfort and human culture. Textiles are versatile: they travel transnationally and across time; are evocative of the histories and politics of particularly women’s and children’s making, whether at homes, in guilds, or in factories; and are linked to the full range of practice from contemporary fine arts to craft – be that hipster craftivism or more traditional “grandma” style home-based handiwork – to community-based art-making traditions.4

Nel mezzo del cammin braids these two aspects of my life together through the work of months. My daily walks affect my maps,
with reflective, embodied walking being an occasion to consider and conceptualize the making of the artwork, and their actual routes being integrated into the maps. In a parallel fashion, the hours of hands-on textile work allows me to relive a walk, to plan another one, and to theorize my walking and material practices. Thus, life and art intertwine, with theories of making and theories of walking prompting and flowing from the practices themselves.

This form and role of theory as lived experience is described by artist and community art educator Beverly Naidus,

Theory is not necessarily stuff that is unreadable, incomprehensible, and elitist. It can be an articulation of an understanding that comes from lived experiences. Without that comprehension, people would continually live with a fragmented misunderstanding of what surrounds them daily. Movements of resistance against dominant culture, artistic or otherwise, have either consciously or unconsciously embodied a theory that pushes their ideas forward.

Theory, thus, can be a distillation, a translation of experience. In considering the role of theory in *Nel mezzo del cammin*, I feel it essential that theory be embedded in the specifics of my visual/material practice and emerge from its making rather than be imposed on my work as afterthought. In this way, theory would have a role that, in the words of philosopher Simon Critchley, is “artopetal” – drawn into and touched by the specificity of the art I make – rather than “philosofugal” or top-down and derived from external thoughts.

Artopetally, then, I engage with theories of “material thinking,” as Australian theorist Paul Carter characterizes a visual arts practice. He emphasizes the “creative intelligence of materials” and proposes that “making art is an act of self-realisation (individually and collectively) at that place and time [of making].” With Carter’s orientation to situated specificity in mind, I’ll first describe the visual and material practices of *Nel mezzo del cammin* and then further locate my context of making, suggesting how that affects my work.

Currently I am stitching and piecing fabrics onto two pieces of deep, rich green wool, creating the first two textile maps of the series. This handwork is both analogue and digital, drawing on traditional techniques of quilting and embroidery to indicate my own experience of each place, step by step, stitch by stitch, but also using digital embroidery in a textile transcription of official and informational maps created by surveyors and city planners. These latter I programmed with Embird software into a Brother PR-600 digital sewing machine and stitched in a green colour that closely matches that of the background cloth, making these machine-made marks more subtle and foundational than the more diversely-coloured textile work with which I interpret my individual, lived experience. Some of the machine stitching renders versions of the same text in both French and English—a nod to the politics of Quebec, where French is the province’s zealously policed official language.

*Nel Mezzo del Cammin 1: Bois Summit Woods: 31 Walks* (44 inches high by 60 inches wide) explores the specifics of the small bird sanctuary atop Westmount, at 201 meters above sea level the lowest of the three small
peaks that comprise Montreal’s mountain. In the spring Summit Woods is reserved for nesting birds, but otherwise dogs and their people have off-leash privileges some or all of the day, depending on the season. At just 23 hectares (57 acres), the park is small enough to be crisscrossed with numerous paths, most in earshot if not sight of each other. Into my map I stitch the perambulations of a month’s worth of outings, with 31 different colours tracing the particular route I took on each occasion. I tend to stick to the quieter side routes where my dog and I move single file: on my map these preferred paths are more densely stitched than the wider “straight roads” I travel less. My artwork thus becomes a memento of my experience as much as an evocation of the pleasures of the everyday practices of walking, of making. If I move briskly, I can cover all my preferred paths on foot in about an hour, but re-tracing my steps in embroidery floss will take me longer.

Nel Mezzo del Cammin 2: Arboretum
Morgan Arboretum: 30 Walks (60 inches high by 40 inches wide) takes us to the western tip of the island of Montreal, to what, at 245 hectares (620 acres), is a much larger and wilder forested reserve, best reached by car when I have a good chunk of time to spend. My favourite walks push me towards the perimeters of the Arboretum terrain, to the furthest flung routes that permit canine accompaniment. In a couple of hours my dog and I can range for more than 5 kilometres, often via the less traveled paths out by Pullin’s Pasture and through under-used swampy and low-lying lands. For this map, I use a mix of patterns to designate specific identified landforms: knolls, ponds, fields, paths, and other features. I work with fabrics that I have found, purchased, and solicited from others who know this space and or walk with me here, a reference to the traditions of collaboration in textile practices. Here, so far, quilting and piecing precede hand stitching, and build on digital embroidery replicating details of the paper map the Arbo hands out to visitors.

I have access to this expensive commercial-grade digital embroidery machine, given my status as a research member of Hexagram-Concordia, a centre for research-creation in media arts and technologies at Concordia University, where I am assistant professor of Art Education. I took up this position in 2008, prompting my move back to my native Montreal after spending more than 20 years in Toronto. Indeed, I am one of the many artists and scholars who change locations to find meaningful work in the academy, often leaving the larger metropolitan centres of their graduate work for distant locations where the jobs are. Even before this move I was deeply engaged with thematics of place and home; however, since my change of abode, my exploration is more urgent. My move aligns me with the millions of individuals around the world who leave home to secure a better life for themselves and their families: in our era of global mobility (enforced and voluntary) 214 million individuals worldwide are classed as “migrants.” As Australian Paul Carter has put it, “the impulse to identify poiesis, or ‘making,’ with place-making is no doubt a widespread migrant tendency.” My work thus reflects a broader cultural impulse, given this particular moment and social trend, as much as it maps my own changed location.

Because I work in academia, I don’t simply make artwork, I engage in what is known as “research-creation,” the name given to art-making-as-research by Canadian funding agencies and universities. Research-creation, known elsewhere in the English-speaking world as practice-based research, is a relatively new construct, with artists, academics, theorists and funding bodies rushing to define terms and claim territory. As we artists think about and are funded to create art-as-research, we are increasingly called upon to theorize the ways in which art “knows,” how knowledge is embedded in art, how a viewer or audience member might engage with or benefit from the completed work of research-creation. An aspect of this work is translation between modalities: articulating in words what the visual-haptic artwork embodies, describing in language the methods of practice invoked in making and writing about the work, adapting methods frequently aligned with more linguistically-oriented procedures of qualitative research. And so while I have my hands in materials, I also have obligations to conceptual paradigms and structures of practice, to theories and methods, that inform both how I understand and make art and how I mentor.
my students to do so. I both welcome and resist these obligations, which bring complexity and enhanced understanding to my mind and work, but trouble and vex me, too.

What is particularly vexatious is my inadequacy in articulating a project’s material thinking in the language of words, which always seems both insufficient and too explicit. This translation between the material and the verbal modes can be as fraught and delicate as the translation between languages, between the Italian terza rima of Dante’s Renaissance poem and its more contemporary English-language versions. After all, as poet James Merrill has written in his commentary on the rendering into English of the Commedia, “ours is an age of indefatigable (if not always great) translation.”17 It is not only a question of finding comparable concepts and meanings; it is also a question of finding some way to give voice to the specifics of a completely different form. With respect to visual art, the problem is twofold. One aspect pertains
to the “excess of articulateness”\textsuperscript{18} of materi-
ality, which is so abundant of meaning that language cannot approximate its density: “the picture is worth 1000 words” line of thought. The other issue that troubles translation of visual media into words is the fact that artwork is “violent.” Such was Roland Barthes’s accu-
sation against the photograph, not because of any brutality of content, but rather because the photo – like other visual forms – “fills the sight by force, [italics in original] and in it nothing can be refused or transformed.”\textsuperscript{19}

Cognizant of the forcefulness with which the visual addresses us, and mindful that what is seen cannot be unseen, in bringing visuals of my textile maps into this article I do not offer the full image of the map-in-progress, which will continue to evolve and change as I work it towards completion. I feel cautious and protective about releasing full frame im-
gages of the work as it is underway. Rather, I tender photographs of a few key details that bring the visual and tactile specificity of component parts as close to the reader’s eye and hand as possible—the equivalent of quoting a stanza or a phrase rather than the whole 14,000 line epic, to stick with the Dante-
an metaphor. I will spare you the theory of fragments, of collage as research method,\textsuperscript{20} that goes with this offering and underpins my making. But in fact, the requirement to find or make and articulate a theory of prac-
tice thrills me, for it takes me to the edge of my thinking and urges me to push into that which I do not yet know. And it is exciting to be flying off the edge.

It is also important that, despite our vexa-
tions, artists are taking on this work of detail-
ing, describing, and defining the theories that drive us. After all, as an artist of my acquain-
tance said to me recently, “If we artists aren’t defining the theories of creative practice, then who is defining them for us? And by what au-
thority?” Pondering those questions since, I have also been wondering how others’ defi-
nitions might affect our material, intellectual, and emotional worlds. Since theory is an “intervention in the world,”\textsuperscript{21} as education scholar and psychoanalyst Deborah Britzman reminds us, it is important to know who is making that intervention and what its pur-
pose might be. And of course theory can be a map by which we view and navigate our worlds.

Theory as map, textile map as theory. In-
deed, the artwork has been called a “theorizing object” by interdisciplinary scholar and film-
maker Mieke Bal, who suggests that a “theore-
tically strong work of art (one that proposes its own theory) has something to contribute to the way we look at art—at this particular piece, at others ‘like it,’ at art in general.”\textsuperscript{22} As the maker of a series of works still underway, I would propose that a current function of my artwork is to both generate and respond to theories relevant to its own making. Indeed, I say to my works in \textit{Nel mezzo del cammin} what Dante said to Virgil, as they continued on their walk, “you are my guide, my master and my teacher.”

