
ARTIZEIN

Arts & Teaching Journal



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The editors of ARTIZEIN are grateful for the support of Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, the assistance of Gregory Wendt in naming the journal Artizein, R. Michael Fisher's painting in the ARTIZEIN banner featured on the website and the thoughtful work of our writers and readers.

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Cover art and journal design by: Jodi Patterson

Artwork inspired by Sally Gradle's poem on page 9 titled "Pulling the Thread: The Art Teacher's Prayer."

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Submissions

ARTIZEIN welcomes manuscripts addressing the consequence of understanding the state of our teaching of the arts relative to the arts themselves. We intend to offer articles, artworks, poems, essays, visual journals, etc. that;

- deepen perceptions about creative capabilities for a broad spectrum of the population, how this innate ability unfolds and develops in a wide array of ways, tempos, and settings,
- inform and engage readers in expansive thinking about what art and its teaching/transmitting/facilitating are, where it might occur, and the many effects the arts have on its practitioners and witnesses,
- direct attention to instructional approaches (some new and innovative, others neglected or forgotten) that are currently restricted by an emphasis on normalized art instruction in public schooling.

Please visit our website for specific information related to upcoming volumes:
http://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/atj/call_for_papers.html

ARTIZEIN

art (n.) early 13c., "skill as a result of learning or practice," from Old French *art* (10c.), from Latin *artem* (nominative *ars*) "work of art; practical skill; a business, craft," from PIE **ar-ti-* (cognates: Sanskrit *rtih* "manner, mode;" Greek *arti* "just," *artios* "complete, suitable," **artizein "to prepare;"** Latin *artus* "joint;" Armenian *arnam* "make;" German *art* "manner, mode"), from root **ar-* "fit together, join"

Welcome to the inaugural edition of Artizein.

The foundational premise of *Artizein* is that the practice and pedagogy of the arts is relational and vital for restoring, sustaining and transforming life. The aim of *Artizein* is to enlarge the domain of the arts and teaching by creating a visually enticing journal dedicated to articulating multiple perspectives on the arts and what the arts are for. *Artizein* offers its readers original material from artists, teachers, and researchers, in the hopes of providing fresh insight into the creating and teaching of the arts for and by many populations, both contemporary and historical.

“There is no inherent difference between fullness of activity and artistic activity; the latter is one with being fully alive. Hence, it is not something possessed by a few persons and setting them apart from the rest of mankind, but is the normal or natural human heritage.” –John Dewey

The originating impulse for founding *Artizein* was the growing impression the editors had that the field of art teaching had, over the years, come to be defined as a profession primarily practiced by certified art teachers within public schools. We realize much work has been done to increase the scope of arts education to include more institutions and a broader range of students, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and distinctive portions of the general population relative to race, gender, income — in community, hybrid, public and private spaces designated (or not) for artistic activity. As editors we observe how artist-teachers are engaging a multitude of approaches to teaching and many other ways of nurturing artful inquiry processes in settings beyond the public school system. *Artizein* intends to serve as a venue for authors and readers whose interests as artists, teachers and researchers, not only address the child in public school but also reach further into artistic teaching and learning practices within the larger community.

We know the arts serve its practitioners and its witnesses in many ways:

- *As means of restoring balance between the cognitive and affective domains,*
- *As means by which an individual is distinguished from their group, and the individual is embedded within their group,*
- *As a significant element in the many rituals that enable communities and individuals to make transitions in their lives and community,*
- *As a spiritual practice; deepening ones sense of being in the many levels of a many level world,*
- *As embracing diversity,*
- *As signs of affection, affiliation, enthusiasm,*
- *As designation of significant spaces and times delineating the ordinary from the extra ordinary,*
- *As forms of thinking and feeling that can only be articulated via the art forms most congenial to those who think and feel most deeply via those art forms,*
- *As ways of investigating and representing features of the manifest world and ones inner world otherwise opaque and indistinct.*

We also know that the schools we have, and the arts curricula, the pedagogies, the standards, the teaching certification requirements and their teacher training programs struggle to incorporate these many, varied and powerful contributions of the arts. Yet all these ways in

which the arts serve people and communities emerge in abundance in the world we have right here and now. The ruled and the unruly dynamics of life creates broad and fertile arenas within which all these functions of the arts can and do emerge. Despite and sometimes because of our richly varied circumstances; our hybrid, free wheeling, multi-dimensional, uncertain, unbalanced, opportunistic, unfair, unjust, inequitable landscape of abundant freedoms and restraints produces a most fertile domain for the emergence of the new, often the more fitting, more often the revealing and certainly vigorous evolutionary forces.

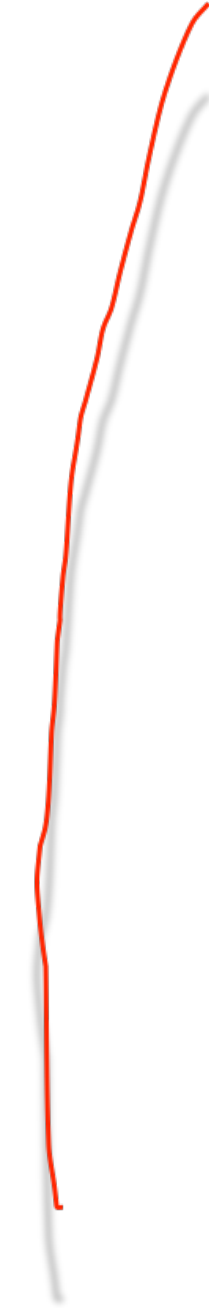
This current issue with its focus on social engagement through the arts opens with an art teachers' prayer in the form of a poem by **Sally Gradle**. Gradle's poems are then intersperse themselves between and around the subsequent articles, offering the reader a place of thoughtful pause and consideration before and after each article. Following the silent prayer **Kristen Congdon** calls our attention to the largely racial disparity embedded in the label of "self-taught artist" and challenges us to question the power of labels that perpetuate the marginalization and devaluing of certain kinds of arts education and artists in our midst. **Peter London** then enticingly brings to our view the painter Seymour Segal, an artist who admits the viewer unabashedly into the "discomfort, the danger... of the protagonist or event

taking place." **Angela La Porte** leads us next into a pedagogical experience of "inverse inclusion" that involves an open-ended curriculum with a variety of roles for teaching and learning between differently and typically abled learners. A spiritual approach to art education is articulated by **Nico Roenpagel**, who reminds us how alternative world views require alternative visions of education, if we, as arts educators are committed to "creating a more compassionate and sustainable future." Moving from a cosmos-centric vision of art education to a specific place-based form of education, **Jodi Kushins** invites us into art education in her backyard as a form of socially engaged art; where

“Pedagogy of the arts is relational and vital for restoring, sustaining and transforming life.

the idea of art opens up our understanding of what the medium and experience of art can or should be. **Jodi Patterson** shares her insights regarding her socially mediated art practice as a "Land Ambassador." Patterson utilizes landscape photography and her nomadic travel experiences as an opportunity to educate her "friends" on global climate change. **Barbara Bickel's** article and video offer a socially engaged art project as an example of dynamic lived curriculum. Through what the Gestare Art Collective call a *Nap-In* students, faculty and the community encounter and engage the unusual experience of communal napping, social dreaming and art making. The final submission returns the reader to a place of thoughtful pause and consideration as **Nicole Gnezda** shares the powerful integration of existential art therapy with art education through three varied and brave programs she developed; successfully demonstrating that personal struggles are often the inhibitor of learning rather than academic issues. A line in Gradle's closing poem reflects the message of the articles in this first issue of *Artizein*, which ultimately invites artists, teachers, researcher and learners into "creating art of your life."

The Editors,
Peter London, Sally Gradle, Barbara Bickel and Jodi Patterson



PULLING the THREAD:

THE ART TEACHER'S PRAYER (After William Stafford)

Let me start from where they are. Let me begin
the only intervention with words like,
“It is your idea. Where do you want it to go?”

Even when they bristle,
when they tell me I am the expert, the artist,
the only one in the room who knows,
let me refuse to believe
they lack the capacity for judging their work,
making it good in their own eyes.

Let me acknowledge
the empty page is a promise,
not an absence.

Let me lead in silence,
pulling a thin thread with sure hands
into the moment that only opens
because of where they are.

~ Sally A. Gradle

Misunderstandings & Consequences of Labeling Artists as Self Taught

By: Kristin G. Congdon

I have championed artists who have been invisible and underrepresented for decades. Sometimes these artists have been labeled by race or ethnicity and many of them have fallen into the categories of folk and self-taught. When writing about artists who have fallen into one of these categories, I have often tried to avoid labeling them, hoping to have them viewed simply (and complexly) as artists worthy of (high) art consideration. However, I have found that sometimes labeling has been necessary and even useful. Labeling helps a writer, curator, scholar, educator, or arts facilitator focus on a particular cultural group, worldview, or historical era. It gives context to an artist from an unfamiliar cultural group and can help illuminate an artist's message. But it can also box an artist into a limited space. And in some cases, labeling can develop an idea about education that may be debilitating, misleading, and wrong. This article is about labeling artists (most especially artists of color or from difficult circumstances) as "self-taught," which is wrought with misunderstanding and riddled with negative consequences for the artist and for the educational process.

The term "self-taught" is often used instead of the term "folk art." It draws attention to a creative person isolated from his or her cultural context and implies that the artist is more of an individual than a group member who works in a particular cultural tradition. When writing about artists who come from specific cultural communities, I have often used the term "folk," partly because I have aligned myself with folklorists and their approach to contextualizing art and artists. I also recognized that the term "folk" can apply to all of us, and in 1985, I even wrote an article claiming that the so-called fine art world was just another folk group (Congdon, 1985). Since we in the West value individualism over community (often to our detriment), recognizing the cultural context of an artist, in my mind, helped balance and expand our understanding of art, education, and our creative expressions. It was my hope that eventually the term "folk" would become obsolete; if it were applied to everyone, then it would apply to no one specifically.¹ (My goal, obviously, hasn't caught on.) I have continued to use the term "folk artist," when a label seems necessary, usually due to the context in which I am writing or speaking, because it was far better than other labels such as "primitive," "unsophisticated," "naïve," "visionary," "vernacular," and "unsophisticated." Some of these terms are derogatory; others could describe work by disparate groups of artists. The descriptor, however, that is currently most ubiquitous and troubling to me is the term "self-taught artists," an alternative term to "folk artists." It is used in an effort to suggest that these artists' works seem not to relate to any particular cultural community.² This term is troublesome for a number of reasons.

¹ My goal was to rid us of high and low art categories that reflect not only on how art is valued, but also on how artists are seen and valued.

² The term "outsider" is also ubiquitous and troublesome. It has been debated at length and isn't often used in academic circles anymore. Most scholars recognize how problematic it is, even if they use it.

Cultural Context Exists for Everyone

All artists come from cultural contexts and their work reflects those contexts, even when it deals with a philosophical issue that can be universally applied. The term “self-taught” has been used to describe an artist as innovative and unlike anyone else, whereas the term “folk” establishes an artist within a cultural context.³ Both labels have been used to describe the same artists, such as is the case with Bessie Harvey and Purvis Young. These artists made work that is unique and readily attributed to them; their work also speaks to their heritage and is best understood in context. Harvey worked primarily with wood, tree branches, trunks, and roots, which she adorned with varying found objects including glass, marbles, jewelry shells, and human hair. Her sculptures, she explained, were “soul people;” her inspiration came from the Bible and her African heritage (Perry, 1989, p. 46). Likewise, Purvis Young’s paintings are culturally based and need to be understood as rooted in his Overtown, Florida, an African American and Afro-Caribbean neighborhood in Miami. His works are filled with energetic scenes from his neighborhood, buildings, street people, trucks, wild horses, pregnant women, and angels. Painted on reused wood he gathered from the streets, they are usually framed with various strips of old wood nailed to the board. Often referred to as self-taught, Young educated himself by reading art books from the public library and watching educational television. He also very carefully observed the people in his community (Congdon & Bucuvalas, 2006). Nicario Jiménez learned to make *retablos* from a family member in Peru. After coming to the United States to live, his work began incorporating the lives and political situations he encountered in his adopted land (Congdon & Bucuvalas 2006). Simon Rodia’s *Watt’s Towers* is another good example of work that appears unique and unlike anything anyone has seen before. But research by Daniel Franklin Ward and I. Sheldon Posen found it to be rooted in the Italian Feast of St. Paulinus, also called “The Giglio Festival.” This festival takes place in Italy as well as in the town of Nola, just outside of New York City. Rodia was no doubt influenced by the tower and ship that are paraded through the streets during this festival. Additionally, the artist claimed to have worked at one time with Father Mathias Wernerus on his mosaicked Holy Ghost Park in Dickeyville, Wisconsin (Morgan, 1984). Even the most eccentric and unusual works, if studied carefully, is culturally based.

An artwork’s cultural context can be varied. It could be a museum context, an academic or theoretical context, or a geographical, racial, recreational, religious, or political context. The fear in labeling artists as “folk” is that audiences might think their work isn’t innovative or new, a modernist concept now deconstructed as universally relevant by numerous artists and theorists.⁴ More importantly, if understood fully, artworks labeled “folk” expresses both individual and cultural contexts. Much of it is extremely innovative; the innovation can be found not only in the way an artwork appears but also in the way that it is made, appreciated, and used. The context in which the object is experienced can also lend innovation to the object (Jones, 1972; Congdon, 1986).

³ In 1998, John Howell White and I wrote about problems with labeling some artists as “fine” and others as “folk” when so many artists work from a cultural context and it is the cultural context that is most important in the work. The article is titled “Travel, boundaries, and the movement of culture(s): Explanations for the folk/fine art quandary.”

⁴ Examples include the work of Sherri Levine who photographed the work of famous photographers. Mike Bidlo creates artworks that are as close to being copies of other artists works as possible. Creating painting from Bob Ross television shows has been discussed in depth in *Happy Clouds, Happy Trees: The Bob Ross Phenomenon* by Kristin G. Congdon, Doug Blandy, and Danny Coeyman.

All Artists are Educated

All artists are educated in some way, and artists who are formally schooled don't necessarily attribute their creative inspiration to their academic learning. This could be because many schools and art education settings don't align well with artists' needs. Daniel Nettles (2001) rightly claims that artists are divergent and unorthodox thinkers. They don't easily fit into our (too often) factory-like education systems. Although a good grounding in art history may be useful, Agnes Martin, fearing that it could sway artists from their own ways of creating, once said, "If Picasso crosses your mind while you are painting, it's all over" (quoted in Landi, 2013, p. 34).

Many artists learn their creative skills from family members, but this kind of learning doesn't always translate to them being called "folk" or "self-taught." They are, more simply, artists or designers. For instance, Andrew Rosen, C. E. O. of Theory, the popular clothing line, is a third generation garment-industry entrepreneur. He dropped out of the University of Miami after a year and credits growing up in the business to providing him with the skills he needed to succeed. He explains, "I went to a different kind of school" (quoted in Mead, 2013, p. 88).

Theaster Gates, who currently works to revitalize the South Side of Chicago, learned how to work with his hands and run a business from his father who tarred roofs, operated a barbeque, and owned a four-unit rental property (Austin, 2013). (His undergraduate major was urban planning although he took some ceramic classes; his master's degree was in fine arts and religious studies.) Mike Kelley, who grew up in Detroit as the son of a school janitor, had a strong academic training in art but his inspiration came from other experiences. As a child, instead of playing sports, he learned to sew. He played in a noise band called Destroy All Monsters when he was at the University of Michigan. It was this experience that gave him performance experience. At CalArts he alarmed everyone when he presented wooden birdhouses like he made in his high school shop class for his final show. One of his last works was a public sculpture, a full-scale replica of his childhood home, placed in his destitute hometown of Detroit. His work relates more directly to the abuse he experienced as a child than his formal art education (Cotter, 2013; Schjeldahl, 2013b). He explained, "Since I am an artist, it seemed natural to look at my own aesthetic training as the root of my secret indoctrination in perversity and possibly as the site of my own abuse. My education must have been a form of mental abuse, of brainwashing" (quoted in Kennedy, 2013, p. AR24).⁵

It seems obvious to state that an art school education is only one aspect of an artists' education and some artists reject their education in art or bury it deeply in the past. Most academically trained artists meld it with other cultural experiences.

Academic Education as Unevenly Noted

Many artists (those defined as "fine artists," usually with the descriptor left off), are in fact not academically schooled, but are not labeled self-taught. Van Gogh was basically self-taught (in this context, meaning taught outside school) but he isn't labeled that way. A recent study shows that he learned from an exhaustive method of working and reworking. Although his paintings appear to be spontaneous, they weren't created in a spontaneous manner. Even when he reported to his brother Theo that he had made a painting in one day, further studies shows that it was done in several sessions (Stolz, 2013). Balthus, the Polish French painter was mostly self-taught, as he learned to paint by copying frescos and paintings by master artists, mostly Piero della Francesca and Gustave Courbet (Schjeldahl, 2013a). Nicole Holofcener, whose father was Woody Allen's producer and manager, got an early education in

⁵ Mike Kelley committed suicide on January 31, 2012.

filmmaking by being on Allen's sets (Schulman, 2013). In a similar way, John Romita, Jr.'s parents, who both worked for Marvel Comics, inspired their son to become a comic artist like them (Gustines, 2014). Richard Linklater watched six hundred films a year when he was in his early twenties to learn about filmmaking (Heller, 2014). Sculptor Alice Aycock's father, who worked in construction, inspired her to build large things (Loo, 2014). Julie Traymor was greatly influenced by her time making art in Bali in her youth (Dominus, 2013), and Steve Jobs learned good design, in part, from living in a home built by Joseph Eichler (Isaacson, 2011).⁶ Photographer Jessica Lehrman had hippies for parents who believed in self-directed education. She learned her photography through travel, having to adapt and figure out things by herself (Lehrman, 2014).

David Salle champions self-education. Talking about himself and many of his artist friends, he explains:

You mustn't underestimate the extent to which all this was a process of educating ourselves. Our generation was pathetically educated, just pathetic beyond imagination. I was better educated than many. Julian [Schnabel] was totally uneducated....We had to educate ourselves in a hundred different ways. (Quoted in Malcolm, 2013, p. 5).

Numerous other so-called fine artists (or, more simply, artists) note that they are self-taught, and yet, they are not formally labeled this way. Yayoi Kusami dismisses the influence of her four years of study at Kyoto Municipal School of Arts and Crafts, as she disliked the hierarchal approach and attention to minute precision so she frequently skipped classes. Although she was surrounded by artists in New York City and often visited museums, she claims she is a self-taught artist who developed her work entirely on her own (Kusama, 2011). Still, no one calls her a self-taught artist. Alma Allen, whose work was in the 2014 Whitney Biennial calls himself self-taught in lieu of the term "outsider," which is too often association with being insane (Tyrnauer, 2014).

The tendency is to ignore the fact that some artists learn their artistic skills in ways other than academic schooling, even when they refer to themselves as self-taught. Artists who do get labeled as self-taught are overwhelming Black⁷ and most often from the South. Art historians, curators, collectors, and others who come from outside the parameters of the creative spaces of these artists generally impose this terminology on them.

Anyone can pick up a book on self-taught art and find a disproportionate number of the artists to be Black. Eugene Metcalf, as early as 1983, saw problems with how Black artists were associated with the debilitating stereotype of being labeled as self-taught and were therefore assumed to be uneducated. The terminology associates them with being unaware of artistic constraints, and therefore somewhat freer than academically trained artists. He writes, "Before the 1920s blacks were condemned for being childlike and shiftless. After the war they were applauded for being spontaneous and free" (Metcalf, 1983, p. 277). The association continues, equating primitive or uneducated behavior to Blacks. When some artists (mostly White) are labeled as artists, even though they acknowledge learning their

⁶ Eichler homes were designed for low-income people. They were straightforward in their design with good crafting.

⁷ The term "Black" is capitalized in this article; it refers to people of the African diaspora. Although academics and activists have noted that it is proper to use the term as capitalized, major newspapers, books, and publication styles reject the capitalization. In an *New York Times* Op-Ed piece, Lori L. Tharp (2014) writes "Black should always be written with a capital B. We are indeed a people, a race, a tribe. It's only correct" (p. A23). In keeping with this practice, I have also capitalized the term "White" when referring to a group of people.

artistic practices outside academia, and others are labeled self-taught (disproportionately Black), one must question why this discrepancy takes place.⁸

Numerous artists could also be listed here who regard their academic education as being helpful or crucial to being artists. Artists who were schooled at the Black Mountain College in North Carolina, for example, repeatedly note how important their education was. The school was successful in producing and attracting many well known artists including Robert Rauschenberg, Anni and Joseph Albers, Buckminster Fuller, Elaine and William de Kooning, Peter Voulkos, and Ray Johnson, among others (Gefter, 2013; Katz, 2013). In most all cases, these artists and others who are academically educated will claim other influences besides their schooling. For example, Erica Baum was primed to be an artist well before she attended Yale University as she drew constantly as a child. Her interest in anthropology and literature has been key to her art making, as were her travels to Kenya and Japan. She readily credits the filing jobs she had as a teenager as being hugely influential as were London billboards, newspaper headlines, blackboards, card catalogs, and books (Stillman, 2013).

When asked what influenced them as artists, artists don't often note their art school experiences as their most relevant inspiration. Instead, they talk about their parents, hardships, community and environmental influences, museum trips, and numerous other experiences before they talk about their schooling. It is noteworthy that so many artists don't credit their formal training for their creative foundation.

The self-taught label creates a false dichotomy that an artist is either academically schooled or not schooled. This perspective implies a simplistic notion about the education of artists. Historically, there have been numerous ways artists learn their skills. Just because someone studies in an art school does not make him or her an artist and someone can become an artist without having any academic training whatsoever. School-based educational backgrounds should not directly determine how an artist is labeled and valued; one kind of art education is not necessarily better than another. And if someone didn't go far in school, it doesn't mean that person is uneducated.

