ART AND DESIGN TEACHING AND LEARNING: A CONFERENCE REPORT

Leoni Schmidt

Most of the contributions in this particular issue stem from an event held In April 2009 at the Dunedin School of Art and the Department of Design of Otago Polytechnic in New Zealand when *art works – mahi toi*, the 2009 biennial conference of the ANZAAE (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators), was delivered in order to support and enhance teaching and learning for art educators throughout the country, the Pacific Rim region and further afield. The conference programme addressed values and principles of visual arts and design education – from early childhood education to primary, through to secondary and tertiary and including arts and design education outside the classroom. Through its themes of multi-cultural pedagogies, innovative cross-disciplinary and collaborative practice and by situating art and design education in a broader socio-political context, *art works – mahi toi* was effective in exploring a range of learning opportunities to inspire art and design educators. Particular effort was made to develop a conference programme that would be relevant to educators working in the primary, secondary, tertiary and public gallery sectors through 'streaming' of the sectors on particular days. There was also a stream for bicultural issues and presentations on Pacific and Asian art education issues. As such, *art works – mahi toi* tackled topics of interest that to date have not been fully explored in an arts education conference. These particular areas included Asian issues in contemporary New Zealand art and art education, cultural sensitivities in teaching Māori art and the use of new and digital technologies in art and design education.

The conference also included a range of presentations on contemporary art and design practices and issues relevant to these and the teaching and learning ensuing from them. Exhibitions added value to the conference and floortalks by artists and designers made the material accessible to lecturers, teachers and students attending the events. Some contributions to this issue of *Scope* reflect the conference's inclusion of practice-based research and its focus on the ways in which artists' work can be presented alongside more formal conference presentations.

The range of contributions to this issue of *Scope* is an indication of the varied character of the *art works – mahi toi* conference programme. Contributions not directly connected with the conference suggest further dimensions of teaching and learning in the visual arts, design and adjacent disciplines.

Nathan Thompson's article brings graphic dimensions of sound into the mix of contributions. Alexandra Kennedy explores notions of the *dérive* and *détournement* in relation to contemporary painting. Francis Plagne reports on an experimental installation by Adam Douglass. Catharine Hodson writes about installation work which explores experiences of breast cancer and hospitalisation.

Peter Belton wonders about the sometimes awkward relationship between formal composition and iconographic analogy in the visual arts. Max Bellamy reports on his recent work straddling the boundaries between sculptural installation and electronic art. Marcus Williams explores the vagaries we encounter within teaching and learning experiences. Stephen Naylor reports on regional strategies for the survival and success of art schools. David Bell confronts the secondary school arts curriculum. Pamela Zeplin rethinks the artist-in-residency as a context for teaching and learning. Charles Robb argues for the 'open studio' without boundaries between disciplines as an

answer to pressures on art schools in our time. As was the case with many contributions, this lead to much debate during the conference as the Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic fiercely protects its discipline-based teaching and learning.

Still in this particular issue of *Scope*, Fiona Grieve and Monique Redmond situate examples of creative publication within contemporary art and design practice. Lesley Duxbury explores the open-ended nature of creative research and the kinds of community which can be engendered in this context. Pat Hoffie's take on creativity places it firmly outside institutions and their potential for assimilating the efforts of creative practitioners. Student Janeen Greig's artist's pages includes a poem alongside an image of one of her tragi-comic 'self-portraits', suggesting that 'creativity' may be alive and well exactly because it can be protected and nurtured within institutional enclaves.

Primary education finds a place within this issue of *Scope*. Beverley Clark and Nicky de Latour explore the role of adults within the visual arts primary classroom. Conference keynote speaker Barbara Piscitelli writes about children, art and museums based on her extensive experience of children's projects in conjunction with museums. With a wider learning target group in mind, Helen Lloyd investigates the opportunities for critical thinking engendered by museum and gallery contexts. Estelle Alma Maré reminds us of our experiences of museum visits where, for example, the work of El Greco has been seen by many generations of artists who have quoted him in their work. Peter Stupples discusses his own experiences of curating exhibitions for public art galleries and presents examples from the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, where his conference contribution concluded art *works – mahi toi*.

Other teaching and learning environments unfold for the reader in this issue of *Scope*. Victoria Bell and Lee Houlihan present artists' pages from a student exhibition during the conference in the Blue Oyster, a contemporary art space in Dunedin. Much debate ensued from the inclusion of other material in the same exhibition entitled *Instructional Models* at the Blue Oyster and lead to public consideration of the appropriate or inappropriate inclusion of materials relevant to Māori history in public contexts.