On the one hand, \textit{Nel mezzo del cammin} proposes walking and making as practices that are perpetual, not confined or delimited by a particular self-contained event or item, no matter what the state of completion of a work. In this way, I agree with anthropolo-
gist Ted Ingold, who insists that we consider creativity to be at once “itinerant, improvisa-
tory and rhythmic.”\textsuperscript{23} Drawing on theory proposed by Deleuze and Guattari as well as
aligned ideas of artists Paul Klee and John Berger, Ingold sees creative practice as a line of flight, a means of giving life, a dynamic collaboration of forces and materials evident in the engagement between the active maker and her medium. He writes,

…the role of the artist – as that of any skilled practitioner – is not to give effect to a preconceived idea, novel or not, but to join with and follow the forces and flows of material that bring the form of the work into being. The work invites the viewer to join the artist as a fellow traveller, to look with it as it unfolds in the world, rather than behind it to an originating intention of which it is the final product.24

As I have written above, my intentions for Nel mezzo del cammin include embodying – translating, perhaps – my joy in walking and in making. I see this orientation to intention as dynamically linked to my love of process, visualizing the two as connected pathways throughout the wooded terrain of my practices as artist and researcher. At times I favour certain paths over others, but it is the walking, the working, and even the struggling to translate between modalities, between theory and practice, that refines my artwork and brings it into being. And thus the making and the walking continue.

tu duca, tu segnore e tu maestro.
Così li dissi; e poi che mosso fue,
intrai per lo cammino alto e silvestro.

You are my guide, my master and my teacher.
This is what I said, and when he moved
I entered on the deep and savage path.25

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Endnotes

1. This translation is by Seamus Heaney, like me, a lover of bog lands, wildish landscapes, and the histories embedded within them. His translation of the first three cantos of the _Commedia_ can be found in Daniel Halpern’s edited volume, _Dante’s Inferno: Translations by 20 Contemporary Poets_ (New York: Ecco Press, 1993), 3. Merrill’s “Introduction” to this volume explores the significant challenges of rendering the well-known and often-translated first canto into English. A compendium of versions can be found online at blogger Tim Love’s _Litrefs_ site, http://litrefsarticles.blogspot.com/2012/04/translating-dantes-la-commedia-divina.html

2. Composed of a series of three-line stanzas or tercets, _terza rima_ requires that the middle line of one tercet rhyme with the first and third lines of the next tercet. This creates a characteristic back-and-forth cadence that counters the forward thrust of narrative or meter. The rhyming sequence is thus ABA BCB CDC, etc. On the structure and effects of the _terza rima_ see J.S.P. Tatlock’s “Dante’s _Terza Rima_,” _PMLA_ 51, no. 4 (December 1936), 895-903.


4. For a dense, excellent introduction to the multiple facets of textiles, see the edited volume by Joan Livingstone and John Ploof, _The Object of Labour: Art, Cloth, and Cultural Production_ (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007).


6. Simon Critchley, “‘The Infinite Demand of Art,’” _Art & Research: A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods_ 3, no. 2 (Summer 2010), 3. Retrieved from http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v3n2/critchley.php Critchley further suggests “that a certain top-down model or ‘theory as legitimation of the artist’ model of the relation between theory and practice has grown old and I think that’s a good thing” (p. 1), remarking that we have all seen ineffective art that sits too close to fashionable contemporary theory, illustrating it.


9. The City of Westmount has the briefest of material about Summit Woods on its own site: http://www.westmount.org/page.cfm?Section_ID=2&Menu_Item_ID=24&Menu_Item_Sub=41 More detailed information can be found on the website of _Les amis de la montagne_ [Friends of the Mountain], an independent registered charitable organization oriented to environmental education. This site offers geological and naturalistic, as well as historical details on the full expanse of Mount Royal and its three peaks, emphasizing the _Colline de la Croix_ (or Mount Royal “proper”) but with some discussion of Westmount and Summit Woods. See http://www.lemontroyal.qc.ca/en/learn-about-mount-royal/homepage.sn

10. The Arboretum is part of McGill University’s MacDonald College campus. For the Morgan Arboretum’s official site, see http://www.morganarboretum.org/fma/
11. A full elaboration of Hexagram’s mission, members, and resources is available on its site: http://hexagram.concordia.ca/


15. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), a federal funding body, defines research-creation as “A creative process that comprises an essential part of a research activity, and fosters the development and renewal of knowledge through aesthetic, technical, instrumental or other innovations. Both the research and the resulting literary/artistic work(s) must meet merit review standards of excellence and be suitable for publication, public performance or viewing.” (SSHRC, Definitions of terms, accessed February 15, 2013, http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programmes/definitions-eng.aspx#a22), while the Fonds Québécois de Recherche Société et Culture (FQRSC), a provincial funding body, offers a slightly different articulation: “…as research activities or processes that foster the creation or interpretation/performance of literary or artistic works of all kinds. For the purposes of this program, interpretation is a synonym of creation and cannot be understood to mean the intellectual process of analyzing the work of a creator. Research-creation in arts and letters comprises ongoing creative practice, the reflective process innate in the creation of original works or productions, and the dissemination of these works in various forms. Research-creation must contribute to development of the field through renewal of knowledge or know-how and through aesthetic, technical, instrumental or other innovations.” (FQRSC, Postdoctoral Research-Creation Scholarships, accessed February 15, 2013, http://www.fqrsc.gouv.qc.ca/en/bourses/id-21.php)


17. James Merrill, “Introduction,” in Dante’s Inferno, ix.

18. Carter, Material Thinking, xii


24. Ibid., 97.


References


Andrew Harwood

Matte

Matte is an exhibition that aims to reclaim the formalist elements of late modernisms— that of abstraction and that with postmodern and meta-modern twists—to reclaim abstraction for queers. I might be so inclined to believe that, at this juncture in history as humans, and including queers, we might be completely over-represented. Figurative representation, conversely, has been absolutely necessary in forming queer identities over the past century and even more importantly during the height of the AIDS epidemic. We were here—we were and are alive. What though of our inner lives and those ideas that need a form but can only be expressed in formalist and abstract terms?... I will always believe that “all that glitters is gold.” Matte is an examination and a continuation of playing with aesthetics that are beyond my own accepted practice yet remain true to my own history, identity and style.
Above, left: *For Yves Klein*, pom-poms, glue and matte acrylic on wood, 8” x 5”.

Above, right: *For K. M.*, pom-poms, hot glue, florist’s foam on plywood, 12” x 6”.

Opposite: *If Cy Twombly Was My Boyfriend?*, florist’s foam and glue on enamel on plywood, 3’ x 4’.
On the surface of a performance is a simple pleasure—the willingness to receive. Deeper, there is a not so simple pleasure—the openness to change. This goes for both performer and audience. Of course, on the performer’s part, there is an added act—giving.

The book I’ve been writing for some time is titled We Plié. It’s one poem in five sections of twenty, in which I write one piece, then write from it for the next. This is a fold, a dance of folds.

At a recent arts event I was asked to read revisions of my poetry. Instead, I chose to read and re-read. This is a revision. Much like re-reading this text, reading and re-reading in performance is an echo, a fold of reception, gift, and change. In the performance there are a couple of things going on. I am presented and the poem is presented to the audience and to myself. I read my work, myself, and read the audience. Nothing unusual so far. However, because of the syntactic bridges and suspended meaning in my poetry, my words become more musical. A pleasure of reception is enhanced; openness to change is fostered in this musical act of giving.
The reading/performance becomes a form of doubled research, another folding in the poetry’s suspension of meaning. Suspending meaning isn’t a denial of gift, or reception, or change; it doesn’t deny. In essence it permits a life and a death to occur simultaneously—a beginning and end, the beginning of a living concept and the end of a static one. My poetry is lyric, but it doesn’t follow the lyric tradition of recuperating the subject of the poem, as in Sappho, or Wordsworth. Those lyrics reify the object of the call (Nature, sister, lover) by subsuming them into the lyric act, the song. My work provides a lyric moment without the recuperative gesture—in this way it is a dance. In performance, my poetry can dance in these suspensions with the audience.

At the end of my reading I read a poem and mentioned to the audience I would provide some context as a post-script. I would read poetry that in itself is a folding, then situate the audience with context and read the poem again. From my perspective this is a sounding. It’s like placing an echo-locator in the room. The locator is the performance, the people, the poem; and everyone knows it, expects it, anticipates.

To get a better idea, let’s try to replicate the experience here. I will present the poem I read, will provide some context and then will re-present it. Holding true to the idea that this is a form of research, it would be useful for you, the reader, to reflect on gift, reception, and change within suspended meaning. These are the echoes located, the meaning “sounded.” Their composite is evidence articulated, the “things” that can be shared with others as parcels of meaning, of research.

here, hold this—a loose leg a tongue tip.

the moment curiosity quits ‘cross a face, open eyed— its limit.
tongue-tied, close to the world
awash in misfit molecule, cut electric.
what exhale confirms gamete
sets spots before our eyes.
done deal,
trucked onus—tho before all of it a nose

a tail to an un-matted future.
I dislike parsing. Describing art is physically challenging. Description disrupts the balance between creator and created, subject and object. (Description breaks down the body.) Poetry struggles to materialize itself independent of language. Context situates the word and in it the word struggles for its independence. We know color and space remain independent of painting or architecture. However, in the name of research it can be reasonable to engage in a process of archeology of sorts. The life of the poem can remain vital even when clouded by context, as can the life of the reader or listener.