Unintended Consequences of the Label "Self-Taught Artist"

The term "self-taught" has created a class of artists who are overly associated with being poor and educationally unknowing. Being self-taught is also disproportionally associated with being Black. It further assumes that being non-academically educated allows for a worldview that is less "true" to a mainstream (read as elite White) way of seeing. The so-called self-taught artist can easily become quaint, charming, or at least from the mainstream art world perspective, the "other." It therefore perpetuates racist connotations and ideas about education that are detrimental to educational diversity, how we see and value knowledge, and how an artist can and should be educated. Labels communicate ideas that aren't always analyzed. While individuals who use the term "self-taught" to describe a certain category of artists, they do so partly in ignorance as to what the term connotes, and partly to the detriment in acknowledging and valuing the multiple ways that artists can be educated. Artists can be, and are, educated in numerous ways. Art educators need to recognize this fact and develop curriculum accordingly.

⁸ A quick look at the racial breakdown of Black and non-Blacks in *Passionate Visions of the American South: Self-Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present*, the well regarded book by Alice Rae Yelen (1993) includes 50 artists who are African American and 34 who are seemingly all or mostly White.

Schooling in the visual arts is being questioned, at all levels, but especially in higher education. Contemporary art critic Dave Hickey has repeatedly said that you can't teach someone to make art. "There is no knowledge there," he claims. "It's a proposition about how things should look, and it doesn't contain any truth" (quote is from Fendrich, 2013, p. B10). Hickey knows that art comes from culture and he enjoys it when an object is honest in its representation or interpretation of one's experience in the world. For the record, I believe that Hickey is incorrect in his assessment; there are some things about art that can be taught. However, an academic art education is but one aspect of some artists' cultural experience and art learning.



Let's recognize that what we really want our students to do is figure out how they can best adapt their artistic selves to the rest of their lives ...

Just as no one is solely self-taught, no one becomes an artist simply because he or she gets an academic art education. Still, we can't deny the importance of a good art education or the vast and relevant experiences we all have outside school. We must recognize the myriad ways we all learn. Everyone participates in folk groups and everyone is self-taught in that they reflect on their daily experiences, interpret and act on varying encounters, and build on and change their values, beliefs structures, and personalities. Learning takes place sometimes without us knowing it. It's part of our everyday experiences, like figuring out what's hot and cold or how to be safe when crossing a street. Other kinds of learning, such as drawing with perspective or successfully performing an artwork, takes effort and we don't learn these kinds of lessons if we don't want to. Academic experiences in art can be life changing, but they can also be debilitating or inconsequential to an artist's primary influences. But even when school-based experiences are excellent, they are not the sum total of what goes into an artist's work. Both the artist and the educational process are filled with complexity. Let's get rid of the "self-taught" label. It doesn't really describe anything well and it sends the wrong messages.

And while we are disposing of that label, we as art educators must do better at recognizing and incorporating our student's life experiences into our lessons. We should celebrate their varied cultural contexts and diverse ways of learning. By incorporating more varied artists into our presentations, we can open up the ways in which students have permission to explore their own ways of interacting in the world. Let's recognize that what we really want our students to do is figure out how they can best adapt their artistic selves to the rest of their lives and how they can teach themselves to reflect, learn, and explore in ways that better themselves in our increasingly complex world.

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PRETTY

Selma had a thick history, tabs like tombstones
marked her past.
No one thought she could draw.
Unresponsive, lazy, they called her,
with little inclination to learn.
A vacant lot--no trouble really--
just a lumbering
slowness, a lost letter
stuck in the institutional drawer.

Then came Schaefer and his words found Selma.
The moment crackled, space opened,
potential surged through every circuit
as he showed her some drawings.

Do you like this picture? Schaefer asked her.
Respect unfurled before her and waited without a smile.
Look for a while. Why don't you draw something yourself?
Make a pretty picture. Something you like.

Twenty minutes later, she was done.
The sun hung in her sky,
trees and flowers spanned the page
not one touched another, or the grassy green.

Look at this! What you've done.
You did some wonderful work. What a fine job to finish!

The room inflated, a buoyant raft,
a safety zone,
perhaps a place for path makers.

Selma reached for paper and began again.
A large wavy line, blue above a big tree,
with smaller trees
on either side,
new forms of her own design.

Another work. What a great thing to do this!
You have worked hard.

A third drawing, this time
Selma chose her own colors from the box.

*Work slowly. Go carefully. Take all the time
you like. You do not need to hurry. Make it the way you want.*

Small, unspoiled beginnings.
Weeks of little changes
To the hills, the flowers, skies and trees.
Each day unfolding
more of what she knew she could do.

That was the real story Schaefer taught us--
how it was *all* there *all* the time.
How Selma's work
opened to become her home,
her place to be.
How it made her, grew a shy smile
that spread over us
like hope,
this art of her own making.

~ Sally A. Gradle

A full account of art educator Henry Schaefer-Simmern's case study of Selma can be read in his book *The Unfolding of Artistic Activity* (1948). The educational psychologist Seymour Sarason who was present at Southbury Training School for the case study also tells a parallel documentation of the same event. Sarason has written about the profound effect of Schaefer-Simmern's teaching in several of his publications.

CELEBRATING LIFE, DENOUNCING HUMAN VIOLENCE

By: Peter London



Bridge Series #13

Seymour Segal, a painter whose lush women and driven men, whose arresting color and virtuoso brush strokes can and has dazzled us for over fifty years, knows how to create enchanting images that quickly gather one into their world. A world loud with passion and daring, verve and Eros. More than merely visually arresting, Segal's work quickens one, shocking one into realizing that he/she has lived a more more subdued and safe life than realized before visiting an exhibition of his work.

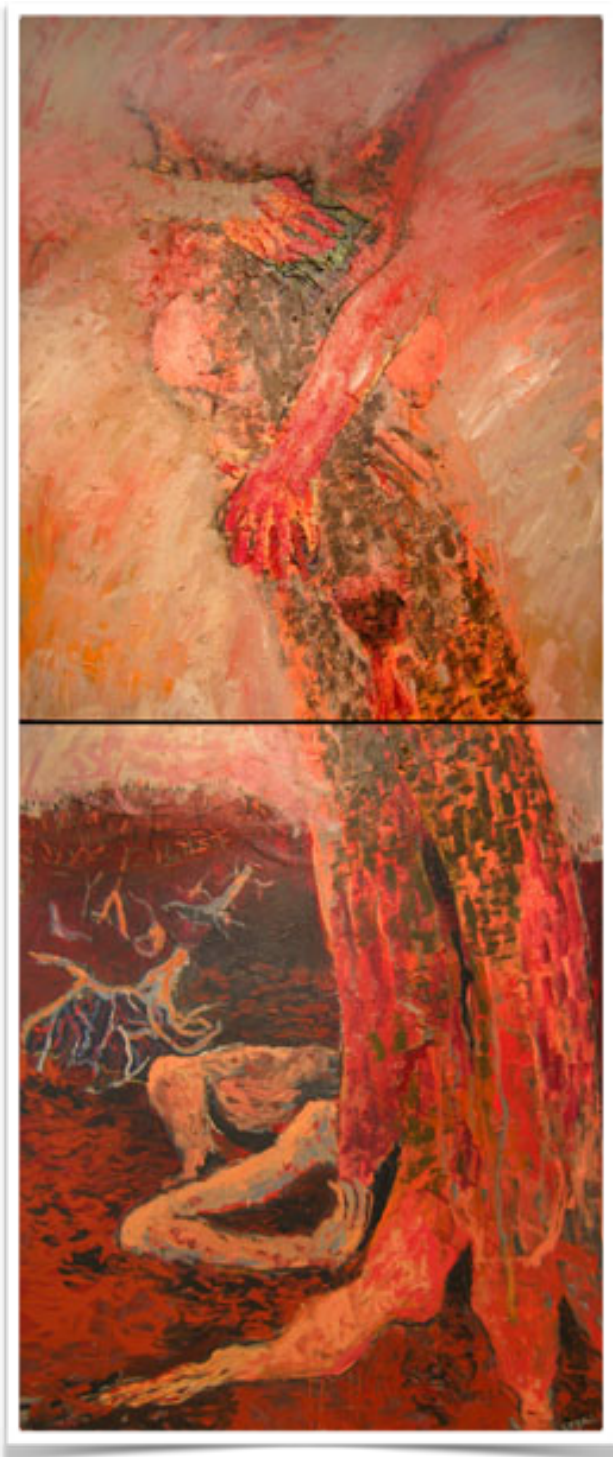
For those who have followed Segal's paintings this half century we have also followed the course of his love life, his friendships, his physical adventures, his introspections, in short his autobiography.

But now we have something different, again.

For what we have now is Segal as the artist who has been witness to the disasters, the human inflicted disasters, that inflicted our times; as we all have, but unlike all too many of us, has not blinked. Not the self referential but the commentator on not only his, but our times.

Our times. The world being what it is just now, and maybe always so, is so rife with self made disasters, that it is no surprise that many in the arts are finding other issues to address rather than to engulf themselves in the enormity of the myriad disasters of our own making. Certainly we have been visited by avalanches, volcanic eruptions, tidal waves, droughts, hurricanes, tornados, and creeping warming that have all brought their miseries to further our own hand-wrought ones. But why dwell on this? Why devote our gifts and precious life to address the suffering that these calamities pour down upon us, especially upon the most vulnerable, the innocent, the least deserving? Such devoted attention cannot help but be debilitating. The issues are endless; the causes seemingly intractable, officials responsible to redress the issues seem incapable of doing so. How is it possible to remain aware, engaged, sane and continue to practice ones art with the dedicated focus the arts require in the midst of this maelstrom?

One response has been to side step brutish times by disengaging with the surrounding field, in the attempt to duck the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune and take up loftier concerns; the realm of abstractions or the fantasia of the mytho-poetic, or wax rhapsodic about the harmonies of the natural world, or, just turn out pleasantries – even the weakest of talents know how to do that. (And is likely just this caliber of artists who do turn out such stuff.) And there clearly is a need for escape to the play land of entertainment, even distinguished entertainment. Clever plays, beautiful music, fetching dance



Paysage Paradox #21

and arresting cinema all provide relief, but not merely relief, for they are often brilliantly crafted, fabulously conceived fabrications that do provide awe and wonder, and of course, relief.

The visual arts are no exception. Why not have more beauty, calm, and peace? If not in the world and not in our lives, at least let's have it in our art. And so we have. Marvelously gifted artists in every art form have devoted their gifts to elevating the human experience by creating visions of how we might live rather than the way we have all too often come to live. Lux and calm, as Matisse devoted himself to in the midst of war ravaged Europe. As Renoir as did Cezanne. Nothing wrong with plump young ladies at their bath or with pears, apples and jugs composed just so, but after all there was a war going on and dedicated combatants as well as innocents were having their lives mangled and ripped from them.

Every artist in every era has provided us with these expansive and deepening harmonies often in the midst of their own tragic times, and we have indeed been deepened, broadened refined, elevated by their contributions. But we also have Bach, and Beethoven

Michelangelo and Goya, Verdi and T. S. Elliot, Sylvia Plath, John Berryman, and Max Beckman who also turned their attention to the profound darkness's of their times with correspondingly deeper tones and more difficult harmonies. Ralph Ellison, Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, E. L. Doctorow, Philip Roth, Samuel Beckett, Andrew Wyeth, Lucien Freud, Anna Mendieta, Judy Chicago, Salman Rushdie, also come quickly to mind. In an earlier era, Egon Schiele,

George Grosz, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Primo Levi, took up the cause of casting light on our darkest tendencies.

The problem that addressing the myriad forms of social injustice presents is that the very issues one takes up are so compelling, so maddening that it all but overwhelms the artist's ability to be articulate and not become a well deserved babbling, bawling wreck. Art that is insincere, art that is not a full

account of the core substance of the artist may be pleasing-for some. But it rings hollow, fails to either charm or convince those whose pay sincere and full attention.

“ **Segal's work quickens one, shocking one into realizing that he/she has lived a more more subdued and safe life than realized before visiting an exhibition of his work.** ”

Which brings us back to Segal's work.

One's immediate impression, without yet focusing on any one work, but scanning the whole, is this fellow is not fooling around. This viscosity of the paint, the profligate abundance of it lathered, poured, scratched, smeared, carved onto the surface, is strangely congruent with the gravity of the issue addressed. It is as if the quantity of paint employed and the muscularity of its application were in proportion to convictions of the artist, coupled to the enormity of the issues addressed. Quantity, even proportionally, does not, of course, equate with quality, but unstinting effort on behalf of full conviction is persuasive. Segal's lush employment of media is elevated by his choice of palette. High chroma, saturated hue, broad chromatic scale, raise the pitch of his work to high decibels. The paintings are loud. Not boisterous, but neither are they reticent. All this highly wrought expression might

end up as being melodramatic and even garish in lesser hands, but with Segal what we see are gorgeous, tempered things. Yes, gorgeous. Not damped down expression, to make the disastrous issues and images easier on the eye, but the invention of forms, the dazzling color harmonies, the skillful draftsmanship, concoct a thing of difficult beauty. Difficult. Beautiful.

In front of his works, we are brought right where the protagonists or the event are taking place; leaving no place for us to remain an uninvolved bystander. We feel the heat, the discomfort, the danger, and permitted no appeasement for our sensibilities. This is, of course exactly where the artist stands to these very same scenes, in the maw of this mysterious penchant we humans have for violence in the name of every real and imagined self-righteous cause and adversary.

And here is where the dilemma of the artist with an active social conscience resides; how to be honest and full about grave matters without compromising one's passions for the well made thing. Segal has wrestled with this throughout the course of his life. In his artist's statement accompanying these works he writes, "Fear, insecurity and doubt are my constant companions, their loyal support has encouraged and supported my efforts ... For over fifty years, [painting] has been my privileged process of **celebrating life and love and denouncing human violence.**"

These last works are the look of a beset and honest man at work; always difficult work.

Always
darkly
beautiful.

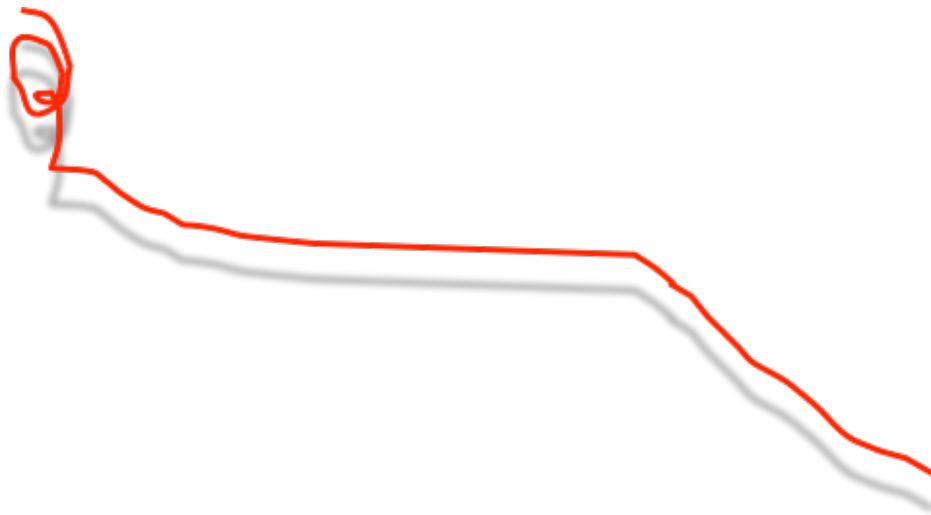


Paysage Paradoxal #20, 48" x 42"
Leaving - O/C, 48" x 60"

Artist website:

<http://www.seymoursegal.qc.ca/fr/index.html>

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THE SMALL START

If you draw very small in the middle of the page
then the empty space seizes

the eye, takes over. The important
marks you made will be like a celebration

happening in the next town
on the fourth of July.

Some eyes will strain to determine
its source, remembering

other shy thoughts they too
have had, the tender shoots

that once sprouted as uncertainties.
Others will wonder why

you let the paper say so much.
They will not be aware

that this was the best opening
your mind could make just then

to let this little thing out.

~ **Sally A. Gradle**

INVERSE INCLUSION

A MODEL FOR PRESERVICE ART TEACHER TRAINING

By: Angela M. La Porte

Introduction

A university community-based intercession course offered preservice art teachers a unique opportunity to participate as learners in an inclusive art education environment that I refer to as *inverse inclusion*. Unlike the typical model of a K-12 inclusion classroom where a few special needs students are integrated into a class with typically-abled students, or reverse inclusion (Schoger, 2006), where a few selected typically-abled students are placed into a self-contained classroom for limited interactions, inverse inclusion assimilates preservice art teachers into a special needs classroom where they serve multiple participatory roles as art students (participant-observers¹) alongside differently-abled² adult art students, as art teacher, as teacher's assistant, and as videographer. Their observations and interactions from these multiple roles, especially as participant-observer, provide preservice teachers with perceptive insights and perspectives about teaching, and nurture a better understanding of differently-abled students' personal interests and abilities. The experience informs their strategies in adapting art curriculum theory and practice to the particular needs of these students. The inclusive setting creates a supportive environment where open-ended curricula with enduring ideas connects to students' personal interests and motivates them to grow as individual artists. Student participant-observers closely observe special needs students' responses to studio activities and suggest adaptive curricula strategies as needed. Participation in this novel type of inclusion in a community-based art setting adds a beneficial learning dimension for preservice art teachers, and offers the differently-abled adults a unique opportunity to experience an inclusive art class, which is normally segregated.

Inclusive K-12 art education experiences for students referred to as special (Gerber & Guay, 2006), or differently-abled (Kraft & Keifer-Boyd, 2013) have been ongoing topics in education literature regarding students with physical and/or mental disabilities since the implementation of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997 and its amendment in 2004 (P.L. 108-446). The act mandated that differently-abled students be integrated into classrooms with those who are typically-abled.³ This challenged art educators to work with parents, paraprofessionals or aides, and school counselors to develop IEP (Individualized Education Program) plans in art for every student with special needs, and to supplement their learning goals in an integrated classroom. With the inclusion mandates, many art specialists still lacked extensive training and confidence in teaching this differently-abled population (Keifer-Boyd & Kraft, 2003), resulting in misconceptions about these

¹ Participant-observer is the preservice teachers' role as an art student working side-by-side with special needs students. The term is typically used as an ethnographic research technique to better understand a culture by working alongside, interacting with, and observing them over an extensive period of time. I borrow the term to best describe this particular preservice teacher role as a student in the inclusive class and to differentiate them from the special needs students throughout this article.

² "Differently-abled" has been used by Kraft and Keifer-Boyd (2013) in referring to persons with mental and/or physical impairments.

³ "Typically-abled" is a term that has been used by Kraft and Keifer-Boyd (2013) to refer to persons with typical mental and/or physical abilities.

students and a somewhat awkward relationship with them (Kraft, 2004; Dorff, 2010; Kraft & Keifer-Boyd, 2013). Art curriculum for this population had also been to a large extent teacher directed, “with little opportunity for thoughtful and creative engagement with artworks or with personal meaning making” (Guay, 2010, p. 113). To remedy these issues, university programs could encourage the informal, side-by-side exposure that students gain in an inverse inclusion setting, where preservice teachers’ alternating roles among differently-abled learners offer them practical insights and understanding. These enable them to better design, adapt, and teach an open-ended curriculum that personally connects to student interests and abilities. The inverse inclusion experience can also aid in gaining trust and acceptance, and removing their own prejudices and biases through positive interactions with special needs students (Kraft & Keifer-Boyd, 2013).



Figure: 1A

Bridging a Gap for Preservice Art Educators

With the above goals in mind, I taught a two-week intercession course to better serve my art education students in an area that seemed lacking in their current university program requirements. The course bridged contemporary curriculum theory to practice, providing an inclusive, participatory learning environment for preservice teachers. Art education students who had already taken a required class for certification, Survey of Exceptionalities, still desired actual art teaching experiences with special needs students. Guay (2003), Lund and Massey (2004), and Kraft and Keifer-Boyd (2013) have noted that preservice art teachers had limited experience implementing art curriculum and teaching strategies within an inclusive art education environment. Keifer-Boyd & Kraft (2003) believed that confidence in teaching could emerge from increasing art teachers' inclusive classroom experiences. I responded by developing a special topics course that borrowed elements described in Kraft & Keifer-Boyd's (2013) chapter on Human Empowerment Through the Arts (HEARTS) to incorporate into my class. The authors described a three week intercession course where art and general education preservice students taught art to a mix of typically and differently-abled students from grades 9 to 12. They labeled the program HEARTS (Human Empowerment through the Arts). Its mission was "to create a reciprocal and nurturing environment accessible to everyone involved using art as a vehicle for a creative and expressive journey of self and others" (p. 55). The goals embraced art education curriculum frameworks including artmaking and art appreciation, as well as advances in sociological, cognitive, and sensory skills. Inspired by the HEARTS program, I wanted to increase my own preservice students' experience, empathy, and understanding of persons with different abilities, acquire confidence in how to prepare and teach flexible, open-ended curriculum, and create an inclusive multi-ability, intergenerational learning community.

I chose to work with an established art program for special needs adults (18 years and older) in the community, since this population had few opportunities for integrated art education experiences, regardless of the U.S. Department of Justice (2009) disability rights laws that guaranteed equal opportunities in inclusive environments. Riley (2011) notes that many of these adults become more isolated in group home settings or clustered housing (Mansell & Beadle-Brown, 2009) where personal care, job training resources, and other service facilities are often centralized and more easily accessible (Reinke, 2009). Even though group homes are more likely to facilitate community-based programs, such as shopping at the mall or participating in an art show at the public library for special needs artists, adults in group homes are less likely to participate in inclusive activities (Willer & Intagliata, 1984) with the exception of a few who hold part-time employment or enroll in university coursework.