This vitality is found at the moment of the gift, in giving and receiving. Language often drags along meaning as a step-child, and we become enamored with the second-meaning rather than the birth of it, the durability of change within it, the capacity of it to hold and emit time and timelessness. It is in the language of birth, change, and time that we discover meaning—in it we do our research.

Fortunately, life eludes the stake in the ground of description. Life also alludes to the fatigue found in description by providing a constant eagerness in renewal. Description is a marker, a grave to which the stake points.

This is the last poem in the section of We Plié titled “Life Living Life.” I wrote it twenty-four hours after my cat Rio was put to death in my arms. He was seventeen, and with me for the life of this book, my current marriage, the life of my dog, three jobs, four cars, six houses, the end of my previous
marriage, and the publication of my first book. Before his kidney-failure, his bladder problems, his thyroiditis, he was calm but nutty—“Rio” is short for me río, “I laugh” in Spanish.

The poem is not about him. It is “about” the process of life that engages the stake of description – death – with a phantom limb. It is, as best I can, a reach into an end and a placement of a marker in suspension. It’s an effort to confirm a twin that when read twins him, me, poem, audience and, with the clearest artifact of life, the resonance of life-in-death.

That artifact in the midst of lyric history is claimed as recuperation. In my poetry I wholeheartedly deny it. For received lyric history as recuperative act is a denial of the true gift of the song. Without this true gift, mutability is lost. We give up our willingness to sustain change—a death itself.

An example: As I read the poem on the preceding page (prior to description), I prefaced it with “Were I Robert Creeley I would likely cry upon reading this. But, I lack his humility.” After performing/reading the poem and providing context, in the vitality of personal change, I began to re-read and struggled haltingly through tears—in the midst of this twice-received gift of mutability.

To again suspend, I ask you to re-read the first poem—to do “research” into that mutability. I feel when we re-position ourselves in the midst of context we discover a key to our humanness and can uncover a new mode of discovery. The discovery is that context itself can be suspended (and is in fact in flux) if we now willfully permit the poem to echo-locate our prior selves—to see if your previous self still exists there; for there is where the poem breaks free.
Seeing
Jean-Luc Nancy

See the world see it spread out before you –
seeing: it’s the world spread out before you –
seeing spreads before you the world, before me,
splits it from me, splits
me from it,
unfurls it and folds me away
in depth, width, height,
in colours, values, glimmers,
and all that shapes the living delight
of the luminous, of the shining,
of the clarity constituent
in which things can reveal themselves as things,
appear.

The diaphanous is that which spreads itself before me
between me and things
beginning in my eye with a windowed
body and a lens,
tissue of translucent flesh,
limpid as water,
humour where the gaze bathes,
humour that watches, in tears,
the spectacle, flashes, shadows,
the unfurling of the world before me.

So I am always removed further back, always deeper in
to this vision –
Oh! Vision draws always further back
into the ineludibly dark point seen
by no eye,
and neither does it see itself
Punctum caecum.

Punctum caecum: ego.
I see, I see, there is before me,
there is a before, there are sides to the left and right,
and a behind-me hidden always,
the invisible back of my eye
and of my sitting and of the vile
always behind me.
What is in extension of world around me is more than the visible: I can also discover it in the advance of my arms, of my hands and in all the movement of my body advancing, receding, and in the way air envelops and blankets my face, eyes closed, eyes blind, and in the contours I feel and in the faraway distances that touch me with their rumbling.

And yet distancing is the most split once it lets itself be seen, sliding towards the invisible, at the edge, at the horizon, the line of the last disappearance — we may fear the whole of it because behind it both unformed and unappearing are possible; even worse—other apparitions, unsuspected, detach themselves upon other horizons further back each time, and it never ceases, the distancing of the even further away and the nearer never ceases to come towards me touching, blinding me, the exorbitant visible.

Come-and-go between two lovers: the embrace steals their sight —even steals their life a little, life, sight, the infinite pursuit.

Lovers have to split apart so they can see each other
- --- you and you –
and then plunge again into the invisible the unlivable lively beat, dazzling
\textit{in the deep and clear subsistence}
\textit{of the high-up light}
\textit{as iris to iris}
\textit{light reflected within the self}

Your eyes, to see your eyes no more than my own never to see living vision but to enter with eyes wide open into its limitless behind-world where nothing more can be seen near or far

like the moment you leave the cinema.

\textit{Translated from the French by Jessica Moore}
Voir
Jean-Luc Nancy

Voir le monde le voir étendu devant soi
Voir : c’est le monde étendu devant soi
Voir étend devant soi le monde, devant moi,
Il l’écarte de moi, il m’écarte de lui,
Il le déploie il me replie
En profondeur, largeur, hauteur,
En couleurs, en valeurs, en lueurs,
Et tout ce qui fait le très vif bonheur
Du lumineux, du luisant,
De la clarté élément dans lequel
Les choses peuvent se montrer choses,
Paraître.

Le diaphane est cela qui s’étend devant moi
Entre moi et les choses
Commencant dans mon œil par un corps vitré
Et par un cristallin,
Tissus de chair translucide,
Aussi limpide qu’une eau,
Humeur où baigne le regard,
Humeur qui regarde en larmes
Le spectacle, les éclairs, les ombres,
Le déploiement du monde devant moi.

Ainsi me retire toujours plus en arrière, toujours plus au fond,
De cette vision –
Oh ! la vision toujours recule plus profond
Dans le point forcément obscur
Qui ne se donne à voir à aucun œil
Et qui ne se voit pas non plus lui-même,
**Punctum caecum.**

**Punctum caecum : ego.**
Je vois, je vois, il y a devant moi,
Il y a un devant, des côtés à gauche et à droite,
Et un arrière dérobé toujours,
L’arrière invisible de mon voir
Et celui de mon asseoir et de l’immonde
Toujours derrière moi.
Ce qui est en extension de monde autour de moi est plus que le visible : je peux le découvrir aussi dans l’avancée de mes bras, de mes mains et dans tout le mouvement de mon corps avançant, reculant et dans la façon dont l’air enveloppe et nappe mon visage, les yeux clos, les yeux aveugles, et dans les reliefs que je palpe et dans les lointains qui me touchent de leurs rumeurs.

L’éloignement pourtant est le plus écarté lorsqu’il se fait voir, glissant à l’invisible, Au bout, à l’horizon, la ligne de la disparition dernière Don’t on peut tout craindre car derrière elle est possible L’iniforme et l’inappaissant Ou bien peut-être pire encore d’autres apparitions, insoupçonnées, Se détachant sur d’autres horizons plus reculés à chaque fois Sans que ces jamais l’éloignement du plus lointain encore Et sans que le plus proche cesse de se porter Vers moi A me toucher, à m’aveugler, visible exorbitant.

Va-et-vient entre deux amants : l’étreinte leur ôte la vue – pour un peu leur ôte la vie, La vie, la vue, la poursuite infinie.

Les amants il leur faut s’écarter pour se voir - --- toi et toi - Et de nouveau plonger dans l’invisible et l’invivable Battement vif, Éblouissement Dans la profonde et claire subsistance De la haute lumière Comme iris en iris Lumière en soi réfléchie

Tes yeux, voir tes yeux pas plus que les miens Ne jamais voir la vision vive Mais entrer les yeux grand ouverts Dans son arrière-monde sans fond Où plus rien n’est à voir ni proche ni lointain Comme à la sortie du cinéma.
Jane Dalton  
*Altered Perspectives: Shaping Teachers’ Experiences through Arts-Based Professional Development*

Teachers have one of the highest attrition rates of any profession. A myriad of reasons can be cited for teacher dissatisfaction; however, the challenges teachers face regarding the increased pressures of accountability and standardization, and the toll they take on teaching creatively and autonomously, using one’s own gifts and talents, is a reoccurring theme. Research is clear about the need for professional development that is not a one-size fits all approach. Although effective professional development has been proven to successfully impact teacher renewal and retention, there is a gap in the research that explores using the expressive arts framework for support and renewal of K-12 teachers in a professional development model that allows teachers to reflect critically on their practice and to fashion new knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learning. This study was designed to investigate the changes that occur for K-12 teachers who experience professional development in the arts. The results of this study are discussed in terms of experienced teachers’ professional development in the arts, transformative learning, and expressive arts therapy. This qualitative study used interviews and arts-based methodology for data collection, to analyze the experiences of teachers who attended arts-based professional development. All participants in this study expressed experience change after participating in arts-based professional development. The changes that occurred can be categorized as professional, personal, or a combination of the two, allowing teachers to make new interpretations, differentiate from previous constructed ideas, and transform these into new knowledge. The implications of this study point towards a shift in thinking about how best to support K-12 teachers through pro-
professional development that not only includes but embraces artistic experiences as a valuable tool for personal and professional growth. This study advances dialogue on how expressive arts can be used within education for professional development that supports and offers tools for K-12 teachers to sustain the fire to teach.