This population of differently-abled adults comprises an increasing percentage of the adult and older adult population, living longer, healthier lives in clustered community settings or in more independent living situations (Elliott, 2004; Howden & Meyer, 2011). Yet, little has been written about their engagement with art education (Hoffman, 1992; Blandy, 1993; Kraft & Keifer-Boyd, 2013, & Carrington, 1994).

The intercession course described here addressed these challenges in a meaningful way. I created a novel inverse inclusion classroom where my art education students served primarily as student participant-observers alongside special needs students, and also performed

intermittent roles as teacher, teacher assistants, and videographers (documenting the lesson for teacher reflection). Teaching and learning in this type of inclusive setting personalized my students' understanding of this population. This article recommends the use of inverse inclusion as a method for higher education to begin bridging theories, research, and practices to better prepare preservice art teachers for teaching in an inclusive classroom.

Program Description

The two-week intercession course for university art education students was an intensive teaching experience at an existing community-based art program for special needs adults aged 18 and older, particularly those with developmental disabilities. The non-profit organization that established the art education resource originated in 1976, and currently provides special needs adults with support while living with family, in their own homes, or in clustered duplex housing near the main program complex. Two facilities serve clients at separate locations: one for performing arts, recreation, advocacy, and skill building plus a separate structure devoted to visual art, where my art education students delivered team taught art curricula in conjunction with a University of Arkansas' three credit hour special topic intercession course in art education.

The course met daily from 1pm to 4:45pm for eleven days and included reading assignments, collaborative curriculum planning, ten two-hour team teaching experiences, reflections/discussions, and preservice teacher research presentations on artists with special needs and artistic abilities. They led daily art instruction for a varying number of differently-abled adults at the program's visual art building.

While each university preservice teacher had opportunities to assume roles as the lead teacher, the teaching assistant, and the videographer (for teacher documentation) during the intercession course, they all participated most often as learners alongside seven to fifteen differently-abled adult students. During the lesson introduction, studio work, and closure, the preservice art teachers invited all participants (university students and adults with special needs) to be mentally, verbally, and physically engaged side-by-side as an inclusive community of learners.

Open-ended Curriculum, Personal Connection, and Elaboration

The collaborative open-ended curriculum planning between myself and preservice teachers allowed for adjustments to improve instructional choices that offered every student, regardless of abilities, an opportunity to personally connect and be empowered through art education. Wexler and Derby (2015) suggest that "art educators should foster development of artistic identities of disabled learners, which requires devoted attention to recognizing and honoring such identities in learners' artwork" (p. 138). Dorff (2010), Eren (2010), and Koo (2010), also suggest that knowing and connecting with the interests of students and expanding on them is particularly important for persons with autistic behaviors.

For example, one lesson introduced everyone to the concept of landscape and their experience with familiar landscapes. The work of cityscape artist, Song Dong, offered examples of how a variety of materials and recycled objects could be used to create parts of imaginary cities or landscapes. The preservice teacher reminded students of films where miniature people

transformed everyday objects for other purposes, e.g., “The Borrowers” and “Honey, I Shrunk the Kids.” The university preservice teachers contributed ideas and brought in recycled materials (small boxes, scrap paper, popsicle sticks, etc.) to create a miniature three-dimensional collaborative landscape onto a plaster land form. Both preservice teachers and the special needs adults discussed artists who created landscapes and possibilities for imaginative ones, and built their own personally meaningful buildings, towers, animals, plants, fences, and other elements including painted terrain onto the plaster base (see Figures 1A & 1B).



Figure: 1B

Another teacher introduced students to emotions portrayed in movie poster designs with an introduction and discussion about designers' use of elements of color, images, and typography in posters that express a mood or scene in a movie. Participants also shared their personal film interests. The preservice teacher photographed the participants prior to class with props. Later, students used photocopies of digital portraits in an ink transfer process or actual photocopies of themselves to include in their movie poster design. Participants chose their

favorite movie genre, from fairytales to action films, and depicted themselves in leading roles on their own film poster (see Figure 2).

Students easily connected with storytelling themes. Book illustration and/or authorship offered a variety of approaches to storytelling. Participants who loved to write and/or draw were able to express their personal stories, and in one case, elaborate on repetitive subject schema. The story theme offered one differently-abled student the opportunity to embellish her artwork with more detail and scope—Simplistic imagery (see Figure 3) became more complex (see Figure 4). It also allowed another to explore her interest in fairytales and writing (see Figure 5). According to Wexler and Derby (2015), “students disabilities are rarely encouraged to find their own symbols and metaphors that are carriers of emotions and internal conflict” (p. 138).



Figure: 2

stained glass windows and talk about what they noticed in each of the artist examples presented. Students then created their stained glass design to display in the windows of their art building. Since many special needs students wanted to draw rather than work exclusively with shapes of color, we accommodated them by sandwiching their color tissue paper design between two pieces of waxed paper, allowing them to draw on top of the waxed paper with a permanent marker (see Figure 6). We made efforts to recognize and honor the personal interests of special needs learners, as suggested by Wexler and Derby (2015).

In another unit, a student presented the concept of space and architecture, introducing the stained glass window as a way to enhance architectural space with color. The preservice teacher's curriculum idea was a response to the large windows and skylights in the art facility. During the introduction, she asked everyone to share what they knew about windows, their experiences with them, how they influenced one's feelings in an architectural space, and artists' use of color, design, and subject matter. Participants were able to share their own experiences with



Figure: 3, 4, 5



Figures: 6 (top), 8 & 7

One preservice teacher introduced an approach to creating imaginative artwork inspired by abstract imagery from clouds in the sky or inkblots on paper, similar to a method Kornfeld (2012) used to engage adults in a drawing activity beginning with nonrepresentational imagery on paper. She began by showing everyone photographs of clouds. Most participants engaged in the discussion by commenting on what they imagined seeing in the clouds. The preservice teacher then shifted to Rorschach images and to how the artist, Jessica Nissen, transformed them into artwork. The preservice teacher also introduced Mequitta Ahuja, an

artist who used accidental inkblots as inspiration for her art. Most participants seemed to be engaged in the discussion by commenting on what they imagined seeing in the clouds. Students who were reticent to create artwork from their own or pre-made inkblots seemed to respond if their familiar preferred subject matter or interest was worked into the art process. One special needs student who repeatedly drew dog forms in crayon (see Figure 3) responded when a preservice teacher in the student (participant-observer) role introduced her to an ink form that resembled her dogs (see Figure 7). She began to add detail and create an inkblot that she expanded into a humanlike form (see Figure 8). Another person continued reading a magazine during the studio time until another preservice teacher in the role of student participant-observer demonstrated how to make an inkblot design onto a recycled magazine page, offering her an alternative possibility that the special needs student adopted (see Figure 9). Koo (2010) asserted that knowing student interests and expanding them through curriculum associations can prompt motivation, particularly with autistic students. Open-ended lesson ideas also allowed everyone to connect unique personal interests and artistic strengths as suggested by Kirk, Gallagher, and Coleman (2015).

As conclusions to many of these art units, all students had opportunities to talk about their work and display it in the art building or at the university. One student shared her fairytale story that emotionally moved the preservice teachers. She read, "Once upon a time there was a princess named Margaret. She was in love with Ray, a prince. Age or disability didn't matter at all." This artwork was a powerful affirmation that art can elevate special needs students to a level of acceptance through open-ended curriculum encouraging personal art interests, as did the support and adaptations generated primarily by preservice teachers as student participant-observers.



Figure: 9

An Inclusive Learning Experience

The university students realized how theory and research applied to their inclusive classroom experiences. Rotating preservice teacher roles as teacher, teacher assistant, videographer, and student offered them opportunities to gain broader and deeper experiences with special needs learners. Whether preservice teachers were instructing an art lesson or creating art in this inclusive environment, they gained a comfortable familiarity and sensitivity through their interactions with special needs students. A similar effect is evidenced by Carrigan (1994) through partnering differently-abled adults with typically-abled college students in a small group studio setting. Preservice teachers recognized, valued, and accepted everyone's diverse artistic abilities as starting points for curriculum motivation and adaptations.

When I asked preservice teachers to reflect on what they learned at the end of the intercession course and its future applicability, they identified the following attitudes, dispositions, and instructional strategies through what they read and experienced in the classroom:

1. *"Special needs adults are not very different than your average students. . . . They are eager to learn and have great potential . . . and should not be underestimated" (student written reflection).*
2. *All students should experience success.*
3. *Be flexible with expectations and goals with patience, understanding, and acceptance to allow student uniquenesses to emerge.*
4. *Every student is unique, and every day is different.*
5. *Open-ended curriculum encourages student choice, and connects with individual interests and/or experiences.*
6. *Take time to interact and learn more about students.*
7. *Use multiple modes of learning to reinforce objectives (visual, tactile, kinesthetic, etc.).*
8. *Create a classroom environment that has limited distractions where work stations are organized and safe.*
9. *There are many ways to engage students about their art and the work of others with open-ended questions and dialogue.*
10. *Plan extensively with modifications for differently-abled students. Consider how to visually and verbally reinforce instructional processes and goals with table toppers, handouts, etc.*

Although adjustments to the physical environment (Wexler & Leuthi-Garrecht, 2015), and adaptive tools (Coleman & Cramer, 2015) were not addressed in this article, preservice teachers identified some of the most crucial elements to consider for teaching special needs students through their inverse inclusion experience.

Conclusion

Inverse inclusion is a new model for art educators to train future teachers and for researchers to study at other easily accessible community-based sites and locations with differently-abled learners. Preservice teachers' experience rotating between roles as teacher, teaching assistant, videographer, and student participant-observer offer multiple perspectives and opportunities to better understand the individual interests and abilities of special needs students and learn to be innovative and flexible in adjusting or guiding curricula to enhance motivation and artistic development. The intercession course became more than bridging theory to practice—the multiple roles during inverse inclusion offered lenses that enabled preservice teachers' to gain insights into the complex dynamics of the inclusive art classroom. Open-ended curriculum with enduring ideas personally connected to differently-abled learners, as preservice teachers' multiple roles encouraged recognition of students' personal interests in subject matter, media, and unique abilities. These implications suggest that a community-based collaboration that is similar to the one described can also augment preservice teachers' preparation for teaching special needs students in a K-12 inclusion classroom. The uniqueness of this program was inverse inclusion, the opportunity for students to spend extensive amounts of time interacting with special needs students in a variety of roles. This model can expand educational opportunities for preservice teachers, as well as special needs adults, who experience limited inclusive art education.

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THE LOVE POEM

He pushed the fragile bundle
to the table's edge, fixed her blankets,
and said to all of us,

She's still here.

She knows what you're saying.

She's still the same person.

Putting a paintbrush in her hand,
pulling the page near her right side.

Here you go, my dear.

Paint away.

She thanked him,
a color spread slowly
across the page, like sleep.

Each day attentive to her needs,
he informed us

She had a rough night last night.

Fell asleep during breakfast.

Still wants to come to art class.

Each day asking her

What color, how much, where should it go.

Do you want help, here try another.

Each day remarking on her spirit

*Good try, marvelous to keep going, isn't she
doing well, what art.*

Once when the praise hovered thick, I think
I heard her say, *Oh, just be quiet.*

Their story legend, we watched them leave
and wondered if any of us could be like this pair someday.

What if we were the one whose mind and muscles
no longer went where we wanted,
what would our spouses do?
Give up everything to be by our side, doing art until the end of our time?

Slowly her words formed the last day of class.
She turned to him like a blossom:

I learned so much about you.

~ **Sally A. Gradle**

An earlier version of this poem
appeared in the
Linden Avenue Literary
Journal, 2012.

OTHER - THAN - EGO CONSCIOUSNESS : Approaching the “Spiritual” in Secular Art Education

By: Nico Roenpapel

Introduction: Alternative Worldviews

The education systems of today greatly influence the world and values of tomorrow. On the one hand, this means that education is a key vehicle for creating a more compassionate and sustainable future.¹ On the other hand, an increasing number of scholars question whether the value system currently underpinning education will be successful in reconciling the world of tomorrow (Brantmeier, Lin, & Miller, 2010; Bussey, Inayatullah, & Milojević, 2008; Hart, 2009; Miller, 2006; Milojević, 2005; Slaughter, 2004; de Souza, Francis, O'Higgins-Norman, & Scott, 2009). This article sheds light on a spiritual approach to art education as a catalyst for transforming individual and collective consciousness toward fostering a more peaceful global future.

A changing world produces and requires changing conceptions of education. Within a rapidly changing world and unprecedented “civilizational challenges” (Slaughter, 2004), a serious engagement with alternative frameworks seems a matter of urgency and necessity. Ultimately, ideas about education are driven by the philosophical question of what it means to be human. Different answers to this question imply different conceptions about the aims of education and about preferred types of pedagogies. Consequently, an interplay exists between and among a worldview², values, educational goals and purposes, learning theory, and educational practice as applied in a specific setting of learning and teaching. Put differently, a worldview—that is, innermost beliefs about our humanness—has direct ramifications for ideas of education, both philosophically and pedagogically.

A number of scholars, such as Forbes (2003) and Miller (1998, 2000), highlighted this interrelatedness, stressing that educational ideas and practices are ultimately, if not distinctly, informed by different images of human nature. Hence, it is significant to recognize that alternative world views bring forth alternative visions of education. Depicting the principle of layered relationship, Figure 1 shows how educational thinking and practice is embedded within, and thus inseparable from, philosophical views of what it means to be human. Acknowledging this interplay, it is worthwhile giving attention to alternative world views that already do, and some that might, generate more diverse educational thinking.

¹ Because “the future” is always uncertain, multiple, and contested, the plural version “futures,” as established within futures studies, is more adequate. However, to increase the readability, I use the singular form “future,” meaning to acknowledge openness and diversity.

²With “worldview” I refer to a person’s or group’s deep-seated culturally and experientially informed ground for interpreting and evaluating life, that is, a specific set of cosmological, ontological, and epistemological beliefs. I adapted the latter trio from Australian Torres Strait Islander and scholar Martin Nakata (2007), who uses these three categories to speak about the fundamental differences between an Indigenous knowledge system and a Western scientific knowledge system.

This article concentrates on visual art as a subject at high school. I demonstrate that visual art presents a secular environment well suited for incorporating an alternative worldview that engages teenagers with spiritual questions. I first comment on growing discussions of spirituality in education discourse generally before turning to the field of art education. Through five concepts, I propose a contemporary interpretation of spirituality that seems compatible with secular systems. Each concept is first approached through broader educational discussions, followed by implications for high school art education specifically.



Figure 1. The Embeddedness of Educational Thinking and Practice.

This schema of nested layers demonstrates that underpinning philosophical views and assumptions about human nature shape a preference for certain educational ideas and behaviors.

Growing Interest in Spirituality in Education

The last decade in particular has generated a growing engagement with spirituality in both popular culture and different academic discourses, including education. Specifically, there has been a significant rise in scholarly interest regarding the role of spirituality within secular education contexts (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011; Brantmeier et al., 2010; Bussey et al., 2008; Crawford & Rossiter, 2006; Hart, 2009; Miller, 2006; Miller & Nakagawa, 2002). These scholars observe the emergence of a discursive shift whereby alternative and spiritual views are beginning to be taken seriously within current educational discussions. A trend toward growing systematic engagement with spiritual frameworks seems to be confirmed through new academic conferences, scholarly publications, and journals, as well as professional organizations and networks dedicated to spirituality in education.³

³ An example for an established organization dealing with spirituality in education is The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society. The Center's website lists a number of useful links to campus initiatives in North American universities, including programs, resources, and databases that reflect the increasing scholarly engagement with spirituality in education (<http://www.contemplativemind.org>).

While the above literature suggests spiritual alternatives are being taken seriously within education discourse, some scholars proclaim that despiritualized paradigms continue to underpin contemporary models of education. With “despiritualized” I refer to the discursive, epistemic, or institutional absence or exclusion of spirituality. Accordingly, some sources diagnose a cultural inclination toward scientific–materialistic worldviews and methodologies in disciplines related to education (Anthony, 2008; Apffel-Marglin, 2005; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991; Wilber, 2000). As a consequence, some theorists see a continuation of analytical–rationalist, industrialist, and despiritualized frameworks dominating models of learning and teaching within mainstream education (Anthony, 2008; Bussey et al., 2008; Hart, 2009; Miller, 1988, 2000; Slaughter, 2004).

The two seemingly opposing readings of recent developments of spirituality in education are not contradictory per se: A continued bias toward materialist frameworks (e.g., Anthony, 2008; Wilber, 2000) can coexist with a paradigm shift toward greater scholarly recognition of spiritual worldviews (e.g., Astin et al., 2011; Brantmeier et al., 2010). Specifically, it appears that emerging alternative discourses begin to successfully challenge the dominant epistemic climate. Surprisingly too, the two different interpretations agree in one point: Both are convinced that a radically new paradigm of profound interconnectedness is necessary to develop an “education of inner significance” (Hart, 2009). These advocates now hope for a new paradigm that will contribute to an evolution of consciousness beyond the conventional narratives of materialism and competitiveness arguably driving most education systems.

Because this article focuses on visual art at high school, it is imperative to comment on the role of spirituality within secular education contexts. Essentially, as a social, political, and philosophical theory, secularism designates a separation between the church and the state. In the literature, there are different standpoints regarding the relation between spirituality and secularism. For example, Anthony (2008) views the two as irreconcilable, whereas Miller (2000) sees them as a false dichotomy. Significantly, the secular ideal postulates a separation between *church* and state, but not necessarily between *spirituality* and state. For this reason, a conceptual distinction, if not divergence, between spirituality and religion heralds a constructive way forward in the discussion (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006). Put differently, secularism refers to the separation between institutionalized power structures, addressing organized religions and not spirituality as such. As a consequence, nonreligious conceptions of spirituality appear justified and pertinent for current secular democracies and thus compatible with secular education settings, such as high school visual art.

Art Education and the Spiritual

While notions of the spiritual have gained increased attention over the recent years in various domains of education, applying spirituality to the field of art education appears particularly feasible. The following three aspects of art education make it a conducive environment for integrating a spiritual approach.

First, themes of religion, spirituality, and the sacred have been essential elements for the production of artworks throughout time and culture (Brennan, 2010; Koppman, 2002; Lander, 2014; London, 2007). Second, these and other scholars believe that an engagement with artworks is especially relevant for exploring reflective and existential, if not spiritual, questions (Baas & Jacob, 2004; Campbell, 2006; Campbell & Simmons III, 2012; Gall, 2008; Irwin, 2007; Rosch, 2004). Third, many official art education documents include the term “spiritual.” For example, the visual art syllabus for the High School Certificate in New South Wales, Australia declares:

Visual Arts provides a school context to foster students’ physical and spiritual development The bringing together of ideas and materials invested with meaning

may lead to spiritual significance in the art produced, and for the student. The study of artworks in historical and contemporary cultures reflects an ongoing interest in representations of the spiritual. (Board of Studies, 2009, p. 6)

A similar wording regarding visual art's "spiritual significance" or its potential impact on students' "spiritual development" can be found in numerous art education policies internationally, including North America. Significantly, in most cases—like the above-cited syllabus—educational documents use the term "spiritual" in a generic way, without further explaining, discussing, or contextualizing it (Webster, 2009). In this regard, it is important to underline that due to the secular intention of most visual art syllabi, the use of "spiritual" cannot be equated with "religious." Rather, the two would need to be actively distinguished. Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that a nonreligious framework is required to adequately interpret notions of the spiritual in secular art education policies.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned intrinsic link between art education and the spiritual, it is surprising that contemporary art education discourse has given relatively little systematic attention to the role of spirituality in teaching art. Indeed, the following valuable resources confirm a paradigmatic marginalization of spiritual worldviews within art educational discussions: the *International Handbook of Research in Arts Education* (Bresler, 2007) that dedicates its final section to "spirituality" (chap. 95-103); a recent anthology titled *The Heart of Art Education: Holistic Approaches to Creativity, Integration, and Transformation* (Campbell & Simmons III, 2012); as well as the well-argued book *Spiritual Art and Art Education* (Lander, 2014). For instance, Campbell (2012) states that while spirituality in education receives growing scholarly recognition in various educational contexts, the field of art education has not yet participated in the larger trend toward negotiating holistic approaches. Especially constructive is Lander's (2014) work that defines spirituality through first-person sciences of consciousness. She calls for a deliberate break with traditional concepts of spirituality as confined through religious systems. Lander and other scholars in the above publications have significantly contributed toward filling the discursive gap, helping to ignite credible and productive discussions about the spiritual in contemporary, secular art education.

Approaching the Spiritual in Art Teaching

Notions of the "spiritual" and "spirituality" are inherently complex, ambiguous, elusive, controversial and, ultimately, mysterious. In other words, any definition of the spiritual must be either partial or paradoxical in nature. This point was addressed by the late-20th-century Indian mystic Osho (1994) who warned of attempts to explain any ultimate reality—such as the spiritual—stating provocatively that, "if you explain it you will be explaining it away" (p. 134).

Different conceptions of spirituality are determined by a person's worldview, where a worldview is understood as an interpretive context shaped by culture, tradition, assumptions, life experiences, and so forth. In addition to different religious perspectives, ideas of the spiritual and spirituality may be informed, among other things, by nonreligious, secular, humanist, or therapeutic frameworks. Specifically, evolving notions of spirituality now encompass areas such as medicine, healing, mental health, sport, patient care, the work place, and popular culture (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006; Lander, 2014; de Souza et al., 2009; Webster, 2009).