Lorena Fernandez
The Effects of Expressive Arts on Decision-Making: Sense-making in Situations of Complexity and Ambiguity

The increase in personal and global interdependence, interconnectedness, and diversity is compelling individuals and organizations to make decisions in situations of escalating complexity and ambiguity. There is a need to find methods that allow individuals to make sense of complex situations where no clear way of proceeding is evident. In this dissertation, the researcher focuses on expressive arts methods to facilitate sense-making and decision-making in situations of high complexity and ambiguity. This qualitative research is an exploration of the questions: What can we learn from high functioning people about the value of their artistic practices in helping them to make good decisions? and, How can this knowledge be integrated with expressive arts coaching to help individuals and groups strengthen their own decision-making processes? The first part of this study included interviews with a diverse group of high functioning, well-adapted, successful individuals who consistently practiced the arts. They were interviewed about how making art functioned in their lives from childhood up to the moment of the interview. The second part of this study included one group expressive arts workshop and individual expressive arts sessions designed to facilitate decision-making about specific questions brought in by the participants. All of the questions were about situations of high ambiguity where no clear path was readily identifiable, such as: (a) What is my role in the community? (b) How can I fit more on my plate without taking anything off? (c) What should I do next professionally? (d) What should I look for in a future mate? and (e) How can I move forward in my art career? The research resulted in a number of important findings. From the interviews, it was found that practicing the arts played a role in five domains of the interviewees' lives. These domains were: The Self, Emotional Management, Connection to People, Connection to the World, and Creative Visualization. These five domains were visualized as a network to understand their relationships in accordance with ideas from the complex adaptive system metaphor. The issue of resistance to expressive arts methods from people unfamiliar with them was linked to the relation between the exploration of new possibilities and the exploitation of old certainties, which is a concern for all complex adaptive systems including individuals and organizations. In this study, the researcher helped to identify ways in which expressive arts can contribute to decision making: (a) it was observed that expressive arts allowed individuals to turn ambiguous situations into comprehended ones, explicitly in words, which permitted them to take action: either deciding something mentally and/or implementing a decision, (b) expressive arts allowed people to manage emotions while making decisions, and (c) to manage emotions while implementing decisions. The use of expressive arts highlighted personal and environmental unfolding, emergence, agency, flow, and transience that could have been ob-
secured by using exclusively analytical methods for sense-making and decision-making. The encouraging findings obtained in this research advocate further, extensive, and in-depth explorations of the use of expressive arts as a tool for sense-making and decision-making—for individuals and groups—in situations of high complexity, ambiguity, and emotionality.

Jena Leake
Re-imagining Life Through Art

This arts-based dissertation explores women’s experiences of personal transformation and healing in expressive arts therapy. The study examines a studio-based approach to expressive arts therapy, in which individual and therapeutic artistic work takes place within a group format in a studio environment. The co-researchers are artist/participants who have been actively involved in The Art Life Studio, the researcher’s expressive arts therapy studio.

The study reflects upon women’s individual and communal experiences of re-imagining their lives as they engage in visual art-making, movement, writing, storytelling, and ritual. Artwork and writing from artist/participants are presented throughout the dissertation as aesthetic renderings of women’s experiences. An art exhibit and performance ritual convey artist/participants’ personal stories of transformation and the role of community in healing.

Through the methodology of a/r/tography, the researcher documents and investigates her practice of studio expressive arts therapy, integrating her contiguous roles as artist/researcher/teacher/therapist. Drawing on theoretical approaches to expressive arts therapy, women’s psychological theories of growth and change, and a/r/tographical methods of living inquiry through art-based practice, this study investigates the relational aesthetics of expressive arts therapy.

Janet Mermey A.K.A. Maryam Mermey
The Transformation of Power in the Bullying Cycle Through the Theatre of the Expressive Arts Model: What Is the Lived Experience of Elementary and Middle School Students Who Play the Role of the Bully?

“The Transformation of Power in the Bullying Cycle Through the Theatre of the Expressive Arts Model: What Is the Lived Experience of Elementary and Middle School Students Who Play the Role of the Bully?” was explored in the framework of hermeneutical phenomenology conducted in three Transforming the Bullying Cycle Through Expressive Arts workshops presented in California, Maine, and Massachusetts. The workshops took place over the span of a year with populations from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. An intermodal approach was taken, which layered theatre, visual, performing, and film arts in an artistic exploration of the roles of the bully, the target, the witness, and the hero, with a chance to reenact the character of the bully and make changes to the participants’ visual art projects. The entire workshop—including exit interviews and a sample of follow-up interviews with workshop participants—as well as personal interviews with professionals on issues central to the bullying dynamic—was professionally filmed and made into a series of five DVDs through a process of art reduction. The students were viewed as the experts on the research question.
For the majority of the youth in all three workshops, the lived experience of playing the role of the bully through the Theatre of the Expressive Arts engendered empathy and compassion for both the bully and the target as two different faces of the same suffering. Using a catalytic validity model informed by the pedagogy of playfulness, the data showed that most of the young people were inspired to transform the power of the bully to hurt into the power of the hero to help.

Lucia (Sarva) Posey
*Life Worthy of Life*

The fate of Nazi Euthanasia victims exerts influence on their descendants in the generations after the death of the victims. Researching these influences has a certain immediacy given the age of the descendants of World War II and the secrecy the families maintain about having a Euthanasia victim in the family. The Euthanasia killings were supposedly intended to further the German race both through the elimination of hereditary diseases and the eradication of people who did not fit into a society of Aryan superiority. This included long-term patients of psychiatric hospitals, homeless people, prostitutes, homosexuals, traumatized World War I soldiers, and prisoners of war.

To break through the secrecy and taboo concerning Euthanasia victims, decentering with art making is used throughout this research. This study also reveals the subjective journey of the researcher who fits into the category of *descendant of a Euthanasia victim*.

The findings demonstrate how the atrocities committed on this disadvantaged population influence the descendants of the Euthanasia victims expressed as intergenerational trauma, which is uncovered in the repressed conscious and unconscious of the descendants. The theoretical framework for this research comes from Bar-On who researched the lives of the descendants of Holocaust victims.

This study uncovers how shame of having a disabled relative has prevented researchers from delving into the lives of the descendants, and how, for the descendants, overcoming this dilemma can add quality their lives. Activism and self-care help the participants to separate their lives from the lives of the victims. Despite difficult circumstances, the participants have been able to find meaning in life. Decentering with art making during the interview helped deepen the participants’ responses.

Sabine Silberberg
*Illuminating Liminality—A Collaborative Photo-based Process with People Affected by Marginalization*

Unpredictability is a life circumstance for people living with the effects of marginalization in a HIV/AIDS organization in Vancouver, BC – the location of the research project. Harm reduction as a core model of care guided the project’s conceptualization and facilitation. “Meeting people where they are at,” a core maxim of this approach, calls for closing the moral distance between drug addict and care worker, challenging stigmatization while promoting acceptance and engagement as core aspects of therapeutic relationships. A collaborative photo-based process was offered to six individuals, and integrated into the researcher’s already existing role as counsellor/expressive arts therapist.

Phenomenology and visual ethnography
presented themselves as methodologies for an inquiry into what seemed unsayable and invisible. Preparatory photography projects, introduced over two years before this study began, made a difference in the participants’ ambivalent relationships with the medium.

The process revealed the participants’ resilience in considering marginalization as a teacher. It allowed them to gain an awareness of their strengths and resources, and to use the camera to actively negotiate their assigned status in permanent liminality. They developed an emerging relationship with photography as an additional resource, and experienced the collaborative therapeutic relationship as a liminal peer. The process opened flexible entry points into six creative processes, with beauty as an ally and life-affirming presence. Resilience, understood social-ecologically as deeply contextual, revealed itself as the participants’ active negotiation and navigation of creative and relational resources, and as their attribution of meaning to the shifts in perception they experienced.

The combined principles of expressive arts, harm reduction, and resilience theory created the conditions for both the participants and the researcher to welcome the emergent in the service of reconnection, greater self-determination, and a poetic shaping of perceptions.

Media and Communication

Micah White

Post-Search—Libraries, Search Engines and the Organization of Knowledge

This dissertation examines the meaning of searching by exploring the origins and consequences of the two dominant ways of organizing knowledge: libraries and search engines. Structured around four lines of approach—historical, philosophical, literary, and cultural—the dissertation begins by challenging the traditional historical assumption that the keyword indexing of search engines like Google and the subject hierarchy categorization of academic libraries are fundamentally opposed. I then consider the apotheosis of contemporary knowledge organization, Wikipedia. I argue that the associative indexing system of Wiki-
pedia carries within it a trauma that makes it a system designed not for remembering but for forgetting. Debates over the utility of search engines and libraries often assume there is only one kind of searching. From a literary perspective I propose that there are instead several kinds of search, only two of which are addressed by search engines. Finally, I conclude the dissertation by proposing that the era of search may already be drawing to a close and that we are entering a post-search world where information flows replace active seeking.

Lorella Di Cintio
Choosing Ethics over Aesthetics: The Designer’s Dilemma

If design is creatively purposive, then what purpose does it serve? Can the rubric of consumption be a two-way street between prosperity and sustainability? What would happen if there were intended ethical components applied to design? Is it possible to design in opposition to the demands of the market? The discussion contained within this thesis attempts to commingle philosophical ideas of aesthetics and ethics within the design practice. Taking a cue from legal terminology, Piercing the Veil aims to provide evidence that a “breach of trust” has occurred within the design community. How has this happened, and who is responsible? Have corporate market demands denied designers the opportunity to pursue or practice ethical behaviors? Are designers being used as agents for global capitalism? If a breach of trust has occurred, is it not time to seek justice for the designed object or designed space, or for the users and non-users of the objects or spaces? Should we go so far as to call for the end of design and designers? This study maps out four areas: (1) aesthetics; (2) ethics; (3) justice; and (4) the redirection of design practice into design activism. These themes explore responsibility and duty, applied environmental ethics, and social justice theory, and present them alongside queries regarding the need for a new discipline. The concluding chapter points towards practical pursuits in pedagogy and social justice with the underlying premise that institutions of higher learning and the design profession are in need of a radical reordering.