Keeping in mind this complexity and ambiguity regarding the spiritual and spirituality, it is not my intention to generate a conclusive definition of spirituality, or one that is characterized by one particular framework. Rather, I aim to present an inclusive view that recognizes the existing diversity of spiritual worldviews. Further, I intend to provide an approach that has

tangible, productive implications for art education theory and practice. Specifically, I propose that the following five concepts offer a constructive path forward in current discussions on spirituality in secular art education. I first describe each concept from a general, art-independent point of view to acknowledge discussions in wider education discourse. I then comment on each concept's implications for art education. To provide concrete examples, a high school year-10 cohort of teenagers (aged 14 to 15) serves as the specific community of learners. This said, the proposed implications for learning and teaching are not restricted to this age group but may be transferable to other ages at high school level or to alternative art education environments.

1. Spirituality versus religion.

A first helpful approach is to clarify the relation between spirituality and religion in recent educational thinking. A growing number of scholars not only differentiate between spirituality and religion but further advocate spirituality as explicitly noninstitutional, if not nondenominational. Despite the increasing delineation between spirituality and religion, there are varying interpretations and subtle differences regarding this distinction. For example, some scholars (e.g., Adams, 2006; Bussey, 2008; Lander, 2014) prefer a strong categorical distinction between spirituality and religion. Others (e.g., Crawford & Rossiter, 2006; Miller, 2000; Webster, 2009) propose an inclusive conception of spirituality that acknowledges religion as *one* possible context in which spiritual experiences can occur.

Overall, the majority of educational theorists agree insofar as they conceive of religion as a culturally constructed and institutionalized set of prescriptive beliefs, rituals, and practices that ideally assist an individual's spirituality. In contrast, the same theorists suggest that spirituality is distinct from religion and refers to a person's unique inner journey of spiritual growth that deals with existential, transcendental, and "ultimate" questions about the meaning of life.⁴ Put differently, unlike organized religions that are concerned with a set of *external* structures, spirituality relates to an *internal* development. "Internal" refers to a person's interior reality and processes as the total sum of first-person experiences covering physical, emotional, and mental impressions, as well as mysterious or spiritual aspects of experience.

Relevant for secular art education, the literature demonstrates that the trend to differentiate between spirituality and religion is not confined to scholarly discourse, but increasingly governs public opinion as well. Interestingly, studies show that young people in particular prefer the term "spiritual" over "religious," seeing the former as the more important and more inclusive construct (Astin et al., 2011; Crawford & Rossiter, 2006). This tendency places high school art education in an exciting position to address the spiritual within a nonreligious and nondogmatic environment.

In art education, students have access to a rich pool of artworks throughout art history negotiating themes of spirituality, transcendence, and the sacred. One example would be Casper David Friedrich's Romantic, awe-evoking paintings of the majestic natural world. Specifically since modernity, many artworks convey spiritual themes but no longer use traditional religious iconography. Consequently, modern and contemporary artworks may provide meaningful sources to engaging students in a dialogue about the shifting relation between spirituality and religion in the early 21st century.

With regard to a year-10 class, many teenagers have a desire to explore their innermost, personal philosophies about the value and meaning of life. The art classroom offers an

⁴ For "stereotypical distinctions and polarities" between the spiritual and the religious see Crawford and Rossiter's (2006, p. 183) insightful table.

environment for young people to reflect on ultimate questions and perhaps to use them as driving forces in the production of their artworks. Especially through art practice, teenagers may explore and express spiritual themes through a visual language that is distinct from established religious imagery. Through the work of Mark Rothko, for instance, students learn that abstraction—rather than religious symbols—can be a vehicle for expressing transcendence.

2. Awareness of interconnectedness.

The idea of a profound and mysterious interconnectedness of all life seems to be shared by all spiritual traditions as a principal cosmological and ontological belief. Shedding light on the concept of “interconnectedness,” which has become part of vernacular language, is useful for a contemporary interpretation of spirituality in art education contexts.

What might help with understanding this interconnectedness is the philosophy of “holism.” According to holism, the universe and especially living matter is seen in terms of unified or interacting wholes that are greater than the sum of their seemingly separate parts. Hence, holism implies a proposition of human existence and experience as embedded within a larger reality, or “unity,” beyond human scope and reason. An “awareness of interconnectedness” refers to a recognition of the interrelatedness and mutual dependency of all life on this planet, covering humans, animals, and plants alike. Significantly, the type of “interconnectedness” addressed here is not of a mere economical or ecological nature. Rather, it is inspired by a spiritual worldview of the sacredness and existential interdependence of all life. Accordingly, the notion of “interconnectedness” serves as a useful and nonsectarian approach to spirituality concerned with one’s connections with self, others, nature, and the transcendent (de Souza, Francis, O’Higgins-Norman, & Scott, 2009).

Many scholars are convinced that an experiential understanding of the profound interconnectedness of all life necessarily leads to more compassionate human beings who care deeply about cocreating a peaceful and sustainable future (Adams, 2006; Anthony, 2008; Bussey et al., 2008; Collins, 2010; Hart, 2009; Miller, 1988, 2000, 2006). This argument maintains that by realizing oneself as part of a larger unity, a person automatically develops a heightened sense of humility, compassion, and an ethic of caring through a “commitment to the whole” (Anthony, 2008, p. 220).

If we accept that a spiritual worldview of the profound interconnectedness of all life does have a positive effect on an individual’s valuing of caring, then this argument offers an interesting new perspective on education in the 21st century. If the value of mutual caring is taken seriously as an educational outcome, a worldview of interconnectedness presents a meaningful, alternative narrative to scientific and competition-based ideologies.

Within an art education setting, students can learn about the principle of interconnectedness in various ways. For instance, in a year-10 art classroom teenagers begin to engage with the hermeneutic rule: that the interpretation of an artwork depends on the interpretive perspective, and that the “context” may change an artwork’s meaning. Since about the 1970’s literary and aesthetic theory has elevated the viewer to a constitutive role in the process of meaning making. Subjective experience and interpretation of an artwork is generally taken into account as one dimension in reading artworks. Perhaps at around the age of 14, learners encounter the idea that the viewer is not “separate” but “inseparable” from an artwork. They learn about an interconnectedness between artwork, artist, viewer, and varying contexts. Specifically, learners may begin to grasp that an artwork is not a singular entity, but more correctly behaves like a chameleon interrelated with its environment: continuously changing its meaning with the changing surroundings.

Learning and teaching through art provides a fertile ground for aesthetically examining the ever-changing relationships and interrelationships students experience—on a personal, local, national, and planetary level. For example, the art classroom may offer a conducive space for teenagers to explore timely issues of global interconnectedness. Having grown up with the Internet, most teenagers today have an unprecedented understanding about the interdependency of all life around the planet. Today's tenth graders have vast access to online information that help them acknowledge the law of a profound interconnectedness on a finite planet: Whether global climate warming, the depletion of natural resources, or the global production cycle of "stuff," much of this information comes to students through "images" of diverse formats. Often, images capture complex and multilayered relationships and are particularly powerful in engaging teenagers in issues beyond their immediate life worlds. By integrating material from visual culture or by using contemporary artists who address current global issues, art education encourages teenagers to look deeply at complicated global trends through a visual lens. Students may understand how both popular images and artworks can serve as visual representations of the complex nature of an increasingly interrelated world. Ideally, and possible in year 10, students would realize that they themselves are an interdependent part of the evolving planet as a whole. Further explored in their art practice, this insight can motivate students to develop a growing sense of shared responsibility beyond ethical, religious, national, or geographic identities.

3. Other-than-ego consciousness.

"Other-than-ego consciousness" is a significant notion for contemporary approaches to spirituality. It may also prove useful for addressing the spiritual in 21st century art education. Current spiritual authors, such as Tolle (2005), have contributed to popularizing the term "ego," which has arguably become part of the mainstream. The ego in a spiritual context pertains to a sense of "self" or "I" as a separate and distinct identity or entity. This separate identity results from an identification with physical, mental, and emotional experiences, leading to the conviction of "I" as confined to body, mind, and emotions. However, according to a spiritual understanding, the ego represents just *one* facet of the human and not the whole human being. Hence, an egocentric conception of self describes a construction and experience of self and world exclusively based on the "ego," without recognizing any extrasensory or transpersonal information, such as mystical experiences. An egocentric conception of self also maintains a separation from—rather than interdependence with—that which is not *my* body, not *my* mind, not *my* feelings.

Transcending egocentric conceptions of self refers (a) to a recognition of the existence of an ego, and (b) to a letting go of one's current self-structure. This entails an overcoming of one's cultural conditionings, beliefs, and ideas of self. The concept of an other-than-ego consciousness therefore invites a shift in individual consciousness from egocentrism, ethnocentrism, and anthropocentrism toward increased planetary awareness of interconnectedness. Similar to the previous argument, a number of scholars believe that the development of an other-than-ego consciousness leads to less self-centred but more compassionate individuals (Anthony, 2008; Bussey et al., 2008; Hart, 2009; Miller, 1988). As Feuerstein (1998) points out in the context of yoga,⁵ and Varela et al. (1991) for Buddhism, this view of dissolving experiences of egocentric identities aligns with all genuine spiritual traditions. Accordingly, spiritual traditions are not only underpinned by ethics of love and caring, but also significantly concerned with the higher aim of developing a person's increased sense of selflessness and egolessness. This is what I refer to as an "other-than-ego

⁵ The concept of "karma yoga," understood as self-less service for others, was a founding principle in ancient Indian yogic texts; whereas "yoga" in contemporary Western societies has become virtually synonymous with one or another version of body-based "hatha yoga."

consciousness:” less ego but more consciousness. The need for an other-than-ego consciousness in the 21st century receives growing credible recognition in business, society, and education. For example, MIT academics Scharmer and Kaufer’s (2013) innovative book proposes a shift *From Ego-System to Eco-System Economics*.

Art education delivers a meaningful context for students to imaginatively investigate questions of their identity and sense of self. Most art education policies articulate this learning outcome. For instance, the New South Wales Visual Arts Syllabus for the years 7–10 (Board of Studies, 2003) mentions art as a means to build “social identity,” “cultural identity,” “community identity,” and “national identity.” These terms indicate that the concept of “identity” is complex and exceeds an egoic understanding of self. Furthermore, postmodern theories—and arguably many artists since modernity—have shown that “self” is no longer confined to traditional, fixed notions of a singular “I.” Rather, “I” is increasingly viewed as multiple, fragmented, contested, ungraspable, and ever changing. For year-10 students, a stereotypical but convincing example from art history would be Cubist portraits that depict “fragmented” persons—capturing the simultaneity of diversity. Cindy Sherman or Sophie Calle would be exciting contemporary artists who address issue of identity and a diversified self.

Overall, through its imaginative and creative processes, the art classroom appears to stimulate rethinking individual self. By encouraging learners to engage with novel perspectives, the art classroom potentially challenges—rather than affirms—learners’ existing ideas of self. Most year-10 students are in a period of intense personal change and growth, with much of their mental, emotional, and embodied energy dedicated toward (re)creating themselves. For this reason, incorporating ideas of “other-than-ego consciousness” into the visual art classroom may indeed inspire teenagers to playfully explore the boundaries of their selves.

4. Ultimacy.

Related to the previous notion of other-than-ego consciousness, “Ultimacy” represents another useful concept for a contemporary interpretation of spirituality and its integration into art education. Originally coined by existentialist philosopher and theologian Tillich in the mid-20th century, “Ultimacy,” in this context, refers to the fullest possible human development, both in terms of the highest individual achievement and in terms of engaging with and serving the highest purpose as a human. Hence, Ultimacy—both as a process and end-point—designates a conception of ultimate individual and collective well-being in a spiritual-psychological-ethical sense, promoting an innate human drive toward goodness.

Analysing the ideas and nature of *Holistic Education*, Forbes (2003) identifies Ultimacy as a principal characteristic of different nonreligious spiritual approaches to education. Although Ultimacy can be interpreted differently depending on context, the *idea* of Ultimacy represents a distinct philosophy and approach that highlights the centrality given to ultimate, existential, and spiritual concerns. The development of an other-than-ego consciousness is a repeated concept regarding a person’s ultimate potential. Further, visions of ultimate well-being through education frequently emphasize core human values such as love, caring, and humility (Brantmeier et al., 2010; Bussey et al., 2008; Forbes, 2003; Slaughter, 2004).

Ultimacy as a guiding principle in education may be seen as fundamentally different from most forms of education that are, in Forbes’ (2003) view, generally concerned with either enculturation or preparation for work. A concrete example of Ultimacy in education is Miller’s (2006, 2010) slogan of “educating for wisdom.” Another educationally useful position is Hart’s (2009) model of six interrelated layers, each increasing in depth, covering (a) information, (b) knowledge, (c) intelligence, (d) understanding, (e) wisdom, and (f)

transformation. For Hart, transformation as “the push and pulse that drives self-organization and self-transcendence” (p. 12) describes the ultimate goal of education and is “inherently a spiritual endeavor” (p. 176).

The concept of Ultimacy serves as a compelling philosophical framework to incorporate the spiritual into art education. Most visual art syllabi embrace a somewhat humanistic ideal by aiming to assist the development of the “whole learner.” Many education documents name, among others, students’ social, cultural, academic, moral, creative, and emotional development, ideally culminating in students’ development of “positive self-concepts” (Board of Studies, 2002, p. 5). Interestingly, some art education policies also mention visual art as a context to foster students’ “spiritual development” (Board of Studies, 2009, p. 6).

“Ultimacy” becomes a useful concept insofar as it broadens the notion of the whole learner through a spiritual or mystical dimension. Within an art education setting, Ultimacy would concentrate on how to nurture a student’s highest potential through art. For example, a perennial topic in art classes throughout schooling is the self-portrait. Within a year-10 class, students may create their “ultimate” self-images, helping them to design positive self-concepts. The creation of an ultimate self-image through visual language may include a future projection of oneself in five (or fifty) years’ time. Students may not only focus on their most preferred qualities but may also find ways to re-invent their undesired shadow aspects.

5. Contemplative practices.

Especially over the past ten years, “contemplative practices” have gained growing popularity within diverse education settings. They provide a fifth concept constructive for approaching the spiritual in secular art education. “Contemplative practices” serves as an umbrella term for internally directed techniques that aim to relax, focus, and still a practitioner’s mind, generally as a preparation for developing higher states of consciousness. Various contemplative practices—such as yoga, tai chi, or meditative dance—developed within different cultural contexts, may be seen as first-person explorations of consciousness. Proponents of these various practices claim they lead to increased inner awareness or sensitiveness of subtle changes (mental, emotional, physical, or energetic) (Lander, 2014). Importantly, although contemplative practices often evolved within religious or spiritual systems, any specific metaphysical beliefs are optional to the individual practitioner. This optionality—albeit occasionally misunderstood—is significant for secular education environments.

Since around the turn of the 21st century, there has been an amplified scientific engagement with contemplative practices. Both quantitative and qualitative studies have generated growing evidence of the widespread benefits of contemplative practices for psychological, physical, emotional, intellectual, and social development. With reference to such findings, a number of educational theorists advocate the inclusion of contemplative approaches into education (Astin et al., 2011; Flook, Goldberg, Pinger, Bonus, & Davidson, 2013; Hart, 2004, 2009; Johnson, 2009; Lander, 2014; Lau, 2009; Levy, 2007; Miller, 1988, 2000, 2006, 2010).

Contemplative education or contemplative pedagogies refer to the integration of contemplative practices into diverse educational contexts. Contemplative education covers a variety of experiential techniques, such as visualization, meditation, mindfulness, yoga, and breathing exercises. Evidence is accumulating on the wide reaching benefits of contemplative practices in education, such as teachers and students being more present, peaceful, empathetic, and efficient while being less stressed. Especially the latter is associated with positive effects on cognitive and academic performance, stress management, and increased

self-awareness (Astin et al., 2011; Flook et al., 2013; Johnson, 2009; Kees, 2010; Solloway, 1999).

A growing number of scholars are convinced that contemplative education practices are particularly crucial for children and adolescents growing up in current high-speed societies that seem to have side-lined the value of attentiveness and deep-thought (Levy, 2007). In addition to increased mental health and academic performance, some studies further suggest a link between contemplative practices and a heightened social responsibility. For instance, a longitudinal, large-scale study conducted among college students in North America revealed that those engaged in self-reflection, contemplation, and meditation demonstrated the highest development in empathy, global understanding, and caring throughout their tertiary education (Astin et al., 2011, pp. 63-69).

Among the various contemplative approaches, the Buddhist meditation technique of mindfulness has attracted most attention within educational and psychological discussions (Flook et al., 2013; Kees, 2010; Lau, 2009; Mrazek, Franklin, Phillips, Baird, & Schooler, 2013; Solloway, 1999). Lau (2009) describes mindfulness as “the cultivation of a mental state with moment-to-moment attention and awareness of an object in mind and body without judgment” (p. 719), which “includes all experiences, covering bodily sensations, feelings, perceptions, emotions, thoughts, images, and memories” (p. 721). As a systematic method for the development of presence, awareness, and sensitivity, mindfulness can be variously adapted for an experimental approach to viewing and creating art within a high school setting.

Significantly, mindfulness and other contemplative methods shift art engagement from an abstract-theoretical to a decisively experiential-embodied process. For example, a contemplative viewing of artworks—whether reproduced in a book, projected on a wall, or originals during fieldtrips—gives students a tool to concentrate on the act of seeing as a whole-person experience. Prior to any intellectual interpretation of an artwork, a contemplative approach provides a unique access to a conscious, subjective art experience in the present moment. Year-10 art students may explore the following instructions: “Silently view an artwork for five minutes, then close your eyes for another five minutes: How vividly can you see it with your inner eye?” “Imaginatively ‘breathe’ the different colors of an artwork: What do you notice?” “You have eyes all over body: Where in your body do you feel the artwork?”

All contemplative practices are first-person methodologies that can help students develop complementary visual skills: an awareness of “inner” imagery and visualizations, of the intuitive mind, and of one’s own body as experienced from within. An increased inner awareness may enable teenagers to become more conscious of a subtle inner visual world underneath repetitive imagery and mental chatter.

Further, contemplative methods may also inspire experimental approaches to art practice. Mindfulness and meditation have been a creative theme in art history over at least the past fifty years: for example, John Cage’s sound innovations, Marina Abramović’s endurance performances, or Allan Kaprow’s instructions to carry wet stones along a river till dry. Integrating contemplative methods into the art classroom provides tools for students to investigate processes of perception and creation through increased inner awareness, embodiment, curiosity, and presence. Therefore, an art-inspired adaptation of contemplative practices may widen the spectrum of techniques and resources available to teenagers in their artistic processes.

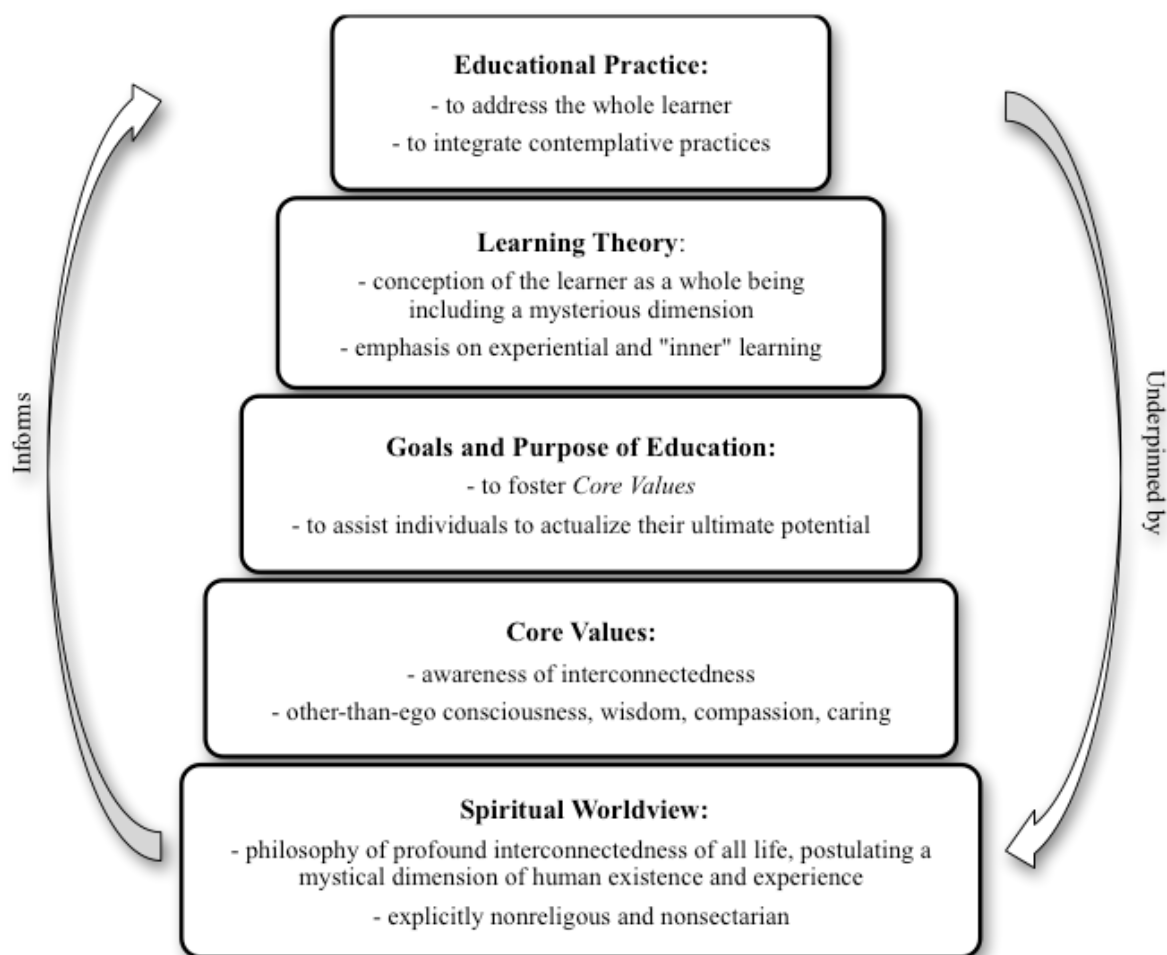


Figure 2. Implications of a Spiritual Worldview for Education.