Michail Tegos
The Infinite of Force

For Hegel, force is finite insofar as it is taken in its separation, one-sidedness and immediacy. The infinite of force refers to the self-becoming infinite of the finite itself; to the destruction of the separation and opposition of interior and exterior. It refers to the rupture, to the transformation into quality and the birth of the new out of the old; it is activity against itself. “True” infinity, as opposed to the “spurious infinite” of quantitative repetition which only redeploys its own limit, describes the movement of the metaphysical and
the dialectical moments in their vanishing contradictory unity; the separate and the inseparate, the immanent and the transcendent, the mobile and the immobile, in the spiraling advent of the new. The Infinite of Force marks a double trajectory; on the one hand, it makes a brief History of Philosophy, of its negations and turnings—important moments from Parmenides and Heraclitus, Spinoza and Kant, to Hegel and Marx. On the other hand, it makes a claim about the recommencement of the Dialectic as a Philosophy of History, a History and a Philosophy of dialectical and non-dialectical negations and overcomings; contradiction, unity of opposites, and the production of historical quality. The Dialectic is to be conceptualized as a process of Division, whereby matter transforms into knowledge. Secondly, Contradiction refers to the process of knowledge becoming force, essence expressing itself. The Absolute describes the contradictory movement of the two, as theory and practice, as return to practice through the mediation of theory. The fourth step, Totality, or Philosophy, after the double negative and its movement as a whole, represents the moment of Spirit’s forceful closure upon itself, only to enable its recommencement. Force describes the movement of becoming of the subjective and the objective, the struggle of forces as Unity of Opposites and tendency, as action and reaction. Force, although arising from it, is the opposite of place. That which has no place. The Subject (and the subjective), manifests precisely as force in capacity of error, free. But this is a moment, omnipresent and eternal, yet timely and historical. Totalization, decision, and action irrupt in the loins of the repetitive process; they destroy all the past and re-write the possibilities for a future, but also filter the abstract choice and negativity of freedom, through a classical decision, an exclusive Two. The Subject hinges on a radical choice, on a wager. There is no necessity for the hypotheses of the spirit, but the higher hypothesis of its freedom. The universal is localized, in a site, the site of a radical rupture with the laws that brought it to be and sustain it. The Subject’s quality is a history of points; ruptures of force as place and choice; a decision, a break of dialectical immanence, cut with repetition and quality filled with the historical quality of this caesura. The passage is not necessary but a struggle; being an affair of the Spirit and its abysmal freedom, such a site is between immanence and transcendence. The site of this passage, of this cut, is on the edges of the void. Decision, in making whole out of the movement of the not-wholes, by totalizing, posits itself at the end of History.

Henry Warwick
The Alexandria Project

Networked Internet computer systems have created compelling alternatives in traditional media distribution and were noted for their durability by way of their rhizomatic structure that added to, and, in many ways, defined, their resilience. An essential service in all computer technology is the ability to copy data—it is what a computer does all the time in its most routine functions and can be seen as part of its enframing as a technology. These systems of sharing have come into direct conflict with extreme proprietarian regimes in neoliberal intellectual property law, primarily defined by the interests of a vast array of publishing and distribution corporations all actively lobbying governments to enable legislation in their favour, using Lockean property theory as a fig leaf for their avarice. The legislation has resulted in increasingly
long terms of copyright and an amplification of the punishments meted out for infractions, even in jurisdictions outside the USA. The Internet, once lauded for its rhizomatic, overcome-all-obstacles structure has become increasingly arboretic and subject to limitation, amply demonstrated during the uprising in Egypt when the government essentially “switched off” the Internet for the vast majority of uses in Egypt.

The price of hard drives relative to their storage capacity has collapsed. Internet Service Providers have been throttling and choking the bandwidth of users they suspect of file sharing and websites they suspect of providing copywritten data, and are developing systems of tiered Internet access. This confluence has resulted in reactions: the formation of the Access to Knowledge movement inspired by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights Article 27, section 1, which states that everyone has a right to knowledge. Also, with the gradual formation of sub rosa informal networks developing huge collections of ebooks in personal libraries, file sharers have reverted to the Sneakernet, where files are copied to storage media, and then transferred either by hand or post to another computer or drive. The subject of this dissertation is to discuss these issues and personal libraries in such a way that they can be considered a new non-directed, non-hierarchic informal offline file sharing system: The Alexandria Project – a disorganized network of file sharing. This device/system has other effects: the viability of a query-based research practice of a private digital library by an independent researcher to supplement and enrich context-based research traditions and the ease with which vast arrays of knowledge can be copied and distributed, searched, and (re)sought. By examining online systems, such as AAAAAARG. ORG, and comparing them to Alexandria Project drives relative to contemporary property rhetoric, a variety of scenarios are developed, building on insights from the Access to Knowledge movement as well as emerging trends in technology, which enable the Alexandria Project to revive purposes of libraries prior to the printing press and copyright: as objects engaged in the sharing of knowledge through the copying of knowledge substrates.

Selçuk ARTUT
Technology: A Compass Between Materiality and Meta-reality

The human-technology relation is experiencing a period of profound change. The roots of this change belong to the moment when humankind began walking upright, allowing the hand to be used as an apparatus, to become a latent extension of the human body. In a technologically saturated society, human-technology relation plays an essential role in establishing rules of a contemporary life with its demystified dimensions. Current advances in the widespread use of technology have made the subject an increasingly central feature of society and culture. Nevertheless, when such relations are analyzed looking only from a perspective of how humans employ technology, there remains a lack of understanding of the opposite side of our symmetrical relation that is technology-human relations. Besides the reciprocal relationship between humans and technology, ever inherent to our understanding and overcoming of our limitations of the external world. The ethical and social impact of human-technology (technology-human) relation requires a much wider investigative query concerning technology. This dissertation argues that in the wake
of the information revolution of the 21st century, extensively integrated human-technology relationships multiplied the perception of reality while foregrounding the philosophical constructions of the mind, the body and their technological associations. When futurist Ray Kurzweil argues “I think we’ll use machines to expand our own intelligence, so we won’t have trouble keeping up with the machines, we are going to become the machines”; are we really talking about a marriage of materiality with meta-reality? While elaborating on 21st Century Philosophy of Technology, are we signifying the same daemon that embodies the essence Heidegger foresees? If so, what could be the new Bestand?

Geoffrey Bell  
*The Janus-faced Apparatus: A Mediology of Aggregated and Disaggregated Authority in Cyberspace*

How does information (data) infiltrate the global socio-economic fabric with forces that aggregate and disaggregate authority and political alliances? This study uses a mediological approach to examine the politics of cultural transmission in Cyberspace. While the Internet opens up new discursive formations (Foucault) for the multitude (Hardt, Negri), it also incites more disciplinary reactions from The State and corporate establishments. Alliances that embody techniques such as monetary monopoly, intellectual property monopoly, surveillance and agnotology uphold ideologies that aggregate authority resulting in a data industrial complex, a survival mechanism for Empire. Alliances that veer towards decentralization apply techniques such as open-source software, bittorrent software, virtual private networks and crypto-currencies to alter discourse. Ruptures between aggregative and disaggregative techniques oscillate authority in paradoxical directions that open up the Internet to new potentiality. Ultimately, this text argues that the Internet is an apparatus that is Janus-faced, one that provides a clearing for the multitude, a swarm that leads socio-economic change through disintermediation, but with the foresight that this may only prolong itself if the circulation of information remains fluid in Cyberspace.

Sean Smith  
*On Performing the University of Disaster*

This dissertation is a fictocritical account of the aesthetics, politics, and pedagogy underpinning an experimental graduate school of media and communication philosophy. Using a framework borrowed from the theory of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, we suggest that this experimental school has “deterriorialized” from more traditional, sedimentary, institutionalized forms of university education—a process of fluidity and fragility in pedagogy that finds the experimental school more *performed* and *perishable* than the solid bureaucracies of the latter. Even in this deterriorialized form the experimental school borrows from and reproduces certain functions of Michel Foucault’s disciplinary apparatuses, and thus offers a preliminary lens through which to understand its pedagogical processes. In this case, however, the experimental school “reterritorializes” upon itself—partly through what Paul Virilio would refer to as a “stereoscopic” complicity between lived space and instantaneous network time, and partly as a “state of exception” to the rules-based nominal disciplinary order described above. Since both performance and perishability largely underpin this pedagogical space,
questions of virtuosity, archive, and power emerge in concert with those of surveillance, spectacle, and disappearance. The case study thus also invites a critique of the experimental school, read through two concepts of Deleuze and Guattari, the “apparatus of capture” and the “cancerous body without organs.” The dissertation then attempts to engage Wolfgang Schirmacher’s concept of “Homo Generator” and its performance of life techniques through technology (Lebensotechnik), informed by the ontogenetic and relational approaches of Brian Massumi’s “occurrent and activist arts.” The dissertation itself becomes a performative manifestation of pedagogical process, activating hypertext, theory, image, video, poetry, code, sculpture, archive, and performance art to dynamically explore the affordances for intervention in the experimental context described above. In this artful life technique of pedagogical process, Homo Generator is refashioned as Homo Generatus to make explicit the ontogenetic primacy of relation in what Bracha Ettinger refers to as “copoiesis” and Hannah Arendt describes as “natality.” Finally, Erin Manning’s articulation of the “politics of touch” is engaged as an operative gesture to question the problematic of ethics and pedagogy in the societies of control. Virilio’s concept of the “information bomb” is juxtaposed against Paolo Virno’s analysis of the “logico-linguistic resources” offered by jokes to chart courses for innovative action within modulating and contingent topologies of power. The “free radical” is proposed as a third figure between “student” and “teacher” in the context of the experimental school, one whose identity is immanent to and emergent from the pedagogical process, and who may provoke or catalyze both the possibilities for thought and the ethics of an emergent educational collective in a propositionally authoritative rather than authoritative fashion.

Alejandro Cerda Rueda
The Time Given: A Metapsychological Study of the Subject in Analysis and its Political Implication

Subjectivity refers above all to a political process. In such terms, every subject that demands psychoanalytic treatment is placed as a referential element to such a political process. However, we must venture to ask if psychoanalysis is a mere object of a prevailing ideology, or whether we can situate it differently. In its broadest terms, the purpose of this thesis is to examine the position of the subject according to psychoanalysis and what exactly the subject and analyst do with the time given for analysis. Since the political subject is directly linked to the allusion of a community, a social entity (crowd or movement), or a nation-state, we will embark upon defining that every subject that undergoes psychoanalytic treatment is, by all means, rightfully subject to a political dimension. This idea will distance our endeavour from previous definitions of subjects in analysis considered as merely individuals (in the tradition of psychology and/or science), selves or egos, clients, or, in a theatrical sense, personas. We will demonstrate that the subject in analysis poses not only an issue of personal inquiry or an ailment of symptomatic manifestations, but he/she illustrates the necessity for a political project supposed as a question of lay analysis. Henceforth, the following dissertation will revolve around three vectoring questions:

- Why would someone consult a psychoanalyst nowadays?
• What is at stake within the temporal framework established by the psychoanalytic setting?

• Can psychoanalysis give an account of a political dimension through psychoanalytic treatment?

Barbara Fornssler

Identities of Affect-ion: Motioning for a Generative Politic

In the disorientation of philosophical thinking called an opening to thought, this dissertation addresses the fundamental concepts of process, movement, gesture and affect to explore the political as the immanent confluence of eventing that weaves a contingent “us” in becoming. Seeking to affect the relational field through writing, this work serves as an inflection point for the generativeness of political processes and situates gesture as the motioning that most heavily affects our political means. These means set a field of potential to motion and produce what we shall describe as “immanent identity.” Immanent identity is best understood as the liberatory ethic of the subject, come to form in the tonal field of relation. Primarily following the work of Alfred North Whitehead, Gilles Deleuze, and Brian Massumi, a philosophy of process and relation is engaged through an affective resonance that forces a reconsideration of technology-as-gesture and builds on Wolfgang Schirmacher’s philosophy of technology-as-life-technique. How does the gesture—as technology of life technique—enlighten the political in-folding that comes to constitute an identity? How does this in-folding shape and generate an un-folding in the sociopolitical realm? By contrasting categorical and linguistically-coded identities with ontogenetic and “affective” identities, while drawing from the ethnographic and non-representational documentation practices that her collaborative work with the art collective Department of Biological Flow fosters, the author writes her own motioning as a performative intervention in the field of potential, to affectively demonstrate the emergence of identity through embodied practice. This writing is an immanent work rather than one occurring through the more common transcendent frame, even if in writing one ultimately engages a transcendent practice. Offering a critique of the Hegelian dialectic and building from her previous work Affective Cyborgs—in which the figure of “switch” was used to describe how agency can be attained through a moving cyborg body that accepts and negotiates the limits of Absolute thought—the author proposes that the full integration of processual terms offers philosophy a necessary support for addressing the formation of identity aside from Absolute terms or analytic frames, allowing this notion to be engaged as immanently emergent from the field-in-motion. This motioning calls forth Spinoza’s notion of joyful politics, as these must remain embodied for their practice to be constituted as an artful engagement with the lived everyday. This work is a call for becoming better-felt rather than better-thought, through our engagements with becoming-life, such that our motioning shapes the emergent and relational identity called our politics that is commensurate with our collective Politics. Our gesture is our politics and our politics propagate identity. These identities of affection prompt the recursive formation of generative life through the force of affective resonance. Embracing the formation of immanent identity is what allows for agency in the proces-
sual field as this sets in motion the politics of our own generation. This generation is always one of copoiesis, better lived than thought and better experienced than written. This is an identity of love, generated in a politics of joy and emergent from our fondest affections for the “self” as co-constituted with and by the “other.”

Cara Judea Alhadeff

Embodied Democracy: Vulnerability and the Potential of Sexual Ethics

What if sexual and erotic relationships with oneself, one’s environment, and with others became a condition for a just, humanitarian, compassion-based society? What if our bodies and the experiences they produce became models for active citizenship? Could social justice evolve out of an uncanny vulnerability? I am a Turkish Hispanic Jewish American visual artist and writer. My creative and critical work has been frequently censored because I attempt to challenge institutionalized fears of difference. My research focuses on corporeal politics—in particular, vulnerability and the seemingly unfamiliar. As a teacher, I seek contingent encounters in which corporeality and subjectivity become pedagogical strategies for social change. I am proposing an embodied democracy in which social models are based on recognition of the absolute necessity of difference: an infinite potential of our bodies as autonomous and contingent modes of relation. Difference is not reduced to opposition. Audre Lorde invokes the imperative for self-investigation and recognition of difference as fertile ground for contingent encounters: “I urge each one of us to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch that terror and loathing of any difference that lives there.” Lorde’s urgent call is at the core of my work. When we “touch” that difference, we inhabit the potential of the erotics of the uncanny. I explore how we experience the other within ourselves as a key to provoke social agency: the creative potential of what Lorde identified as erotic politics. This social commitment disrupts and reorients our cultural constructs of pleasure and vulnerability, and ultimately who has power and control over our bodies—setting the groundwork for feminisms that embrace the unfamiliar and its accompanying relational tensions. In cultural production, as in reception, vulnerability becomes a vital intervention in public-private discourse. Since the private is construed and constructed as vulnerable and ambiguous, it “requires” unquestioned taxonomies of regulation and normalization. The sanctity of normalcy constitutes a hegemony of representation that colonizes our relationships with our own bodies, in particular, women’s bodies. In contrast, my photographs, self-portrait videos, and theoretical practice investigate participatory citizenship through a conscious integration of the erotic into the everyday. Eroticism can be conceived of as any intensely satisfying sensation of connectedness to oneself, to one’s environment, and to others, in which creativity and work intensify our own and others’ sense of vitality—eroticism is the quintessential dialectic. My experiential definition of the erotic is inherently interdisciplinary. The fluid relations between art, bodies, daily life, and politics are absolutely essential at a time when reactionary, divisive politics dominate our worlds. Georges Bataille demanded of himself a human ecology, what Eduoard Glissant calls “poetics of relation”: “If I want to realize totality in my consciousness, I have to relate myself to an immense, ludicrous, and pain-
ful convulsion of all of humanity... If ever I have occasion to write out my last words in blood, I’ll write this: Everything I lived, said, or wrote—everything I loved—I considered communication. How could I live my life otherwise?” (Bataille). This commitment is intrinsic to both erotic politics and embodied theory as social activism, i.e., embodied democracy. Eroticism potentially resists homogenized social relations and self-censorship—offering a key to examine the unconscious mind by interweaving the very interactions that are often prohibited or suppressed under social norms. In both my theoretical and visual work, the grotesque or disarrayed body of the other/the unfamiliar/the immigrant/the socially inappropriate female is intended to dislocate predetermined categories of identification. These uncertainties help me explore my own ambiguous desires and fears about my body and its internal, external designated “disorder”—breaking up pre-determined taxonomies. The foundation of this practice is rooted in (re)discovering vulnerability and difference as physical and emotional strength. I explore women’s access to public sexuality, male multiple orgasms, female (multiple) orgasms, and, in particular, female ejaculation as models for full-capacity living. It is a cultural assumption that it is men, and not women, who are capable of ejaculation. My research is not about the fact that millions of women do indeed ejaculate. Nor is my project an attempt to replicate or usurp male tendencies or to render our bodies within a systematic functionality, thereby reifying hierarchical power relationships in which sexuality is reduced to a generic hydraulic model. I am not looking for a substitute for either phallic norms or male sexuality; but rather, I am driven toward a sexual ethic which reconfigures how we experience sex and the erotic in the context of radical citizenship—how we inhabit our bodies in our everyday lives. This conceptual system that deconstructs patriarchal inscriptions on our bodies is not a prescriptive project. We cannot afford to reassert another hegemony to replace or mimic existing normative paternal tyrannies. Such toxic mimicry would reinforce dichotomous habitual behavior. In his Temptation to Exist, the Romanian philosopher E.M. Cioran enlists Beckett: “What is the good of passing from one untenable position to another, of seeking justification always on the same plane?” Instead, my project seeks to undermine systems of binary codes by investigating how autonomy and sexual difference can become conscious strategies that disassemble society’s phallic illusion of order.