This layered schema depicts the principle of how a spiritual worldview of interconnectedness serves as the philosophical foundation for conceptualizing educational goals, theory, and practice.

In summary, following on from the principle of layered relationships depicted in Figure 1, Figure 2 illustrates the educational implications of the discussed five concepts for a contemporary understanding of spirituality. The figure highlights the foundational role of a worldview within this schema. It demonstrates how a spiritual worldview underpins and informs a particular set of core values, the formulation of educational goals, as well as a preference for a certain learning theory and approach to educational practice. Hence, integrating “spirituality” into art education cannot be reduced to the level of “practice” but is interlinked with underlying philosophical thoughts. The five concepts proposed in this article clarify underlying theory but also connect it with concrete practice in the classroom. Figure 3 lists, in no evaluative order, why the visual art classroom presents an environment notably suitable for engaging teenagers with the spiritual.

Art Education

- stimulates an engagement with existential and ultimate questions through art history, art theory, and art practice
- draws on rich examples of spirituality, transcendence, and the sacred as essential themes throughout art history
- provides a nondogmatic and nonreligious context for exploring the spiritual
- responds to the use of “spiritual” in some art education documents
- invites students to imaginatively investigate and recreate their identity
- promotes learners’ self-reflection and development of positive self-images
- acknowledges learners’ “inner” worlds and provides tools to visually communicate them
- may embrace contemplative methods (e.g., mindfulness or meditation) to increase students’ inner awareness of perception, vision, and embodiment
- offers tools for students to visually engage with the complex interplay between themselves and the planet as an evolving whole
- facilitates visual language to investigate the spiritual distinct from established religious imagery

Figure 3. Engaging with the Spiritual in Art Education.

This table shows some characteristics of art education that designate it as a subject well suited to integrating notions of the spiritual.

Summary and Conclusions

This article set out on the premise that different worldviews not only imply different images of human nature, but also have direct ramifications for ideas of education, both philosophically and pedagogically. Because notions of the spiritual in education are increasingly discussed in popular and academic contexts, a contemporary interpretation of spirituality in current secular societies is paramount. Specifically, because a number of art education documents use the term “spiritual,”—however, generally without unpacking its meaning—an engagement with this term emerges as significant in art education discourse. Aiming to contribute toward greater plurality in art educational thinking, this article proposed five timely concepts to renegotiate the spiritual in secular contexts, such as visual art at high school.

The interpretation of spirituality in this article complies with a recent growing popular and scholarly (1) “distinction between spirituality and religion.” I further proposed (2) an “awareness of the profound interconnectedness of all life (humans, animals, and plants alike),” (3) “other-than-ego consciousness,” (4) “Ultimacy,” and (5) “contemplative practices.”

A nonreligious and nonsectarian approach to spirituality grounded in consciousness studies and experiential, first-person methodologies seems to be well compatible with the secular idea. Further, a nonreligious approach to spirituality appears particularly conducive for the field of art education in which learners frequently engage with reflective and existential questions.

In conclusion, a spiritual worldview offers a philosophical alternative view that inspires a fresh discussion on the purpose and goals of education in the 21st century. Art education may play a significant role in actualizing spiritual ideas within formal secular environments. High school visual art offers a unique nondogmatic and nonreligious space for teenagers to creatively explore deep questions of self and world, inviting spiritual inquiry through art. Therefore, it is advisable for art educators to actively engage with contemporary approaches to spirituality. Participating in current discussions on spirituality may generate novel and timely teaching models and practices. Specifically, the integration of contemplative practices into various art education settings emerges as an innovative and compelling path forward. The adaptation of contemplative methods has the potential to encourage a new type of experiential, embodied learning and complementary way of knowing. Contemplative methods may serve as a vital resource for creatively facilitating art experience and art practice. Finally, the integration of spiritual principles and practices into art education can deepen students' inner awareness of the sacredness and mystery of all life.

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FORM

Cautiously, snowpack releases winter.
Water is surprised to be awake.

Gaining confidence, it sings as it gathers itself
to go great distances.

With each passing day, a child can draw
more like swift running water.

One rivy line suggests the next
could be waiting.

The movement, a dance between
image and insight,

between the hand that holds the crayon,
and the mind that moves the muscles.

All of this flows, capturing pebbles,
uprooting trees, dislodging small animals

bones and relics
on the way to forming a world out there.

All of this.

~ Sally A. Gradle



Art Education in My Backyard:

Creative Place-Making on an Urban Farm

By: Jodi Kushins

More than a decade ago I moved to Ohio to study art education at The Ohio State University (OSU). I never planned to stay here after graduation. As a fourth-generation New Yorker, I couldn't imagine life in the Midwest beyond my dissertation. For my first few years in town, I was a resident of OSU more so than Columbus. This was easy to do considering the university is so big it has its own zip code. Towards the end of my studies, I met a local man with a deep connection to the patch of land he lived on; the land we live on together today. Over time, our yard and the city that surrounds it, have become the context for some of the most authentic and profound experiences I have had as an artist and art educator to date.



Figure 1: Move-in day, August 22, 1949

The paper that follows explores how my knowledge and experience with art education intersects with and influences my work as an urban community farmer, managing a collective of friends and neighbors. It is organized around the major steps one takes in planting and maintaining a garden: siting a location, amending the soil, seeding crops, tending plants, and harvesting produce. Throughout, I weave personal narrative and original photographs with references to artists, educators, and researchers in related fields who serve as sustenance for my work.

Siting the Garden, Excavating History

My husband's grand-parents bought our house in 1949 as part of a post-war building boom (Figure 1). Frank, a postman by day, kept a large kitchen garden out back and gathered apples from a bygone tree while Lenore ran the indoor operation, preserving the fruits of Frank's labor for winter.

Over the years, Dan and I revived that tradition with our own kitchen garden; tending a few raised beds, building a cold frame, and experimenting with rain harvesting, composting, and landscaping with native and edible plants.



Figure 2: Our view over the fence before the sod was lifted.

As our interests in gardening and other forms of self-sufficiency continued to expand, it became clear that we needed more space. Our elderly neighbor's flat, south-facing, totally empty and unused yard caught our attention and we began to imagine all that we could grow there (Figure 2). In 2013 we annexed her yard, cleared the sod, and established *Over the Fence Urban Farm*.

Over the Fence is an experimental urban microfarm, a place to practice small-scale organic agriculture, creative placemaking, and participatory environmental art education. Friends and family operate as a loose-knit cooperative providing financial support through a community supported agriculture (CSA)¹ arrangement and volunteering their time to help with farm chores. I continue to learn and to share techniques for growing produce that promote self-reliance and sustainability, both in the field and through a blog (overthefenceurbanfarm.com). Together we've created and maintain a peaceful and vibrant space in our community. It is work deeply rooted in my interests in socially-engaged and relational art that actively engages audience members and educational initiatives which address real-world issues in the world we share.



Figure 3: The transformation begins; compost tilled into bare earth.

Amending the Soil, Nourishing the Intellect

“Organic gardeners live by the principle: feed the soil, and let the soil feed the plants,” (Bradley, Ellis, and Phillips, 2009). Maintaining healthy soil is a long-term process that demands constant attention and amendments of organic material and nutrients (Figure 3). Like my work as a professor of art education, *Over the Fence Urban Farm* is grounded in

¹ The CSA model was first developed in the U.S. and Europe in the 1980s and is now fairly common on mid-scale farms in many regions. Members provide farmers with funds at the beginning of a season to help cover the costs of seed, fertilizer, other supplies, and labor and in exchange they receive part of the harvest, usually in the form of a weekly share.

intellectual soil that I have been cultivating throughout my lifetime. The books I have read, courses I have taken and taught, exhibitions I have seen and artists I have followed, places I have been, and people I have encountered cumulatively enriched the person I have come to be and continue to become. The following passages introduce scholarly perspective for positioning and understanding parallels between my urban farm work, contemporary art making practices, and art education. Like plants sprouting out of healthy soil, these influences blossom in the context of subsequent sections of the paper.

Connecting Art and Environment

Several interdisciplinary courses I took as an undergraduate at Clark University (1993-1997) organized around themes including *Architecture and Democracy* and *Sacred Space* and co-taught by professors of studio art, art history, philosophy, and cultural geography have remained central to my thinking as an artist and educator. The architecture course paired field trips to old farmhouses and newly-built gated communities with primary source materials from colonial U.S. history and socio-economic critiques by contemporary observers. Later, we analyzed the spaces we occupied on a daily basis, like the university library and student union, according to what we'd seen and read about how the spaces we create both reflect our values and influence our behaviors (Townsend, 1997).

The first week of *Sacred Space*, we washed the classroom floors, windows, and walls and thereafter left our shoes outside its threshold. Throughout the course, we took turns adorning that passageway to reflect archetypes and cultures we were studying – mountains, labyrinths, caves, and trees among other natural and manmade forms like Indian *kolam* and the masonry work of Machu Pichu (Buie and Wright, 1996). As with the architecture course, we learned first hand the meaning of Churchill's suggestion that the shape of spaces we create and inhabit shape us in return (UK Parliament, 1943).

These courses helped me connect my interests in environmental and cultural awareness and conservation with my interests in art. They introduced me to fundamental aspects of visual culture studies. And they prepared me to engage with contemporary conceptual art that is about ideas and processes more than products; works that demand interpretation, and inspire participation.

The Roots of Conceptual Art

An exhibition on view at the Wexner Center for the Arts while I was in graduate school explored the origins of this type of artmaking. *Work Ethic* (2003), curated by Helen Molesworth, began with a collection of works by pioneering conceptual artists from the 1960s including Chris Burden, Vito Acconci, and Eleanor Antin. Molesworth identified several non-traditional roles these artists adopted to guide and position their artmaking as work, not merely self-expression – *worker, manager, and creator of experiences*. These designations gave names to patterns I had previously observed and admired in the practices of artists like Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Christo and Jean-Claude, and On Kawara.

Ukeles is perhaps best known for "Touch Sanitation" (1977-1980). Through this project she celebrated the work of the New York City department of sanitation by shaking the hand of every member of the force and thanking them for keeping residents of the city alive. In so doing, she recognized each of these people whom society rarely acknowledges and would prefer to ignore lest they remind us of the messy trail we leave behind as we go through our lives.

In order to complete epic installations like *Running Fence* (1972-1976) and *The Gates* (2005), Christo and Jeanne-Claude engaged in various types of community outreach and education.

First they had to convince the communities where they hoped to work to let them use the space, be it public or private land or some combination of the two. Later, they had to train volunteers to help them alter these places into special spaces visitors traveled across the globe to encounter, engage with, and explore. These interactions, and the artists' documentation thereof, were all part of their work.

On Kawara's catalogue consists largely of works he created in response to assignments he made for himself. The work often required repetitive tasks like sending a postcard to a friend reporting what time Kawara woke up in the morning - "I Got Up" (1968-1979) - or marking his day's journey on a map - "I Went" (1968-1979). It is work that might be compared with contemporary artists using blogs and other digital recording tools to document their lives as art. The length of these projects speaks to the artist's commitment to these processes as artistic practice.

In the tradition of Marcel Duchamp, post-studio artists challenged traditional definitions of what counts as art. They "no longer needed to content themselves with the production of visually aesthetic objects. Art became a realm of ideas," (Molesworth, 2003, p. 28). They simultaneously tested the limits of what objects could be defined as art and new definitions of artistic labor. As Goodman (cited in Dewhurst, 2012) suggested, they challenged not only *what is art* but *when is art*. Similarly, my work on the farm, is an attempt to broaden and deepen what it means to work as an art educator and to challenge when and where that work begins and where it ends.

Leading a Culture of Participation

Doug Blandy has dedicated much of his career to explorations of art education in the borderlands, spaces outside of formal educational settings. In an invited lecture at the 2011 NAEA convention, he predicted that sustainability, participatory culture, and performing democracy would be three catalysts for innovation in art education in the 21st century. These terms might be used to describe recent movements in our culture-at-large as we've witnessed an increase of support for local economies and as smartphones have turned everyday citizens into potential news reporters and potential lobbyists. Blandy provides a framework for understanding my farm work as art education. Working alongside friends and neighbors at *Over the Fence Urban Farm*, I embrace his challenge for art educators to push aside our past roles as arbiters of aesthetic judgment and explore roles as "facilitators of participatory culture" (Blandy, 2011, p. 250).

In their work as policy advisors, economist Ann Markusen and arts consultant Anne Gadwa (2010) offer observations and analysis on ways the arts and culture contribute to the creation of more livable, economically sustainable, and more entrepreneurially vibrant communities. "We find that creative places are cultural industry crucibles where people, ideas, and organizations come together, generating new products, industries, jobs, and American exports" (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010, p. 5). Their work parallels Richard Florida's popular report on *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002). In both cases, the authors argue that in order to thrive, culturally and economically in the 21st century, cities must support creative individuals as they envision new possibilities for living and working.

While Markusen, Gadwa, and Florida are primarily interested in how artists and other culture workers contribute economically to their communities over time, educator Henry Giroux (1992) suggests ways culture workers, including educators, might transform their communities ideologically. Channeling the work of Paulo Freire, Giroux calls for *radical education*, characterized by a language of possibility. Giroux advocates action-based critique over academic criticism sequestered to printed pages; work that "goes beyond critique to elaborate a positive language of human empowerment" (Giroux, 1992, p. 11). In other words,

we ought to show the world the changes we wish to see, not just write about them. In positioning my farm work as part of my art education practice, I hope to encourage others to put their creative leadership skills to work outside school walls.

As art educators, we are primed to serve as culture workers in our communities. We are trained to lead individuals in creative action, drawing on a broad range of sources for inspiration as we do so. Such work may be understood as an extension of activist art from the 1970s, a substantial portion of which was conceptual in nature. Felshin (1995) described activist art as a hybrid practice “characterized by the innovative use of public space to address issues of sociopolitical and cultural significance, and to encourage community or public participation as a means of effecting social change” (p. 9).

In much the same way, the urban farming movement can be understood as an example of activist art and creative placemaking. In the following sections, I relate this project to artmaking and art education, focusing on creative processes and leadership strategies grounded in my training as an artist and art educator.

Gardening Like an Artist

Composing a Place

As an undergraduate studio art major, I loved developing photographs in the darkroom. Watching an image appear on a seemingly blank sheet of paper was magical. Planting seeds and watching them sprout conjures a similar sense of wonder. But, as a photographer must learn to compose a captivating image not just get her camera adjusted to the light

Seeing seeds sprout and grow into productive plants first requires commitment and hard work such as keeping the soil constantly moist so germination can occur and subsequently monitoring plants for insect invasions. Such work is necessarily repetitive, not unlike Ukeles shaking hands with thousands of sanitation workers or Kawara noting the hour and minute he woke up each morning. Creating a garden that is visually well-balanced as well as healthy and productive, requires knowledge of the plants themselves and how to fit them together biologically and aesthetically based on soil chemistry, available space and supporting structures, and elements of art and principles of design like the plants relative sizes, textures, and colors.

I sow seeds directly in the garden and start seedlings under lights in my basement and in a cold frame outside; a year-round, all-over process. The seedlings that come up in the cold frame serve as my palette from which I pull materials to interplant among others as they come up in situ or are removed. It is similar to composing a collage – mixing and matching, establishing comparisons and contrasts, moving and gluing (Figure 4). While I do much of my farm work with family and friends, determining where and when to move plants around is something I do on my own. It is a responsive exercise that requires me to observe the present and imagine the future.



Figure 4: Interplanting kale and arugula.

Cultivating Creative Risk

Though I majored in studio art in college, I never maintained a serious studio practice post-graduation. I have, however, integrated a practice of thinking like an artist into other aspects of my life. Roland (1996) developed a list of characteristics about artistic approaches and thinking to help art educators develop authentic objectives for teaching creativity. I see many reflected in my community farming practice.

Using my (sub)urban backyard for something other than growing grass, for example, I strive to “go beyond ordinary ways of thinking and doing things” (Roland, 1996). Promising to provide food to others, I am “taking risks and exposing [my]self to possible failure” (Roland, 1996). Like creating any new work of art, gardening requires some comfort with the unknown, an acceptance of the stubborn truth that we don’t always know how the work will end up when we begin the enterprise. Bearing this in mind relieves one of pressure to create some *thing*, and instead invites us to focus on the process of making.



Figure 5: Pulling root vegetables offers an element of surprise.

Young children seem naturally inclined to make art this way (Kohl, 1994). Oftentimes, they set unspoken goals for themselves like using all the crayons in their box in one drawing or tearing a single sheet of paper into as many tiny bits as they can. Their ideas for working with materials are not weighed down by notions of how things are supposed to be, they are just playing with the materials they find at hand and experimenting to see what they can do with them.

Friedrich Froebel recognized this quality in children 150 years ago and named his education program for young children *Kindergarten*, the garden of children, in response. The name was at once poetic and metaphoric – the classroom and activities were designed to serve as an environment to support children’s *natural* creative and mental development. But, it was also a direct outgrowth of his love and respect for the natural world as a significant site and inspiration for teaching and learning about the individual in society (Straunch-Nelson, 2012).

Kindergarten taught children to plant seeds and to water them, to observe the unfolding of the immature parts when they sprouted, and to care for the seedlings as they grew to maturity, all as a means to reveal the power to aid in bringing forth life and to symbolize the inherent responsibility of people to one another and to society (Brosterman, 1997, p. 34).

Many of our farm supporters have children and we invite them to work alongside of us in the garden as often as possible. One of their favorite activities, be it the pre-schoolers or teens, is pulling root vegetables. I believe this is due to the act of discovery that occurs during this process; a chance to encounter the unknown. The unpredictability of the natural world is the antithesis of the world of artificially controlled realities 21st century children spend so much of their lives within. Journalist and environmental education advocate Richard Louv (2005), suggests our children need more direct sensory experiences as an antidote to the inordinate time they now spend indoors staring at screens. When one pulls a carrot, radish, or beet from the ground (Figure 5), one can never be sure what will be on the other end. Will it be small and spindly or long, fat, and juicy? It's hard to predict just what will emerge. This is the root of wonder and magic.

Facilitating Creative Placemaking

Providing Opportunities for Participation

Transformative creative endeavors require continued and conscientious effort on the part of participants in combination with various forms of support from others (Borup, 2011). While I steer the project, the success of *Over the Fence Urban Farm* thus far has relied on financial support through our community supported agriculture (CSA) subscriptions and the labor of our members. While not required, many CSA subscribers volunteer their time on the farm. They come because I ask them to, and because they enjoy the time outdoors and in communion with others working to maintain a beautiful space and to build a more sustainable local food system.



Figure 6: Harvesting garlic.

Sunday afternoons, for example, we gather for one hour of intense labor - turning soil, weeding, pruning and training climbing plants - followed by another hour attending to smaller details, organizing supplies, harvesting, and packaging produce (Figure 6). We call this “Happy Hour on the Farm” and sometimes share a beer as we sort and celebrate the week’s harvest.

For my part, getting ready for these sessions is a lot like preparing to teach an art class. I start by creating a task list of the day’s objectives and work backward to determine what tasks need to be accomplished and what tools are required. I consider who is the best fit for each job – some people are great at finite physical challenges like digging ditches and building trellises while others are better at work that requires slow and consistent attention to small detail like thinning radish sprouts or pruning tomato vines. I have all the tools we need ready so volunteers can begin work upon arrival (Figure 7). This advanced planning not only ensures that all tools needed for the days objectives are clean, sharp, and readily at hand, it reflects my respect for participants time and appreciation for their work.



**Gardening
is equal
parts
science
and art,
diligence
and craft.**

This time is important to our project, not just for the practical reasons of getting tasks accomplished, but socially as well. While I knew most of my subscribers personally before this project, some I knew only in specific contexts, and many didn’t know one another. The time we spend together working the land offers another layer of meaning to our work. It affords us a common experience and a chance to share ideas and interests. Given the personal and professional backgrounds of members of our group, the conversations are often intercultural, intergenerational, and interdisciplinary (Figure 8). I see this as an example of how creative projects can animate communities (Markusen and Gadwa, 2003).

As suggested above, in addition to getting work done and socializing, members report that the time on the farm nourishes them personally. They send me text messages throughout the week and share reflections on our Facebook page like this:

E.B.: I woke up this morning feeling crummy, grumpy and anxious. I just got home from two hours at Over the Fence Urban Farm for a CSA work day and now I'm feeling energized, peaceful, and content. I just needed a little garden therapy!

M. F.: Oh my goodness I brought the same feeling home with me! I came with one unhappy tummy and a whiney little girl in tow. We both left happy and feeling well. (Personal communication, July 21, 2014)

Community Farming in the Digital Age

I share our work on the farm on our blog, Facebook, and Instagram. Being online after being in the field not only allows me to connect with our CSA members as I show them how things are growing in their absence, it serves in my role as an action-based teacher-researcher. I value it as space to reflect in the moment, and over time. As I prepare for various farming activities, I find myself returning to archived blog posts to recall what we did in similar situations last year. The sites provide a forum for my farm photography, which has been

creatively rewarding (Figures 9 and 10), and is a space to share extended, deep thoughts about the process of farming with friends.



Figure 7: (Top) Tools and task lists prepared in advance of a CSA work session.

Figure 8: (Bottom) Sharing life lessons while trimming and sorting the garlic.





Figure 9: Dahlias and depth of field.

Our social media campaign also helps to extend the goals of the project beyond our CSA community **by raising** awareness about organic farming methods, sharing details about the production of our crops, and offering practical advice for others interested in such endeavors. We attract followers across the globe. It has also helped me connect with others in Columbus doing similar work. As a result, I have become part of a network of urban farmers in Columbus who provide opportunities for others to grow and distribute fresh produce—all within a few square miles of my home. We are delivering hyper-local produce infused with compelling and meaningful narratives.

Joseph Swain, for example, left his job as a union-backed construction worker in 2007 to start growing mushrooms and micro-greens on his land a mile down the road. Today, Swainway Urban Farm products are included, by name, on menus throughout Columbus and the surrounding area. The presence of locally sourced restaurants is growing in creative communities across the country (National Restaurant Association, 2014). At the farmer's market, Joseph stands proudly behind his booth like a master craftsman presenting oyster mushrooms as intricate as coral and baby ginger the color of a sunset.

Rachel Tayse Balilleul is a local food advocate, educator, and blogger. Rachel has made keeping chickens in urban yards a popular pastime in our neighborhood, in part by documenting and sharing her experiences with animal husbandry processes on her website



Figure 10: Highlights from the Over the Fence Urban Farm 2014 tomato collection.

Harmonious Homestead. Making this process visible has inspired others, including myself, to imagine backyard chickens as part of our own lives. A few years ago Rachel and her family moved to a larger plot of land in a part of town with less restrictive zoning regulations. There she and an increasing number of new neighbors are creating an urban homesteading corridor in our community.

Recently, Joseph and Rachel combined their energies to start the Columbus Agrarian Society (CAS), dedicated to “assist organic farmers and intensive home gardeners by sharing knowledge and expertise while providing the resources, supplies, and social support to thrive” (CAS, 2015). This is just one way Columbus is building on its agricultural history to remake itself in the 21st century.

Final Harvest: People-Powered Produce

Over the Fence Urban Farm is an example of participatory environmental art education and has proved to be my greatest harvest as an art educator. Aside from outstanding fresh produce (Figure 11), the endeavor has provided me with an opportunity to be a cultural leader in my community. It has enabled me to form deeper connections with people whom I care about and admire, based on our common visions, challenges, and accomplishments.

The farm provides a space where people come together to connect with the land, with one another, and ultimately with themselves. Together, we’ve collaborated to make a living

sculpture that continues to evolve. And, like art galleries I've visited around the world, it is a "special" place (Dissanyake, 1990), a sacred space.



Figure 11: Prize-winning sweet potato.

This project is the culmination of a lifetime of exposure to and involvement with socially-engaged art and culturally-relevant education created in particular times and places. I hope others find my reflections engaging and that this essay encourages them to share their visions for creative communities. Putting artistic thinking and leadership out into the world beyond our schools and classrooms is work we ought to be proud to identify as art education.

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RIGHT WORK

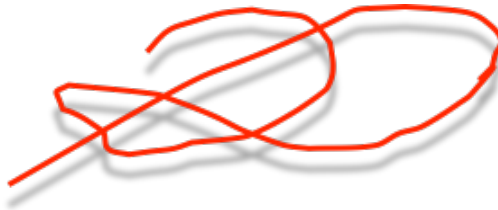
The right work makes a nest of your time
so that all things either fit within
or fly away.

Branches stir, but support you.
The sky twirls
its starry nights, but you

have gathered yourself and learned.
While others wait to be named
or fed or chosen,

you live now. Clarity grows
like a day opened wide to the sky.
Take it.

~ **Sally A. Gradle**



of CAMERA & COMMUNITY

By: Jodi Patterson

After spending decades in my painting studio, I have recently become compelled with landscape photography. This essay reflects on the nuances of the praxis and the unlikely community outreach opportunities a camera and social media are providing.

With cellular phones having decent photo making capabilities, people rarely carry cameras anymore. However, when one does see a person lugging a camera around, that camera is generally of significance. It's obvious presence signifies one is likely in the midst of an artist. An artist with a camera is hard to miss. The camera might have an elongated lens topped with a hood - maybe mounted on a tripod. A bag will be nearby. The bag will hold the extra lenses, filters, lens tissue, blower brush, batteries, maps, waterproofing materials, trail food, etc. It is no small feat to gingerly haul this equipment up and down trails, over rivers, through airport security and on to airplanes. This burden is not something a typical tourist is willing to do.

The difference between the praxis of a studio artist vs. a "plein-air" artist is significant. As a person who spent decades in a studio, I know it is possible to sit for hours and not see or talk with another person while making art. Studio artists do not carry their supplies around their necks, and people do not randomly approach them to chat about their paintbrushes or the paint brand they prefer. When sitting next to them on an airplane or by a waterfall, nobody can usually identify these strangers as "artists."

On the other hand, the camera being carried by a photographer alerts people to the status of an "artist" and sets him or her up to be a person in (not of) the world -- a potential nomadic ambassador for art. The artist who solely makes his or her art outdoors shares a studio with the public.

Onlookers often view this declaration as an invitation to discuss the world at a deeper level. Conversations emerge between strangers that would otherwise likely not happen. Such at-the-scene quips sound like: "See that rainbow earlier?" "Try walking up the hill for a better view." "Does that mirrorless lens work as well as they say?" "Tried Pixlr?" "What a green!" "May I help you?" "Do you have a website?" "This is beautiful!" "You should have seen this when there was more water." "What is your name?"

Due to the wonders of social media (blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.), these outside conversations can keep going. People who engage with social media are people who sign up to be "friends" or "followers" to other friends, artists, organizations, etc. One person can have thousands of followers, and each follower has a batch of friends that are, by theory, also accessible. These people distribute images, links, and friendly debates - using their media presence as a town-square of information sharing. Social media provides a free and instant base for sharing what one knows while controlling the message that is sent, offering artists an incredible opportunity to connect both his or her art and message to a broad community. This community is vast. It includes people who do not necessarily often communicate with art or artists: old hometown friends, colleagues, neighbors, parents, aunts/uncles/cousins, past students/acquaintances, etc. It is in this realm where contextualized imagery can alert, inform, engage and expose a broad audience to a message; where art can be

used to both form community and bring the attention of one community to another in a non-threatening way.

Since my newly found love of photography has delved almost solely into landscape imagery, the combination of my photography, writing

and social media skills allow me to advocate subtly for the land by sharing the extraordinary beauty of Nature with contextualized accounts of what I am seeing – both good and bad (Figure 1).

Personal Facebook Post: Example #1

About 7,000 years ago Mt. Mazama (a stratovolcano) collapsed with a fury and created a 6 mile round caldera. This hole was eventually filled with snow/rain water. It is now the deepest lake in the USA, with a depth of 1,900 feet in some places (and the 6th deepest in the world). No rivers go in or out of Crater Lake. Furthermore, it holds the world record for clarity - with visibility up to 142 feet! Just wow.



Figure 1: Crater Lake, Oregon

Land Ambassador

“Landscape” is imagery that depicts engagement with a natural space. This space filters through several forms of place-relations, from the personal and spiritual to the social and political. Though the spectacle of the scape is often apparent, artistic representation of the land is not about the “view” it is about the involvement it extracts. It is about the life and modes of life that arise within and in relation to it.

Travel is often a luxury of health, time and wealth. Since Nature does not miraculously fall in a lap, the hazarding of the risk of venturing into natural places strengthens one’s relationship with the land. The thrill associated with getting to the “light show” (those magical fleeting moments when the sun kisses the land with abundant verve) is a significant part of a landscape photographer’s overall experience. Surrounded by the elements, he/she searches for aesthetic moments while being exceedingly mindful of light, shadow and sound — and any dangers associated with being in a foreign space.

Though the time needed to formulate a bond within an unknown space can be minute, the memory and sensation of the experience does not fade when manifested and shared via a photograph.

The general public has a natural affiliation with landscape photography. They like looking at nature. Images of sky, land, water, soil, fields, mountains, roads, etc. are easily recognizable all over the world, and because it is identifiable, people are confident discussing what they see. Landscape photography bypasses the elitism of the art world jargon, especially when shared in “low-brow” social media venues. People from various backgrounds often connect with landscape. They either dream of visiting the places exposed in photographs -- or instantly recall a memory if they happened in the space

already. Because well-photographed land is often so incredibly beautiful, and beautiful land in apparent turmoil is so incredibly heartbreaking, people people tend to want to at least “listen” to the photographs.

With these lines of communication open, I have been able to use landscape photography as a way to bring up difficult topics in non-threatening ways. Photographs evidence the fact that the natural spaces of engagement, though often vast and seemingly untouched, have been affected, at times choked, by social/political/economic spaces. By linking photographs with narrative in approachable general public venues, art can subtly expose the inconspicuous realities of the land to a community.

Building Community

For the past two years, I have become a nomad with a camera — having traveled to Iceland, The Yucatan, St. Thomas, British Virgin Islands, Hawaii, Alaska, Nevada, Canada, Utah, Colombia, across the USA (route 80) twice and more. I am new to the Pacific Northwest, and spend my weekends hiking to waterfalls in Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, Idaho, California and Wyoming. In these two years, I have photographed over 70 waterfalls. I have since learned that my camera serves as a calling card for conversations for and with individuals all around the world. The resulting photographs evidence nature’s glory and demise. By sharing my images on social media, I can link the people I meet in my new “outside art studio” with my other “friends” in an unsuspecting community of advocacy.

The images below (Figures 2, 3, 4) come from recent glacier hikes on two different continents where I donned crampons, an ice pick, hardhat, my trusty backpack and a camera. I then carefully walked miles upon glacial ice while speaking with guides and other hikers who have grave concern about the obvious receding of the ice. I came

home and edited the hiking images and then posted them on Facebook. The “likes” and comments allowed the land to speak to an audience that would otherwise not be exposed to the demise.

One respondent emailed me and said, “I never believed in global warming, but I never seen it in person. You make me see it.”

Personal Facebook Post: Example #2



Figure 2: Mendenhall Glacier in Juneau, Alaska.

Mendenhall Glacier is a 12-mile long glacier located in Juneau, Alaska. Inside the glacier are ice caves that are accessible to anyone willing to hike to them. However, the glacier is retreating/melting increasingly fast and this means the ice caves are collapsing and disappearing. Sadly, I was ten months too late and unable to see the most famous ice caves (they collapsed last July and are now lost forever), but I did get lucky enough to see some smaller caves. Organized hikes will soon be obsolete to the general public – as what once took a few hours to hike, now takes eight. This glacier has receded 1.75 miles in 50 years – something it took 500 years to do previously. I am very glad I got to see the Mendenhall up close ... soon it will be too late.

Facebook post replies to Mendenhall photograph:

ROBERT: "Glad you had a good experience. So sad about our disappearing glaciers."

JODI [author] "... my guide doubted he'd have a job in two years, the hike is too far for most people. Sad decline."

MICHAEL: "I was going to say that We are losing are Glaciers Faster then what we Have been told."

ANN: "Awesome you are a film crew shy of a Discovery Channel show."

JOE: "See it soon or be prepared for a much longer walk? No joke (or lie) really 'eh!'"

JIM: "Wow seeing it like you are puts global warming in a whole new Perspective".

JODI: "Yes! When you SEE it – it stuns."

ROBYN: "Amazing. Thanks for sharing."



Figure 2: Me hiking the glacier. I like to put snapshots of the treks online, too. I am in front of the ice cave that collapsed 10 months previous due to warming weather.

Personal Facebook Post: Example #3

Figure 3: Jökulsárlón Lagoon, Iceland.

Most of Iceland is located just below the Arctic Circle. It is one of the fastest-warming places on the planet. It is said to be warming as much a four times more than the average Northern Hemisphere. 300-some glaciers cover Iceland! But more than 10 percent of the island is losing an average of 11 billion tons of ice a year. I snowmobiled and hiked two glaciers here ... the beauty is astounding and the loss is depressing.

Facebook Post Replies:

BECKY: "I feel like you are my history teacher and I absolutely love it! Are you sure you are not filming a travel show, if not you sure as hell should be!!!!!!!!!!"

LIZ: "That is a good idea film it for a travel show ..."

ELAINE: "It IS a travel show. LOL These pictures are scary, wonderful, beautiful all rolled into one."

DIANE: “Oh wow what a cool place to be especially during the summer. Have fun, be safe, still living vicariously through you guys so keep those pics coming.”

EMILCE: “Gracias por al aviso!”

RAY: “Awesome, unique also looks a little dangerous so be careful.”

DOTTY: “Amazing pics it looks a little desolate though.”

TINA: “Very cool-cold.”

LINDA: “Just amazing.”

LIZ: “An inconvenient truth for sure.”

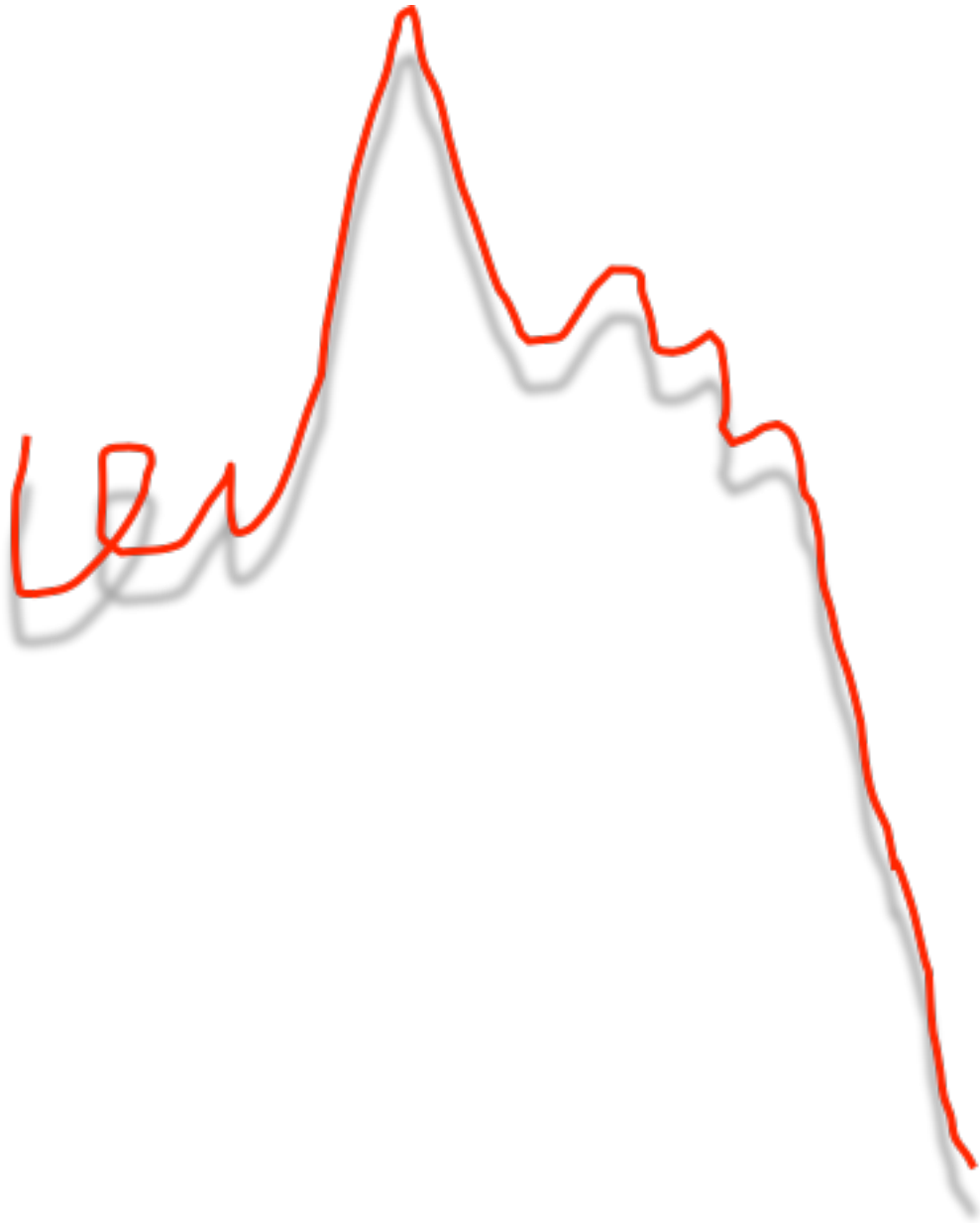
ADRIANNE: “Wow beautiful land and pics, thanx for sharing.”

CONCLUSION

Mother Nature’s show is fickle, fleeting and often demanding. As an emerging landscape photographer, I am quickly learning the emergency-of-now; how once-in-a-lifetime moments are immediately lost if not acted upon. There is no safe, warm studio to snuggle up in and no way to get the content without being outside, in the land, surrounded by the elements and forced to contend with the kindness, fury and temperament of Mother Nature. Simply put, if I do not show up (and react to impulses) I will not get the photograph.

This emergency-of-now is also inherent in the translation of a photograph that can project the voice of the land. It is my wish that the land’s call for help, glory and cognizance will be heard far and wide via whatever community flows from my photographs, be it a gallery’s walls, a website, a magazine, airplane seat conversations and/or the one-on-one conversation between my partner and I as we stand somewhere far from home, snapping shots and swimming in awe — feeling the urgency to expose the encounter while pushing “POST” to our Facebook feed via a rented hotspot connection.

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Socially Engaged Art Education Beyond the Classroom:

Napping, Dreaming and Art Making

By: Barbara Bickel

with video by Gregory Wendt

It is the third week of classes in January and I invite the students in my Philosophy of Art Education class to meet in the student gallery where we will nap as part of a lesson on socially engaged art. The day of class there is no heat in the 100 year old building where the School of Art and Design classroom and gallery is located. I am glad there are many blankets in the gallery Dream Scroll installation as I enter the building that day. (Bickel, 2013, from journal)



Figure 1: Bickel, Barbara. (2013). *Art Education Philosophy Class Nap-In*. Vergette Gallery, Southern Illinois University.

Napping in a student gallery (Figure 1) may seem to be an unorthodox approach to teaching the philosophy of art education but it is one that is steeped in contemporary artist practices. Artists' with practices such as Allan Kaprow's *Happenings* in the 60s, to feminist artists of the 70s (eg. Chicago, Lacy, Edelson), to current socially engaged artists, who situate their art practices within community (eg., Ai Weiwei, Women on Waves Collective, Wochenklausur Collective) are interested in personal and social transformation, often with a critical lens (Lacy, 1995). These socially engaged artists are

engaging philosopher John Dewey's (1934) understanding of *Art as Experience*, artist teacher Kenneth Beittel's "nondifferentiated aesthetic or whole art" (1991, p. 50) and art critic Suzi Gablik's (1992) *Connective Aesthetics*. These practices reflect a move to return art to daily life, with an awareness of human interconnectedness with the world and the more than human world through art. Socially engaged art practices involve a hybridity of art, research and pedagogy, including performance, activism, image making and social research. The shared method that crosses all socially engaged art is "dialogue between the artist and the participant" (Heim, 2003, p. 186).



Figure 2 : Bickel, Barbara. (2013). *Art Education Philosophy Class Nap-In with Dream Scroll and Labyrinth*. Vergette Gallery, Southern Illinois University.

The *Nap-In*,¹ an on-going participatory arts-based inquiry project conceived by the Gestare Art Collective² at an artist residency in July 2011 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada is the genesis of the pedagogical intervention introduced to students in Barbara's class (Bickel & McConachy, 2013). From *Sit-Ins* to *Teach-Ins*, artist/activist/educators have been interested in alternative

¹ To see and read more about the on-going practice of *Nap-Ins* go to: <http://www.gestareartcollective.com/nap-ins.php>

To see documentation of a conference presentation followed by an ocean-side releasing of the dreams on the *Dream Scroll* go to: <http://www.gestareartcollective.com/academic-artworkings.php>

To see an 2012 performance ritual with the *Dream Scroll* entitled *Thread of a Dream*: <https://vimeo.com/44233735>

² Gestare Art Collective was formed in 2009. Current members include Barbara Bickel, Cindy Lou Griffith, Nané Ariadne Jordan, Medwyn McConachy & Ingrid Rose. To learn more about the collective visit to <http://www.gestareartcollective.com>



Figure 3: Bickel, Barbara. (2013). *Dream Scroll* (detail), Vergette Gallery, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

sites of learning. The *Nap-In* is an on-going socially-engaged art practice that integrates aesthetics with the ethical, and political. *Nap-Ins* have taken place at artist residencies, galleries, community centers, and educational conferences in Canada, the USA, and Italy. To date, more than 180 nappers have contributed to the original *Dream Scroll* in 16 different locations.³ *Nap-Ins* offer an opportunity for people of diverse backgrounds to participate in, share and extend their dreams and visions for themselves, their community and the world in an uncensored and anonymous publicly shared cultural artifact. Integral dream scholars Bogzaran and Delauriers (2012) note how;

Dreams reflect our personal development journey while presenting us with enigmatic, partial, and difficult visions of the dilemmas that tie self and society together in their evolutionary dance; dreams reflect the traces of alienation and fragmentation as well as recovery and remembrance of our state of interdependence. (p. 165)

Social dreaming scholar Lawrence (2005) further describes dreams, memories and thoughts as “shadows of the future ... that are just floating around in the social unconscious that belongs to all” (p.83-84). The *Nap-In* event and *Dream Scroll* artifact constitute a challenge

³ Additional *Dream Scrolls* have been created and *Nap-Ins* offered by Gestare artists to other communities. Barbara began one in her Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies program at SIU with specific dreams for WGS Studies in 2013. In 2015 a *Nap-In* workshop and scroll was begun at Vine Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba specific to their community outreach dreams. Gestare Art Collective invites others to engage with this socially-engaged art practice in their own communities, while acknowledging the source of the project from the collective.

aesthetically, ethically and politically to receive individual and communal dreams as significant forms of inquiry, knowledge, critique and wisdom.

Combining napping and walking the labyrinth with the reflective creative process of drawing, writing and sewing onto the *Dream Scroll* is intended to bring to light the collective awareness of a community (Figure 2 & 3). The *Nap-Ins* have held the potential to assist participants to dream and witness themselves co-poetically with/as the other. In these processes participants have the opportunity to step beyond personal boundaries to re-attune with themselves and others.