As a woman who ejaculates without the need for specific physical stimulation, the sociopolitical implications of what my body represents are vast: a rhizomatic sexuality, without an end-point, one in which my body inhabits and produces a chiasmic dissolution of social expectations. I am positioning myself within an intuitive re-configuring of feminism and socialized sexuality. The nature of this collaborative emancipatory project transgresses internalized, invisible, taken-for-granted Oedipal structures. I am less concerned with overt moral crusades that have dictated our behaviour and cultural norms over past centuries, and am much more wary of the insidious explicit and implicit ways in which we have internalized phallic norms and fear of our own bodies—what Foucault identifies as the “fascism within.” Kathy Acker warns: “As long as we continue to regard the body, that which is subject to change, chance, and death, as disgusting and inimical, so long shall we continue to regard our own selves as dangerous others.” By cultivating vulnerability, the logic
of the uncanny illustrates my positioning of female ejaculation as a model for active citizenship. This is a psychosexual commitment to *messing up* in which new and exploratory forms of homo- and heterosexuality are “no longer dominated by the phallus and male desire... Relations between beings... recognize and respect the otherness of the other” (Gro*sz, Engaging with Irigaray, 339). My intention is to move beyond the question of who is disfigured by whose power, and challenge how that disfigurement can be reconceptualized as a vibrant and affirmative collaborative social movement.

**Andrzej Jachimczyk**

*The Text (Experiment) of Plasticity: An Attempt to Liberate Nietzsche through Hegel*

A traditional view of Hegel is that his philosophy is a philosophy of closure and finality, purporting to achieve a final synthesis via dialectical sublation (*Aufhebung*). In this view, Hegel’s teleology is seen as the contradiction to Nietzsche’s openness and becoming. This work argues the contrary. It explores the concept of plasticity, the concept of intertwining opposites in a process of simultaneous creation and destruction and demonstrates that Hegel is a philosopher of incessant becoming, openness, potentiality, and expectation. It calls for an a-dualistic thinking in approaching Hegel, a thinking that deals with opposites as neither rigidly opposed nor united but as plastic. Plasticity, as the process of creation and annihilation, a metamorphosis from substance to subject through its capacity to receive and to give form to its own content, has the ability to actualize itself out of itself through its own dialectical self-contradiction and mobility and thus it is immune to any final resolution. Plasticity bonds two opposites in a chiasmic unity in a mode of reciprocal intertwining without any aim or finality of a goal, without cancelling each other out but accruing and dispersing forces of potentiality in the recurring and continuous process of becoming. This Hegelian suspension of a traditional binary logic in favour of a simultaneity-thinking (*ein Zugleich-Denken*)—anticipated by Nietzsche—results in a view of the world as a chiasmic unity. The chiasmic unity intertwines two opposites by coalescing and separating them simultaneously and does not lead to any kind of absolute disintegration or to any levelling synthesis that has been invoked in the traditional interpretations. On the contrary, plasticity of simultaneity-thinking liberates Hegel’s philosophy from the strictures of a dualistic logic compelling non-finality and the concomitant future that is always to come, and in effect makes Nietzsche a reader of Hegel, prior to the intervention by Derrida and Malabou.

**Ehren Stuff**

*Raw Capacities for Politics: A Set of Practices to Transform Accumulated Elements into New Movement*

This dissertation reads Marx’s critique of the political economy not only in how it analyzes capital, but also in the overlooked passages of what happens to capital when it dysfunctions (e.g. crises). To accomplish this task, this project revisits Marx’s fundamental discovery of surplus-value to reveal its stoppages. This concept of surplus-value, like Marxism, still has numerous contributions and insights to be made. For instance, there remains a great divide between environmentalists and Marxists, and my contention is that this divide can be bridged to produce new allies by introduc-
ing the concept of waste in connection to Marx’s concept of surplus-value. This brings us to the primary thesis of this work: it contends that Marx viewed waste from a capitalist perspective as the disruption in the flow to extract surplus-value or the loss of surplus-value. Waste is not a mere loss of material or profit; it is its own concept, a reduction of power that is produced. This concept of waste is composed of two components: (a) capital, either variable (labour-power) or constant (means of production) and (b) an outage of some type. These two components collide in such a way to reduce capitalist power. To prove this thesis, waste is explored in the three forms that it takes in capitalism:

(1) Enters into value/necessary condition

(2) Loss of surplus-value

(3) Re-utilization (recycling/re-use/new branches)

In the first form, the capitalist is able to transfer the reduction in power onto the commodity’s value, thus part of the price includes what was potentially waste for the capitalist. In the second form, there is an unexpected or unmanageable outage, in which the capitalist is unable to maintain the appropriated value or sustain the ability to appropriate surplus-value. In the third form, the capitalist takes what diminishes value, and re-uses this potentially diminished power to produce a new commodity or use in the production of another commodity. By understanding these three forms, it can be shown how capitalism deals with waste. The products of capitalism are irrelevant to the capitalist, as the primary concern in capitalism is to maintain and reproduce surplus-value. Without labour-power in constant motion, the system does not function. Much like when electricity goes out, we become aware of its current, and in this moment of darkness, there is the potential to re-use this energy in new ways. For example, if garbage increases profit, its production is welcomed. Waste is not the products, waste is when the power current of capitalism dysfunctions for the capitalist. Therefore, when introducing the concept of waste, it short-circuits the concept of surplus-value to be transformed into a revolutionary concept. This is accomplished by introducing the process of re-utilization. In capitalism, re-utilization is when the by-products of production (undetermined material) are re-used for new production. Thus, instead of deeming it waste, they re-utilize the by-products to increase profit. For re-utilization is a contingent process—it looks beyond what is “socially useful,” it begins from the potentiality of the material, instead of remaining a capitalist process. The worker takes on this same task. A world full of undetermined material that can be used to produce the new. This movement is already happening as we breathe, there are those re-utilizing housing/buildings (squatters); reclaiming open lots to grow gardens (guerilla gardeners); or finding new ways to re-appropriate the internet (cyber-activists). Now to accelerate this movement, when work-
ers strike or boycott to the point of disrupting the production of surplus-value or when they seize the means of production to form a worker’s cooperation, these actions produce measurable waste for the capitalist, much like Marxism has already allowed us to measure exploitation with surplus-value. In terms of politics, it can measure the degree of positive revolutionary activity. The activists can calculate whether their activities are productive, not the entire political current but enough to provide consistency when dealing with those parts that capitalism appropriates.

Cecilia Dougherty  
*The Irreducible “I”: Space, Place, Authenticity and Change*

The purpose of this study was to examine identity and subjectivity within the shared space of the everyday. Another aim was to identify and define the locations of the everyday, and to investigate the space of daily life in terms of how change occurs, focusing chiefly on processes of observation and questioning. The author was also interested in examining the forces of mass-market consumerism and global corporatism in terms of how they influence the experience of daily life. Research was conducted in the fields of literature, experimental and documentary film, critical theory, social theory, philosophy, social and community activism, journalism and social commentary, architecture, anthropology, and telecommunications theory, creating links across disciplines and processes. The research led to discussions of the basic nature of the social fabric, and to the conclusion that the network model is the most valuable model not only for studying the formation of the social realm, but also for examining processes for reclaiming the realm of the social from the authority of ubiquitous consumerism. The results of this investigation revealed that subjectivity and identity are engaged in a continual dialogue with a multiplicity of influences and are always in process. Rather than rendering identity less significant as a possible agent of change, it was determined that multiplicity enables a relational idea of selfhood to emerge that not only disengages the question of contradictions between self and other, but also creates openings that allow for the formation of affinities along multiple points of connectivity within continuously changing contexts. The principal conclusion was that resistance to corporate globalism becomes effective first through the processes of observation and questioning, secondly through a rejection of a social hierarchy based on fixed categories of identification, and thirdly through the formation of affinities within a continuous collective process of the creation of daily life.

Ned Camuso  
*Society of the Media Event: Soap Operas, Circuses, Magic, and Democratic Discourse at the Dawn of Social Networks*

Researchers and media critics have done a good job describing many of the excesses of media coverage devoted to American media spectacles in particular. In the 1960s, Daniel Boorstin led the battle cry against the kind of sensationalist and all-absorbing stories seemingly manufactured by mainstream media for the purposes of commanding as much attention as possible for as long as possible in order to compete for revenue and viewers. Like suckers lured into the big circus media tent, we are invited to enjoy the spectacle, while the corporate and commercialized media dreams up ever more sensational ways to keep
us entertained. Among the most entertaining spectacles are the events that focus on the private tragedies of families suddenly exposed to the public eye by a tabloid news media culture hungering for every vulgar detail of the tragedy in the hopes of processing the event, news associated with the event, and any information regarding the event for advertising profits. However, this narrow view of spectacle events, those usually characterized by the media itself as *soap operas* and *circuses*, is misleading. The task in the pages that follow is to argue that these spectacles, involving personal and family tragedies, are in truth the source of interesting debates, discussions, and sometimes even significant social and political change. To help argue the significance of this particular kind of media spectacle, the very same cultural forms (soap opera and circus) used to devalue the coverage of these personal tragedies as events are used to reassess the actual importance of these media events. The figurative language of philosophers such as Heidegger, Schirmacher, Badiou, and Arendt provide useful metaphors for understanding how this particular kind of American media spectacle defies narrow commercial and ideological interests and agendas.

**Vertna Bradley**

*Between the Sprocket Holes: The Voyeuristic Essence & Reflexivity of Identity in Cinema*

This work is a study of what takes places in the space within the frame of movies and examines the essence of the manipulation of the film frame. It is about the voyeurism we are party to, the pleasure and even gratification we take in viewing films, and also in how they reflect our culture; how we take, transfer, and assume what is presented to us through cinema as our own identities. It also examines the concept of the Universal Spectator (US). The Universal Spectator is defined here as the culmination of the commonalities we share when viewing movies, regardless of our culture, gender, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. Yes, there are differences in viewing that do occur because of all of the aforementioned identities, but there exists a common space we achieve in viewing that transports us into a fourth dimension during the experience. The idea of there not being a true separation between the Universal Spectator and cinema is discussed. This work explores how we form identities based on cinema, or because of cinema, and shows how we are intertwined with cinema and it with us in an unbreakable relationship that not only influences who we are and how we see ourselves through it, but also how we assign identification to ourselves and others. It looks at the social economy of the mainstream film industry in terms of spectatorship, gender/sexual identification, spatial intelligence, and the relationship between media and culture.
contributers of art

Mowry Baden—*A Cappella* and *Calyx*
Originally from Los Angeles, Mowry Baden has lived and worked in Canada since 1971. He has practiced sculpture for nearly 50 years and has taught sculpture at Raymond College, Pomona College, UBC and the University of Victoria, from which he retired in 1997. Articulating an internal awareness of movement has always been the most important element in his work. Many of his projects have the goal of impinging upon the viewer’s movements and awakening a physical self-awareness that was previously unconscious. www.mowrybaden.com

Chris Cran—(cover image) *The Space It Takes* and *Manifesto*
The recipient of numerous Canada Council grants, Cran has exhibited internationally at the 49th Parallel Gallery, New York City (1992) and in the Fourth International Painting Biennial, Cuenca, Ecuador (1994). In the Fall 2003 issue of Canadian Art magazine, critic Nancy Tousley described Cran’s rise to the top of the Canadian painting scene, focusing on the conceptual framework of his attraction to popular culture and kitsch. In addition to his professional activities as a painter and teacher (ACAD), Chris Cran has been actively involved with Calgary’s internationally recognized One Yellow Rabbit Performance Theatre. His work may be found in numerous private and public collections including the National Gallery of Canada, the Glenbow Museum, the Nickle Arts Museum and the Art Gallery of Alberta. www.chriscran.com

Don Gill—*Erratic Space*
Don Gill is based in Lethbridge, Alberta and teaches in the Department of Art at the University of Lethbridge. He is originally from Cranbrook B.C. and spent his formative years traveling the landscape between Cranbrook and Calgary, Alberta. In the upcoming year he has projects planned in Japan, Paris and the Australian Outback. www.dongillwalking.blogspot.ca

Rowesa Gordon—*Looking Again*
Rowesa Gordon, co-director and core teaching faculty at ISIS Canada, is an expressive arts therapist in private practice who supervises and consults in this field. A graduate of the Ontario College of Art and Design, with a Masters Degree in Expressive Therapies from Lesley University, she has a certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies from the European Graduate
School Rowesa is adjunct faculty at Sofia University in Paolo Alto, CA and at the European Graduate School in Saas Fee, Switzerland where she has been artist-in-residence. Her paintings have appeared in professional journals and have been shown in Canada, Europe and the United States.

Andrew Harwood—Matte
Andrew Harwood is a Winnipeg-based artist and a graduate of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Over the years he has held a variety of positions in artist-run centres including A Space, Toronto and is a past general manager of C Magazine. His recent exhibitions include Séance at Platform Centre for Digital and Media Arts and The Bob Mc Lobster Show at The Edge, both in Winnipeg. Harwood is currently running a new gallery venture in Manitoba called Zsa Zsa West located in Winnipeg’s Chinatown district. He is working on his Master’s Degree in Fine Arts at the University of Manitoba and will graduate in 2014 with his thesis exhibition Funeral Camp. Permanent collections include the Bank of Montréal, Toronto, the University of Guelph, Guelph, ON and Queen’s University, Kingston, ON. His work is collected privately in Canada and the United States.

Paulette Phillips—The Directed Lie
Paulette Phillips has established an international reputation for her tense, humorous and uncanny explorations of contradiction, assumption and belief. She has shown extensively in Europe and North America. Her work is found in various public, corporate and private collections including the National Gallery of Canada and Oakville Galleries. She teaches contemporary art practices at OCAD University in Toronto. Her work is represented in Toronto by Díaz Contemporary and in London by Danielle Arnaud Contemporary Art. www.paulette-phillips.ca

Lucy Pullen—The Cloud Chamber and Hue
Lucy Pullen has exhibited in Canada, the US, the UK and participated in residencies internationally including: Stramur Art Commune, Iceland (1998); Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture in Maine (1998); Struts in Sackville, New Brunswick (1997); and Bemis Center for the Arts, Omaha, Nebraska (2001), and the Outpost for Contemporary Art, in Los Angeles, California (2006). She attended EGS between 2008-2010. She is an Assistant Professor at the University of Victoria, Canada, where she teaches sculpture and drawing; she is currently on leave from the University to develop art projects in the United States. www.iamthevariable.com.

Matthew Thomson—Golem
Thomson is a multi-disciplinary artist who has shown in Québec and Ontario. His research into combining art and recycling has led him to experiment with different ways that the city’s trash and leftovers can be revived so as to redefine how we view and use waste. http://therecyclingplant.blogspot.ca/
Stella Andonoff is often referred to as Miss. She likes calling her students Sir and Madame, and wonders whether cell phones in the classroom are good ideas. She often dances, paints and sings all at the same time. She is working on doing one thing at a time, taking it slow and looking forward to working more with the arts to mediate violence and bullying in schools.

Co-Director of the Expressive Arts Institute, San Diego, Wes Chester is a musician, poet, artist and author who has worked in the mental health field since 1996. He earned his Master's Degree magna cum laude at the European Graduate School, where he completed his CAGS and is currently pursuing a PhD. Wes specializes in healing the aesthetic relationship to nature, does private practice therapy and coaching, and teaches at the Expressive Arts Institute of San Diego.

In 2011 Daniela Elza received her doctorate from SFU. Her thesis on Pedagogy of the Imagination was awarded the Dean of Graduate Studies Convocation Medal. Daniela’s collection, the weight of dew, was published by Mother Tongue Publishing (2012). Her poetry book Milk Tooth Bane Bone is forthcoming with Leaf Press (2013).

Dorota Kożusznik-Śolarska. Polish woman with many identities: poet, singer, painter, business trainer and consultant, counselor and psychologist, translator, a project manager, journalist, diver. She is also currently a student of CAGS in EGS, Switzerland. Sharing her time between Poland, Switzerland and all the lands she visits in her dreams. www.expressivearts.pl

Emily Fiddy is a poet, teacher, performer and EXA MA student at EGS from Vancouver Island. She is currently living in the closed country of Saudi Arabia teaching young women and practicing expressive arts in both institutionalized and non-institutionalized settings. She collaborates with NGOs and uses the work of EXA in Jordan and Palestine/Israel to advocate arts in psycho-social programs by teaching workshops and facilitating meetings in Amman and Mafruk/Zaa’tari camp to therapists and refugees. She also works with the Freedom Theatre in Palestine.
Judith Greer Essex Co-Director of the Expressive Arts Institute, San Diego, since 1998. Greer has taught at universities – including EGS – and conservatories as an expert on physical imagination and the body. She maintains a private practice, is an avid journaler, and, with her partner, Wes, loves to hike.

James P. Lenfestey is a writer based in Minneapolis and Mackinac Island. After a career in academia, advertising and journalism as an editorial writer at the Minneapolis Star Tribune, he has published a book of personal essays and five collections of poems, including *A Cartload of Scrolls: 100 Poems in the Manner of T’ang Dynasty Poet Han-Shan*.

Elizabeth Gordon McKim is a poet, performer and teacher who works from the oral tradition of song, story and poem, both in the United States and internationally. She has published five books of poetry, the latest being *The Red Thread*, published in April of 2003 by Leapfrog Press. She is the Poet Laureate of the European Graduate School and is deeply appreciative of this honour. She is the honourary Jazz poet of Lynn, MA, where she currently makes her home.


Marc J. Straus has three collections of poetry published by TriQuarterly Books/Northwestern University Press. *Not God* (2006) is a play in verse that dramatizes a cancer patient’s journey through illness. It was produced Off Broadway in 2009. He is the recipient of the Robert Penn Warren Award in the Humanities from Yale Medical School. Marc is a distinguished oncologist and renowned art collector and has opened “Marc Straus LLC” on the Lower Eastside of NY, a gallery devoted to international emerging art.

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Call for Papers
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Imagining Reality
Essays In Honour of James Hillman, 1926-2011

What role does the imagination play in human life? For James Hillman, the image is the natural language of the soul. For Hillman, following Jung, psyche is image; even our reductive materialisms are but the fantasies of a controlling ego, the vision of an heroic conquest of the world. Unlike Jung, however, Hillman rejected the idea of a central image, the Self, around which all others could cohere. For him, what counts in imaginal life is its depth, the resonance that leads us into curious and varied pathways. He was a champion of multiplicity, formulating a polytheistic psychology in which all the energies of the psyche could find a home and in which the world could be seen in its infinite variety.

This Call for Papers invites submissions that are themselves deeply imaginal. To honour Hillman means to imagine ourselves and the world around us in ways that extend the boundaries of our thinking and feeling into new poetic domains. “Stick to the image” was his motto, rejecting all interpretive moves that would give the image meaning outside of itself.

We invite contributors to stay on the ground of the image and thereby let their imaginations soar.

Submissions are due by Jan. 1, 2014.

Submission guidelines and deadlines are on the EGS Press website:

www.egspress.com