Following the socially engaged art experience in the student gallery the *Dream Scroll* was installed in the Rotunda Gallery at the university library-- a public location with comfy chairs where students often nap between study and classes (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Frye, Kathleen. (2013). *Student napping in labyrinth center with Dream Scroll*. Morris Library, Southern Illinois University Library.

The students, inspired by the student gallery *Nap-In* experience, volunteered to facilitate *Nap-Ins* for fellow students and library attendees in the library gallery at scheduled times throughout the three week exhibition (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Bickel, Barbara. (2013). *Student facilitation of Nap-In*. Morris Library Rotunda. Southern Illinois University.

Facilitation involved inviting those who came into the gallery space to nap, to walk the labyrinth taped to the floor surrounding the *Dream Scroll*, to engage thoughtfully and creatively through writing dreams or visions onto the supplied recycled cloth material (See Appendix One). Levels of engagement with the interactive installation varied. Active engagement resulted in participants sewing their completed dream art piece onto the collective scroll. Below is the poster invitation for the Library Installation (Figure 6).

DREAM WORKING II

A Participatory Art Installation in the Library Rotunda



February 11-28, 2013

What are your dreams for the university community, your education and higher education?

The Gestare Art Collective

Attended by Barbara Bickel of the Gestare Art Collective & SIU faculty & community members: Greg Wendt, Laura Dreuth Zeman, Kathleen Frye, Hugh Muldoon, R. Michael Fisher & Holly Cormier

Nap-In Workshops

No Cost

Fri. Feb. 15, 2 - 4pm
Sat. Feb. 16, 11 - 1pm
Sun. Feb 17, 3 - 5pm
Mon Feb 18, 6 - 8pm
Tue. Feb 19, 2 - 4pm
Wed. Feb 20, 1 - 3pm
Thurs. Feb 21, 2 - 4pm
Fri. Feb 22, 3 - 5pm
Sat. Feb 23, 11 - 1pm
Sun. Feb 24, 1 - 3pm
Mon. Feb 25, 1 - 3pm
Tue. Feb 26, 6 - 8pm

Drop in to nap & sew your personal dream onto the Dream Scroll

Nap-In Workshop Facilitators

Barbara Bickel, Joanna Clayton, Olivia Coker, Grace Katalinich, Jessica (Laine) Mayfield, Brigid McCann, Jenna Strickler, Megan Sims, Kathleen Frye

Closing Reception

Wed. Feb. 27, 3 - 5pm
All welcome!

Morris Library Rotunda
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Illinois

Sponsored by:
School of Art & Design and
Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies.

www.gestareartcollective.com
for more info: bickel@siu.edu

Figure 6: Bickel, Barbara. (2013). *Dreamworking II* Poster.

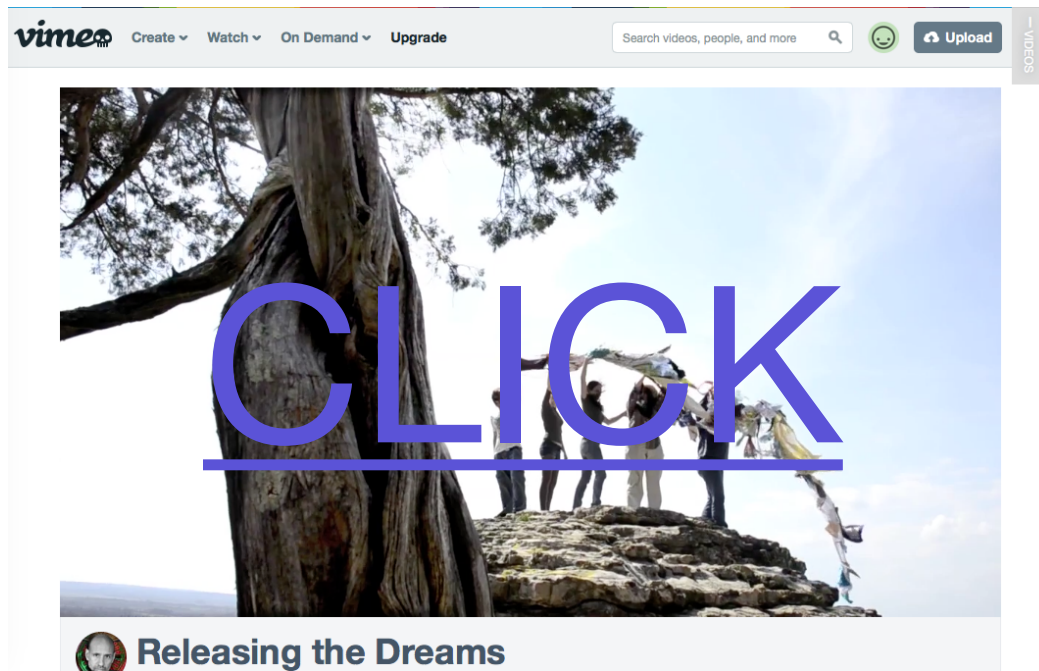
A post *Nap-In* releasing ritual brings closure to each of the *Nap-Ins*. These performative ritual acts vary depending on the impulse and suggestions of participants in each *Nap-In*. At the suggestion of a student involved in the campus *Nap-Ins* the *Dream Scroll* was taken on May 19, 2013 to Inspiration Point in Southern Illinois. Students, faculty and community members climbed to the top of a 300 foot bluff to release the dreams into the winds off of the ancient cliff (Figure 7 & 8).



Figure 7 (top): Sims, Zach. (2013). *Releasing the Dream Scroll Dreams*. Inspiration Point, Southern Illinois. Photo.
Figure 8: Wendt, Gregory. (2013). *Releasing the Dream Scroll Dreams*. Inspiration Point, Southern Illinois. Photo.



This was a breathtaking experience, a cleansing, and release of dreams into the atmosphere. This performative event was filmed and made into video by videographer Gregory Wendt that includes the spoken narration of a compilation of randomly selected dreams embedded in the *Dream Scroll*. This dream text was culled for the video and can be read in Appendix Two. To watch the five minute video click below or visit <https://vimeo.com/74959744>



There is something simultaneously powerful and playful about the collectively growing *Dream Scroll*, created by many hands, some seasoned sewers, others novice, as it borderlinks unknown others across dreams, time, cultures, identities, place and space. It has become a dynamic living curriculum. The socially engaged project has beckoned the artist in each person to co-emerge and co-learn with it; each prior dreamer becoming a wit(h)ness for the next dream.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the members of the Gestare Art Collective who dreamt the *Nap-Ins* into being with me, Medwyn McConachy and Nané Jordan, and the members that continue expanding the dreaming into the world, Cindy Lou Griffith and Ingrid Rose. I also want to thank the following students, faculty, staff and friends at SIU who assisted in multiple aspects of this socially engaged art project at Southern Illinois University; Joanna Clayton, Olivia Coker, Holly Cormier, Laura Dreuth Zeman, R. Michael Fisher, Kathleen Frye, Grace Katalinich, Jessica Mayfield, Brigid McCann, Hugh Muldoon, Megan Sims, Jenna Strickler and Gregory Wendt.

Appendix 1

Drop-In Nap-In – Facilitation Guide

[This is an adapted hand out created by Barbara Bickel given to the Art Education students and other volunteer facilitators of the drop-in *Nap-In* at the Rotunda Gallery. This has been adapted from the Gestare Art Collective facilitation process of prior Nap-Ins]

Objective:

In the Nap-In, participants have the opportunity to step beyond personal boundaries, to re-attune with themselves and others through adding their dreams to the collective. This is an opportunity for building community. Through this socially-engaged art practice we can begin to integrate aesthetics with the ethical, and political.

Prep:

- Set up table with art making materials, fabric, needles, thread, buttons, sharpies, crayons, etc. Participants are welcome to bring fabric scraps from home.
- Pre-make a few Dream Pillows. These are small pillow sachets. These can be given away to people who want to do the full process and nap. A participant may want to make their own *Dream Pillow* and that is good too. If we don't have extra dream pillows to give to someone, let them inhale from the one that we have. Explain what they are and that as herbs, lavender relaxes and mugwort assists dreaming and visioning. Ingredients: a pinch of lavender, a pinch of mugwort, and stuffing (fabric can also be used to stuff)

Facilitation Guidelines

As people approach you, invite them to participate in the *Nap-in* and add their dream to the *Dream Scroll*. Explain the process to them. Give them a bit of background on the *Nap-In* if they are interested. There is no right or wrong way to participate.

Instructions of the Process for Participants:

- 1) Nap, rest in the chair for a long as you like. Walk the labyrinth as a way to start shifting into a reflective dream space.
- 2) When you have woken up or feel ready to start the art process – find fabric and write your dream, thoughts, onto it or make a piece that represents your dream
- 3) The dream can be a dream participants have had, a dream had that night before, a dream they want to let go of, a dream they want to explore further. It can also be words or ideas that come to them while they are resting/napping. Or it can be a dream they want to have. Dream is understood in the largest sense of the word.
- 4) After they have a dream they can choose art materials and being to write their dream down onto fabric or create a fabric piece that visually reflects their dream.
- 5) After completing their fabric dream art they chose where they want to attach it to the large *Dream Scroll*.
- 6) Sign their name on their fabric dream art piece if they choose.
- 7) Lastly, have them sign their name to the contact sheet (there is a sheet up for this) and add their email address. This is so they can be recognized the next time the scroll is shown and be notified when the *Dream Scroll* will be taken to Inspiration Point.

Facilitation Suggestions:

- Offer any sewing help they might want in the process. Encourage them to try it even if they have never sewn. Helps to have needles pre-threaded.
- As a facilitator you will have to intuit if the participant wants to work in silence or if they want to talk while they are working. If you are not sure ask. They will probably want to find a comfortable chair to work in. You can move around and check on how they are doing as they work. This will be practicing your ability to sense the mood of the maker. Some people will be talkative and others will not be. Some will want to share their dreams verbally, others will not. Remember that this is a new art creation and to treat it like a new baby coming into the world. Treat the art dream piece and the maker with care.
- When they are finished their art dream piece. Explain how it can be added wherever they want on the *Dream Scroll*. It may go onto the new white fabric tail. It may be added to another dream art piece that is already there. Ask them to think about where it wants to go. Lift the *Dream Scroll* to show how it will hang down if they are working on the lower piece. They can work on both sides of the scroll.
- It is also okay if they want to take their dream art piece home and not attach it to the *Dream Scroll*. Note: We have never experience this, as participants have been happy and at times relieved to leave their dreams with the other dreams on the *Dream Scroll*.
- If they need help sewing it on you can assist but encourage them to try – give them basic tips. Try to watch that they do not accidentally sew through a piece on the other side of the scroll. If it happens that is not a problem.
- After they leave – check that the dream art piece is securely attached on the *Dream Scroll*. Sometimes the stitching needs to be re-enforced.
- Its okay if they want to take a picture of their piece on the scroll.
- They can take their piece home to finish it and bring it back another day.
- Invite them to come back another day and add another dream.

Enjoy any conversation you may have in this participatory public art experience. Reflect and sketch in your Art Journals during and afterwards about what you learned about yourself as an artist-teacher and about what you saw the participants learn. Enjoy the experience of dreaming for yourself, and the community through your facilitation.

Appendix 2

Dream excerpts from the Dream Scroll spoken in the video

Because dream never just itself – it's cool blue sea dropping
into mouth like a wish

what I'm learning here about trust and control

I dreamt one day my heart higher than my head

I open jail cell quickly, dress is long and deep sky blue.
when I leave I realize I'm eagle watching myself search for
places to hide

Some people have luck with dreams –not me. my dreams
are bad or strange. I want to be a happy person, happy
dreams – what dreams may come? What dreams may
come?

Why mass suicide surfacing in my dream, ecological crisis,
current political moments? wings and heart, my desire to
take flight – heart intact

I felt myself sucked into it at once, I opened into the
universe, breathing turned into an intense hum –universe's
melody – I cried floating in timeless bliss

dream about a psychopath who was trying to kill me but I
killed him first, then I became a psychopath.

used to fly, now grounded

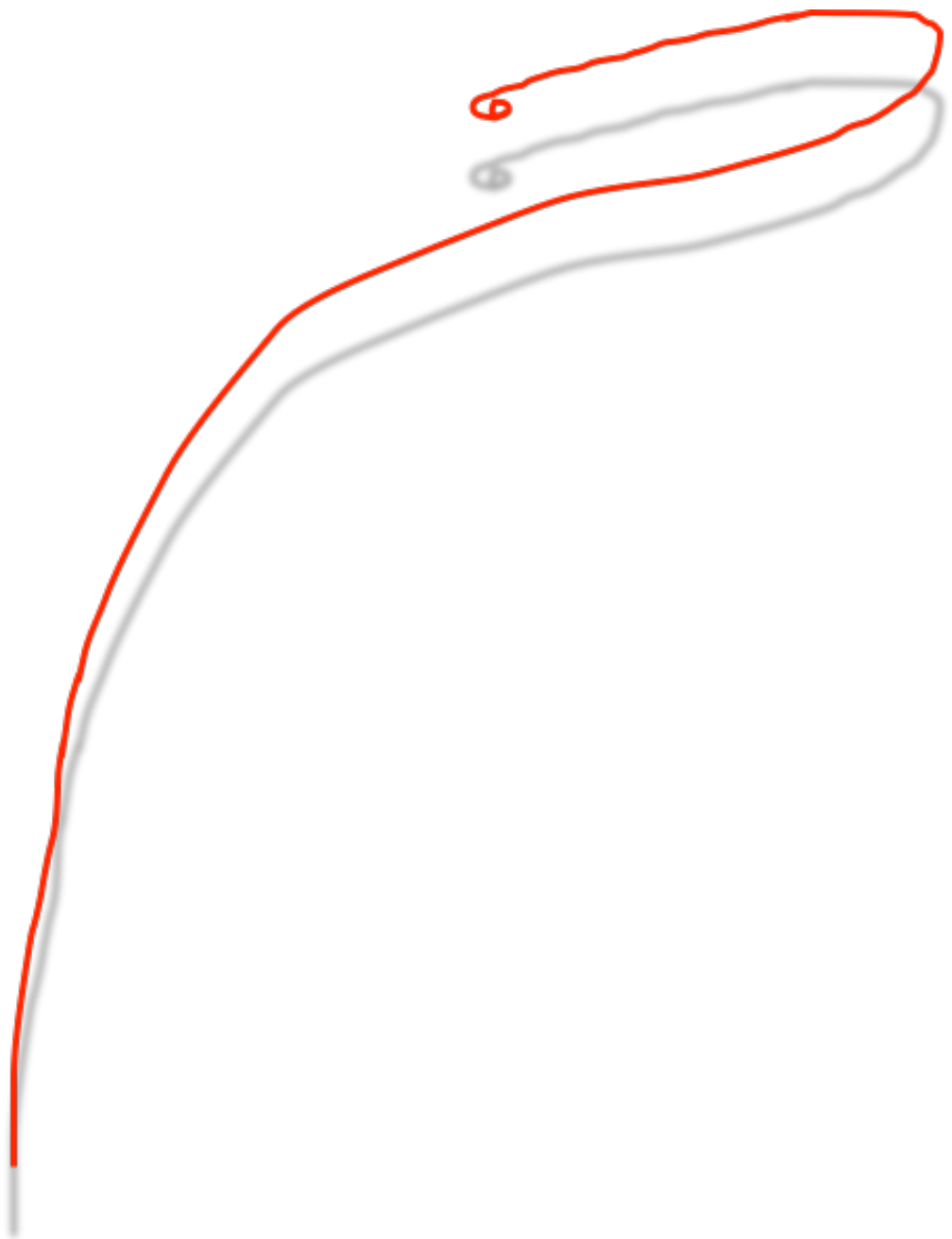
I wish for all of us to realize this: earn what we work for,
know from what we're taught, life a continuous beautiful
lesson challenging us to grow love change – like a rose we
blossom and seed this world, ceaselessly, life continues
based on what we put into it today.

- pruned by Ingrid Rose sept 21, 2013

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Art Therapy in Educational Settings: A Confluence of Practices

By: Nicole Gnezda

School art assignments often result in disturbing images. A student who had recently run away from home drew a self-portrait surrounded by scattered puzzle pieces and screaming faces. Another student drew a vividly colored collage of drug paraphernalia, burning police car, bloody razor blade, noose, swastika, anarchy symbol, and American flag on fire. In the center was a figure whose head was being torn open by two green men. A glowing hand was reaching in to free a white, spirit-like figure from the exposed brain. The artist, a successful student and athlete, wrote that his artwork represented the madness in the world and the glowing hand was the only hope.

As an art educator deeply affected by these and other students' impressions of their worlds, I wanted help to understand and address the strong emotions and troubling images that are not uncommon in student art. I registered for a "Clinical Art Therapy Graduate Intensive" at Harding Hospital in Worthington, Ohio, one of the sites where the field of art therapy had its genesis. Thus began an integration of art education and art therapy that informed my teaching for the rest of my career and into my retirement.

This article will explain principles of existential art therapy, bases for its efficacy, and examples of *art-therapy-style* expressive arts interventions in two educational settings: a suburban high school and a center for homeless and low-income children.

EXISTENTIAL ART THERAPY: DESCRIPTION

Art therapy employs art-making and aesthetic-response processes to facilitate improvement in individuals' mental, emotional and, sometimes, physical states of well-being, (American Art Therapy Association, 2015). Many variations of art therapy are in use. For the purposes of this paper, focus is directed to a form of humanistic art therapy known as "Existential Art Therapy," (Malchiodi, 2012, Moon, 1998).

Existential Art Therapy is based on theories of Existential Psychology (Lantz and Harper, 1991, Feder and Feder, 1981) that originated in response to the writings of Frankl (1963). Frankl was a psychiatrist and concentration camp survivor who believed that even during inhumane circumstances a person can and should create a meaning for his/her life. In fact, survival depends on it. Existential psychologists maintain that turmoil and struggle are essential elements of life and that people unconsciously choose one of two paths for dealing with their troubles - either a flight from self-knowledge that results in the deterioration of self (Lantz and Harper, 1991) or a growth-producing search for self-understanding and personal meaning (Frankl, 1963). Lantz believed that psychological entropy results from repression of emotional pain and vulnerability. A sense of emptiness develops, one that often leads to self-destructive or instinct-motivated behaviors such as substance abuse, violence toward self or others, careless sex, anxiety, emotional numbness, avoidance behaviors, and work or relationship failures. The antidote proposed by existential psychologists is to help clients increase their understanding of their internal worlds, then work toward developing personal meanings that facilitate acceptance and sometimes appreciation for their pain, conflicts and struggles. (Frankl, 1963, Wadeson, 1980).

Existential art therapy is existential psychology in practice. Image-making is a means by which repressed suffering can be illuminated. Moon described images as messengers (2004, p.6) from the interior self, revealing the information that a person most needs to encounter.

Art therapy is sometimes mistakenly assumed to consist of assigning a targeted topic to a client then applying standardized interpretations to the client's images, i.e. deciding for the client what his/her personal expression is all about. While this approach is limited in its effectiveness, it is used occasionally to help a therapist hypothesize a client's psychological state or underlying issues. I witnessed an example during an in-take interview. An adolescent client was asked to make a drawing of a bridge. The strength or weakness of the bridge was considered to indicate the client's unconscious sense of stability and family support.

Many art therapists, especially existential art therapists, resist this approach. They believe that a client is the expert storyteller of the meaning in his/her images (Malchiodi, 1998), and they prefer to wait for a client to grow able to verbalize a response to his/her self-generated art (Case and Dalley, 1990). One reason for having clients assign meaning to their own works is that, while a particular symbol may have a commonly accepted meaning, a client's use of that symbol may instead signify a very different meaning that developed from the client's own context and world-view (Malchiodi, 1998). The color red, for instance, is often used to represent blood, anger, or violence. But it is also the color of a poppy, which might be a client's mother's favorite flower.

An additional concern with interpretations assigned by therapists to clients' art is that the onus of meaning-making and self-exploration is moved from the hurting individual to the authority of his/her therapist. The client, therefore, remains disengaged in the process and disconnected from the messages coming from his/her own interior self.

Existential art therapy is open-ended, encouraging clients to generate their own images and to talk about what they are creating. In a group studio space, an art therapist may paint or sculpt her/his own art, modeling the desired behavior and enticing clients to begin making their own art. The art therapist uses this opportunity to encourage engagement in an activity, support a work ethic, guide self-discipline, teach art techniques (as needed), and talk with clients about the content of their art as well as the struggles of trying to create it. Art-making functions as a parallel process to the psychological growth process on which the client is simultaneously working.

In a small group setting, an existential art therapist may ask participants to make artistic reactions to a prompt. Examples of prompts might be a theme such as "nightmares" or guided imagery such as waking up in a strange house and exploring the basement (Moon 1998).

Discussion of each work of art occurs after the art-making is finished. A participant will show her/his images, describe them and talk about what they mean. Other participants will be asked to react to the art, bringing their own experiences, interpretations, empathy, and praise into the conversation. The art therapist may ask targeted questions to expand the breadth or depth of the talk about the art or to follow up on potent issues that may have been raised. Within the group setting, the artist-clients experience self-revelation, purposeful listening, acceptance from peers, validation of the emotions expressed, and compassionate guidance from the therapist.

EFFICACY OF EXISTENTIAL ART THERAPY: WHY IT WORKS

Art therapy is effective in helping an individual develop self-awareness that can lead to changes in behavior and well-being because expressive art activities are engaging, revelatory, and transformative (Wadeson, 1980).

Art-making is active, pleasurable, and requires "disciplined engagement" (Moon, 2004, p.56), experiences that are often missing for those who are struggling with life. Art is expression, the opposite of repression, and can lessen emotional numbness and feelings of emptiness. Arguile states "For some children who have grown dull through circumstances, the language of art allows them to emotionally grow anew" (2000, p. 148). Art therapy pioneer, Edith Kramer, believed that the creative

process, itself, is the healing agent in art therapy work (American Art Therapy Association Archives, 2015).

Art reveals (Moon, 2004). It makes internal material visible - memories, experiences, sensations, dreams, emotions, anxieties, conflicts, struggles, and pain. Art acts as a bridge between the unconscious and conscious. Metaphorical in nature, art portrays ideas holistically and symbolically, as they exist in the unconscious. Artistic symbols are stand-ins for the self that can be analyzed from an objective distance (Wadeson, 1980). Because art is permanent, it can be revisited and reanalyzed to mine it for more insight, reexamine ideas, or assess a client's growth over time (Wadeson, 1980).

People who may be reluctant to speak directly to a therapist about their problems are often more willing to make images. Conversation with a psychotherapist may seem blatantly confessional and threatening, but art-making discloses internal information in a masked form that can be approached gradually. Malchiodi (2012) believes that **art enables** the expression of sensory memory in ways that verbalization cannot. Also, words require a lengthy, linear explanation and can be manipulated to alter or hide information (Wadeson, 1980). Therefore, images may often be more honest than words, as they escape from places often hidden even to the artist him/herself. With regard to art that flows freely from an individual's own thought processes, Moon said, "the image never lies" (personal communication, June, 1993).

After making art, art therapy clients examine their art, identifying or questioning the images they made. Themes, experiences, and emotions are portrayed in symbols, colors, abstractions, scale, and use of background space. Discussion occurs between the artist and group members, who notice and analyze the significance and meanings of elements in the art. Peers often see meanings in art that the artist her/himself does not recognize at first. With guidance from the therapist, these meanings are explored. Dialogic response to art by artist, peers, and therapist is an important part of the art therapy process. It is through the revelation of unexpected images and the reflection on the meaning of those images that clients work toward transformation.

Art therapy facilitates transformation in several ways. First, it helps alleviate isolation and alienation (Wadeson, 1980). When an individual makes her/his feelings visible to others who accept those feelings, the individual experiences a sense of unity with other people, meeting the basic need for affiliation and love described by Maslow (1962). Both Moon (2006) and McNiff (2004) recognize the healing effects of communities, and Arguile defines the role of the art therapist as that of developing an relationship with a client (2000).

Wadeson (1980) credits art potential to bring about major life changes by guiding clients to confront their experiences; restructure their nebulous, tangled thoughts and emotions into an organized, tangible form; integrate the new way of thinking about their lives and internalize it as new understanding; then

alter their ways of living. Moon (2004), McNiff (2006), and Wadeson (1980) refer to this process of change as transformation. By facing one's suffering, Moon believes, a person is able to transform the painful and ugly into something meaningful and, perhaps, beautiful. Via the art therapy process, one faces his/her vulnerability but also realizes that he/she has survived. In this way, a person learns to own her/his suffering and recognize her/his ability to persevere despite it. McNiff states succinctly, "**Art heals** by accepting the pain and doing something with it" (2006, frontispiece).

“ Art reveals.

therapeutic
exploring

THE ART THERAPY MODEL IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS: TYPICAL TEENS, TROUBLED TEENS, AND HOMELESS CHILDREN

I proposed and piloted expressive art programs called “Creative Mondays” and “Arts Intervention” in the suburban high school where I was teaching. Later, after my retirement from teaching, I established an expressive arts program at an after-school educational center for homeless and low-income children. Both followed the style of existential art therapy. I am a certified art teacher with art therapy training, not a credentialed art therapist (though there is no legislated standard for art therapists in the State of Ohio), therefore, it is important to note that at no time did I engage in any diagnosis or treatment of student’s mental health issues. Instead, I designed and led art activities that encouraged young people to reflect on themselves, think about their behaviors, and express out loud their emotions and challenges, all under the guidance of a caring adult educator.

CREATIVE MONDAYS

After training with Bruce Moon at Harding Hospital, I felt motivated to bring my new knowledge about art therapy into the public high school where I was teaching. I wanted to pay attention to and respond appropriately to the images created by my students.

I started an extra-curricular, art-therapy-style group that met after school on Mondays and was, thus, called “Creative Mondays.” It was advertised at school as a place to make art and talk about life. Attendance was voluntary, and therefore, fluid, although some students attended regularly. Each week’s meeting started with topics/issues that were on a topic (sometimes topics) of the art supplies in my the students, so they could as well as the content of their beginning of each session, (unless a student was at risk risk), respect for all emphasis on technical skills - able to draw,” and a will talk about the art when it given approximately forty-in response to the day’s topic. art-making were led by vent or to process their school and life struggles. Over a period of years, Creative Mondays students explored myriad ideas that ranged from prom dates to the traumatic events of September 11, 2001.

“ Art
heals ...

student input regarding their minds. The group chose for that week’s art. A variety classroom were available to make choices about materials art. Guidelines, stated at the included confidentiality or putting someone else at participants and their art, de- i.e. “you do not have to be reminder that participants is finished. Students were five minutes to create images Discussions that followed the students, some very eager to

Creative Mondays offered a relaxed atmosphere, empathy, and a sounding board for students, both those who succeeded at and those who were challenged by their adolescent lives. Further interventions were sometimes sought for a particular student’s distress, but the facilitator’s role was primarily that of a teacher who cared and spent time being creative and talking with students about their experiences and concerns.

ARTS INTERVENTION

After some lobbying and a stroke of luck, I was able to pilot a high school program called “Arts Intervention.” The purpose was to provide expressive activities to students being restricted to what was then called “in-school suspension.” These students were often repeat offenders with transgressions that ranged from frequent tardiness to insubordination to bullying.

It was customary for my school to deal with inappropriate behaviors through a system of clearly laid out punishments, one of which was removing a student from all classes and segregating him/her with other students who had broken rules. The room where the students stayed was labeled the “In-School Suspension Room” and later by the euphemism, “Alternate Learning Site” (ALS). As evidenced by the large number of referrals and repeat referrals to this disciplinary setting, the behaviorist approach did not seem to deter many students from acting disruptively; it neither addressed the root causes of behavior nor taught students how to respond differently to triggering stimuli (Kohn, 1993).

In an attempt to help students discover underlying issues and develop solutions, Arts Intervention was implemented in a part of the Alternate Learning Site, a room I called “The Creativity Room.” I, the teacher-facilitator, was referred to as “The Expressive Arts Specialist.”

Arts Intervention was proposed as an attempt to better understand our young people and, as a result, to identify and better meet their affective needs. An important link exists between affective well-being and school success. Maslow (1962) explained that a human being can only engage in self-actualization when his/her more fundamental needs for physical safety, psychological safety, love, affiliation, and self-esteem have been met. Becoming educated is an act of self-actualization. High school students struggle daily in their pursuit of basic need satisfaction as they deal with the complexity of relationships, psychological affronts from peers and adults, self-denigration, and issues of safety in school and the larger world. Those students least equipped to cope with these emotional demands and those students who are presented with greater than normal emotional challenges are often the ones who are, time and again, faced with disciplinary action. Helping these adolescents to understand and deal with their affective difficulties, it was proposed, would also enable them to grow toward self-actualization, thereby becoming more engaged in their educations.

Arts Intervention met during a one hundred minute period every other day. In the Creativity Room were posters of adages, insightful statements, and self-help ideas. Chart paper was hung on the walls waiting for potential artists, and paints, markers, oil pastels, pencils, colored pencils, and collage materials were available. A plastic file-crate held handouts for students, including learning-styles assessment packets, anger-management strategies, and articles about child abuse, substance abuse, depression, etc.

At the beginning of the period, I would invite ALS students to participate in art activities, explaining to them that this program had three purposes: to offer them something productive to do with their time, to give them a chance to develop some self-knowledge, and to get to know me as a resource person. I said they would be making art about topics that have to do with life, that they did not have to be able to draw, and that they would also talk about the meanings in their art. Though participation was strictly voluntary, many students gave it a try.

Once in the Creativity Room, students were presented a question, such as: “If you could be anywhere in the world, where would you want to be?” “Who is the person most loyal to you?” “When did you feel most alone?” For about forty minutes students made art with their choice of media in response to the specific question. I assured them that they did not have to draw realistically, that “There is no bad art, only dishonest and honest art.” I stayed carefully out of the way, making my own images on one of the pieces of chart paper. By doing so, I was modeling art-making behavior, working parallel to them as a co-searcher of life meaning, and disclosing some honest information about my life to build trust.

“ ... art
enables ...

After everyone finished, we discussed each other's images. When appropriate, I asked insight-producing questions or guided the discussions toward underlying issues. For example, a student who had recently been released from a drug treatment facility and admitted being treated for depression drew a person injecting drugs. I commented on the beautiful flowers in the ballooned area above the person's head and was told the flowers represented what the student experienced when he was high. I then asked him what were the real (non-drugged) feelings of the person in the drawing. The student replied, "nothing." I suggested that sometimes depression can feel like emotional numbness. Another student in the room was also being treated for depression, so there ensued a discussion in which the students shared their experiences related to the illness. The student-artist was no longer alone at school as he was dealing with his problem. Instead, he experienced support from peers and a caring adult for his efforts at changing his life. Days later at a meeting with the student, his parents, and teachers, I was able to advocate for the student by cautioning those teachers expecting a quick academic turn-around to be sensitive to the student's emotional vulnerability and his need for teachers to be patient and supportive in his efforts to improve his school performance.

Many topics and emotional issues arose in Arts Intervention: bullying, relationships with parents, talents and interests, racial/ethnic/gender discrimination, need for academic help and learning style assessments, violence, philosophies of life, anger management, self-esteem, life dreams and goals, injustice, values, love, domestic abuse, reproductive choices/safe-sex, living mindfully, and other topics. In addition to interacting with students about these issues, I was prepared with (or sought out) educational materials to help students understand and deal with their underlying motivators and behavior responses to them. I also suggested interventions (when appropriate) and referred students to their guidance counselors.

At the end of the period, the students returned to the disciplinary area of ALS and I returned to my classroom to teach my classes. However, there were many follow-up activities that I tried to accomplish: record-keeping; consultation with a Licensed Social Worker; contacts with guidance counselors, teachers of vocational, special education, gifted, and English-language support classes; conversations with parents; attendance at parent-teacher conferences; reading and researching issues raised during the arts intervention period; follow-up appointments with students, including learning-style assessments; and communications with county children's services personnel to report suspected child abuse.

Arts Intervention attempted to facilitate changes in student behavior by helping students develop self-knowledge and learn new coping mechanisms. It reached a number of students and offered ways of identifying and ameliorating problems that students brought into their classrooms. For students with problems outside the scope of this educator's training, conferences were held with guidance counselors in hopes that students would be referred to mental health professionals for further help. In this public high school, as in many Ohio schools, neither social workers nor psychotherapists were available on site. During the existence of Arts Intervention, plans were being discussed, however, to connect with a local counseling service that would oversee the Arts Intervention program and provide students who needed it a direct line to psychotherapy.

Despite a lack of interest by district leadership that caused Arts Intervention to be discontinued after only one semester, the potential for its effectiveness was expressed clearly by students in a small follow-up survey. Half of Arts Intervention participants who completed the survey said they had made changes in their day-to-day lives because of Arts Intervention. Students wrote, "I am working to make my learning more hands-on," "I have been staying in school and have gone to all my classes the last two weeks," "I am making better decisions and now I think before I do anything," and the Expressive Arts Specialist "made me believe in myself and she also made me realize I don't have to keep things inside forever. As a result, I have begun to talk to a therapist." Other comments included: "She should keep doing this for other kids," "[She] really took her time and listened," "I would really like to see her continue with the ALS art program, because if she was able to reach and teach me, she certainly can touch other teenagers." Other students asked me to "Keep in contact...have a little

conversation once in a while,” “Just be there if I need her.” For many students, Arts Intervention helped school become a place to heal, grow, and be accepted, rather than an additional stressor that further complicated already complicated lives.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS INTERVENTION AT AN AFTER-SCHOOL CENTER FOR HOMELESS AND LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

Since 2009, I have directed a small expressive arts program at an after-school center for homeless and low-income children. The goal is to provide opportunities for the children to address their experiences and feelings about those experiences in a safe environment with compassionate response from an adult. During sessions, the children and I think about day-to-day life, school, family, peer relationships, and world events. I start each session with a prompt and provide carefully selected art supplies. Conversations veer in directions determined by the children. Sometimes they ask direct questions about or seek help for specific events that are troubling them. A psychotherapist visits the center and often sits in our sessions and/or I refer children to her for further intervention. Sometimes I seek resources outside of the center that may be of help to a child and his/her family.

Expressive arts sessions meet for one ninety-minute period a week. Students are selected each week by teachers and each group usually consists of no more than six students. Grade levels rotate throughout a month. Idea-prompts and projects are adjusted to relate appropriately to children's age differences.

I begin a session by introducing an evocative topic related to a life issue or experience. I then explain the art-making process to be used to explore the idea. Among the variety of projects and ideas that have been explored by the children are:

- Children made wooden amulets colored with African symbols, selected by the children to represent their own character traits. Discussion was related to character, life choices, behavior, and personal strengths.
- Children constructed houses out of boxes and papers patterned like bricks, stone, gold, wood, etc. to represent safe places for the children to live. Discussion unveiled many issues relating to neighborhood violence, family interactions, insect infestations, home invasions, pets, and outdoor play areas.
- A Halloween project was based on the book, *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak. Students drew chalk pictures of things that scared them. Children discussed frightening experiences and also displayed bravado or numbness to such stressors.
- Children made “Best and Worst” posters of the worst things that happened either in the last couple of days or in their whole lives and then the best things that had happened to them. Children discussed separation of family members (by death, divorce, loss of parental rights, or jail); bullying; the stress of moves into shelters; the love of family; joys in life; the importance of friends.
- Children illustrated blank puzzles with images that raised the “big questions” (or puzzles) of their lives. Among other ideas, children's puzzles asked, “Why do some people have mansions?” and “Why do people act the way they do?”
- Children were given small canvas boards and acrylic paint with which to freely create expressions of strong feelings via use of color and brushstrokes. Chaos and anger were common emotions in the paintings, although children also painted happy or loving images.

When all of the art projects have been completed, the children take turns talking about their art. At this time, stories of life events are told and feelings are revealed. The children offer each other support, relate similar stories, show empathy, or make suggestions for dealing with the situations. I ask questions, empathize, advise the children, and, when appropriate, offer to do further research or seek intervention to help children with their problems. Follow-ups in response to issues raised at our sessions have included: providing information about diet and strategies to supplement medical treatment for a boy with encopresis; acquiring a work permit application for a middle school student wanting to earn money for a laptop computer; making journals for a student with anger-management problems and offering suggestions for using the journals to help him diffuse his anger; locating a specialized counseling program for a victim of sexual abuse and meeting with her weekly to offer additional support.

Expressive art activities at the center have been effective means for children in stressful, unstable environments to address their emotions, circumstances, and questions about their lives. The children have learned to trust in me as a caring professional who, like the other educators at the center, is dedicated to the children's growth and well-being. For the most part, the children are enthusiastic about being chosen for the day's art therapy group. Often a child will run up to me with a hug, asking if she/he can be picked to go to that day's session. The administrator will sometimes approach me with reports about problems that a child or a group of children are having, guiding me to adapt the art therapy session to address current issues. I learn to know the children as human beings with philosophies, beliefs, feelings, expectations, disappointments, fears, regrets, dreams and wishes. Thus, I am enabled to recognize their challenges and help support them as they work their way through their difficult lives. Specific benefits of this expressive arts program include:

- A psychologically safe, non-judgmental environment for children to talk about their experiences, constructively release anger, and express their feelings.
- *Development of supportive peer relationships.*
- Empathetic adult supervision while children discuss emotionally charged information.
- *Nurturing and guidance of at-risk young people toward better self-understanding and meaningful self-exploration.*
- The expressive art teacher/facilitator learns information about her students' problems, concerns, and situations that may be underlying their behaviors. She can then seek interventions tailored to the specific needs of individual children and their families.
- *Children are taught to be self-reflective, to ask questions about life circumstances, to consider a variety of choices about how to live their lives, and to be proactive in planning for their futures. They are treated as valuable human beings with potential for success in their adult lives.*

A significant example of the positive impact of expressive art activities at the center occurred during a session with fifth graders. After explaining the expression "Walking on Cloud Nine," I gave the students stationery that looked like a summer sky with puffy white clouds and some cotton balls to make their own clouds. The prompt for drawing was, "What would make you feel like you were walking on Cloud Nine?" A rather disengaged boy drew a picture of a flashy car, money, and a person walking in the street. His effort seemed to be without much thinking or attention to the quality of his drawing. During the discussion he said that a lot of money and a Cadillac would make him happy. I responded to the money issue. Then another student remarked that the car looked as if it was going to run into the person in the picture. The artist, who had seemed like he couldn't care less about our session, began to talk. He said the person in front of the car was him (suggesting he deserved to be hit) and revealed that he believed had caused someone's death. Then came a poignant account of an event that happened when the boy was five years old. He and a twelve year-old friend were walking in their neighborhood when someone appeared with a gun. The older friend stepped in front of the boy and was hit by a fatal bullet. For half of his young life, the boy in my group blamed himself for his friend being killed. It became clear, that my student associated himself with death and killing and was carrying guilt with him into adolescence.

The artist claimed that no other adult knew how he felt and that no one had ever helped him deal with the incident. This was a courageous, revelatory moment in this child's life. It needed a response that was empathetic and that provided a change of perspective. I suggested that my student did not cause his friend's death, that, in fact, his friend was a hero for saving the boy's life. I further explained that the friend must have loved the boy very much to have chosen to protect him in this way. Later, I informed the administrator of the center so that she could follow up by arranging appropriate counseling for the boy.

Because of the expressive arts program, a child who identified himself with violence and was on the brink of critical pre-adult choices made a major revelation that resulted in emotional relief, reconsideration of his identity, and the possibility of therapeutic intervention.

Though this expressive arts program at the after-school center offers a variety of benefits for the children, perhaps the most important of all is that which people need most to thrive in the world: someone who cares enough to ask about their lives and to listen compassionately. The expressive arts program at the center sets aside time specifically designed for that purpose, a time when the individual importance of each child is acknowledged, each child's world-view is heard and understood, and the pain, needs, loves, and self-images of each child are honored.

CONCLUSION

As a life-long educator, I believe that many students who struggle with school, fail, or drop out, do so not because of the rigors of academics but because of personal challenges that interfere with their ability to focus on learning. Art teachers are witnesses of their students' "troubling images that want empathy" (McNiff, p. 98), images that communicate underlying pain and perhaps hint at remedies. By merging the disciplines of art education and art therapy, an observant, sensitive, teacher trained in art therapy can guide a student to grow in self-understanding and to seek help in alleviating their stressors.

It is important to restate that educators are not therapists and should not engage in diagnosis or treatment of serious mental health disorders. But an art educator with concomitant training in art therapy can design assignments and settings where students are free to make art based on their own free-flowing ideas and engage in conversations that address the meanings in those images. At the least, art educators can teach young people to live mindfully and to reflect on their experiences. However, bringing an existential-art-therapy-styled approach into schools has the even greater potential to begin a process of major life change for students secretly in distress. Case and Dalley (1990) acknowledge that though school-based art therapy activities are uncommon, there is growing recognition that they have the potential to help students with educational challenges and unruly behavior (2014). Early on, Kramer argued that an art therapist was not a psychotherapist, but "more like a psychologically informed art teacher" (in American Art Therapy Association, Archives, 2015).

Art and art therapy are both processes of exploring, creating, and expressing meaning. Art teachers are the school professionals best equipped to guide creative processes. Are we not also professionals who, with proper training, can help students use their creative processes for personal growth via the engagement, revelation and transformation Wadeson (1981) described?

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TEACHING

So you do it:

flinging boulders aside
crafting intricate sailing vessels
scaling ice if you have to
and forging the first one of everything over and over,
creating art of your life.

There is no preamble to teaching.

It just opens things by being the door of a church
space for a bird
a shovel.

~ **Sally A. Gradle**

Sally A. Gradle is affiliated with the University of Illinois Carbondale, retired.

The Peter London Papers.

ARTIZEIN is thrilled to announce the work and scholarship of our founding co-editor, Dr. Peter London, will be cared for and housed at the Southern Illinois University Carbondale Special Collections Research Center Archives Online (ARCHON). This material is currently being archived and will be available to the public via this link in the near future: <http://archives.lib.siu.edu>

The Peter London Papers at SIU

Southern Illinois University at Carbondale is pleased to house the Peter London Papers in the Morris Library Special Collections Center. Set to release in 2016, the London Papers will include an array of documents that cover more than 40 years of Dr. London prodigious career. Thanks to Peter London's charitable donation, researchers will have access to a series of personal and professional correspondence, course and lecture notes from his years of teaching at Southern Massachusetts University (now University of Massachusetts Dartmouth), journal and newspaper articles, exhibition notices, workshops, details of professional achievement, conference presentations, and more. With more than 300 folders of archived material, this collection provides a rich portrait of an artist and educator whose years of service have significantly influenced the way we see art and its transformative role in our private and public lives.

Biographical Sketch

Dr. Peter London, long time educator and artist, is Professor Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. He is the author of such books as *No More Secondhand Art; Awakening the Artist Within* (1989) and *Drawing Closer to Nature* (2003). Earning his M.F.A. and Doctorate of Education from Columbia University, Peter London has taught hundreds of students about art and its creative power since the late 60s. Now retired from the academy, Dr. London holds workshops and gives lectures around the world each year. He resides in Shelburne, MA and Davis, CA. A more detailed account of Dr. London's work and services can be found on his website: www.peterlondon.us.

~ Aaron Darrisaw, Southern Illinois
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