Rachel Gilles's article reports on the format of the student blog as a context for teaching and learning, thereby connecting this issue of *Scope* with a concurrent issue of *Scope: Teaching and Learning* (see www.thescopes.org) in which four earlier contributions to *art works – mahi* toi are now included as articles focusing on new technologies in the classroom environment.

Another cluster of contributions focuses on learning and teaching challenges. Jane Venis takes a positive view in her article on ways in which learners with low self-esteem can be motivated in the studio environment. Tania Allan Ross reports on her conference workshop which addressed the designing of multi-sensory learning environments for students who are challenged by sensory experiences. Max Oettli and Margo Barton report on group-based learning in the context of a photography and fashion combination of disciplines.

Ethics and its specific issues are highlighted where Mark Jackson writes about the ethics of design and when Qassim Saad considers designing for development. Jannie Visser contributes a narrative of being, growing and becoming across cultural landscapes, subtitled 'art and art education encounters with self and others'.

This issue of *Scope* includes two short review articles on traditional practices in Turkey. Dilek Alkan Salur presents exquisite examples of Ottoman costumes depicted on 18th-Century Kutahya ceramics. Nilgun Salur makes us aware of how the traditional Turkish art of Kat1 printmaking are being deployed in contemporary Turkish classrooms, thereby being saved from extinction.

Scope 2009 concludes with Steve Lovett's article on the connections between printmaking and digital media in the twenty-first century. His contribution follows on from a workshop presented to conference delegates attending *art works – mahi toi*. This was part of a wider programme of workshops which – along with the twelve concurrent exhibitions – gave this particular ANZAAE conference a strong practice-based dimension. Neil Emmerson's *The*

Glass Closet refers to one of the exhibitions and acts as a bookend together with Nathan Thompson's first item in this issue: both presenting the reader with a strong cross-disciplinary approach to practice, one of the strong dialogic components of *art works – mahi toi.*

The full title of this issue of *Scope: Contemporary Research Topics* includes at its end *(Art & Design)*. The inclusion of *Design* acknowledges the teamwork between the Dunedin School of Art and the Department of Design at Otago Polytechnic in New Zealand. It also invites further and future synergies between art and design in New Zealand and further afield. Titles of subsequent issues of *Scope* will reflect such synergies or alternatively may reflect synergies with other disciplines.

In conclusion to this editorial, Otago Polytechnic is acknowledged and thanked for its generous support of *art works – mahi toi* in 2009. Other sponsors made the conference possible (see www.anzaae2009.org.nz), but without the underwriting support of Otago Polytechnic the conference and this issue of *Scope* would not have been possible in the first instance. On behalf of the ANZAAE, the Editorial Team of *Scope* and all contributors who benefit from the conference and this publication, I thank Otago Polytechnic for its research vision and its generous support in line with this vision.

Lastly, but not least, the contributions of Kai Tahu in context of the Memorandum of Understanding between local Kai Tahu rūnaka and Otago Polytechnic are acknowledged. The guidance and presence of Kai Tahu representatives under the auspices of Otago Polytechnic Kaitohutohu Dr Khyla Russell made *art works – mahi toi* a unique experience for everybody involved with the conference and this subsequent issue of *Scope.*

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Article

NAVIGATION – GRAPHIC DIRECTIONS IN SOUND

Nathan Thompson

The description of sound has always been elusive. Its complex ephemeral nature has often defied the boundaries of traditional musical notation. The 1950s and '60s saw an increased desire on the part of some composers to integrate everyday sounds and elements of chance into musical composition. This expanded range of sounds dictated an increased range of graphic tools available for the exploration of sound. A chance encounter with graphic scores by John Cage stimulated research into the relationship between graphic scores and sound. Using navigation as a theme, this writing explores these connections across continents and communities and looks at how graphic scores operate as technologies.

PART 1 – THE MAPPING OF SOUND

"I am the play within the structure"[1]
Morton Feldman

The graphic score is a technology of paper and pencil. A manual tool consisting of a series of related marks designed to describe and articulate sound, in doing this a graphic score organises and orders frameworks of experience. Unlike traditional musical notation, graphic scores form a relationship with sound which can evolve and adapt through use. The tools and signs used for one score may not be adequate for the next. Drawn on two-dimensional surfaces, graphic scores are like maps for the generation of time-based events. This essay explores this relationship and my fascination with these machines made of pencil and paper, viewing them as a kind of poetic nanotechnology that encompass some of the ideas that interest me most in music.

The twentieth century saw an increase in the use of the graphic score by composers. In America, Morton Feldman and John Cage were devising new notation that varied from piece to piece. Feldman's *Projection* (1951) and John Cage's *Fontana Mix* (1960) are both examples of a notation and sound evolving in parallel to produce music. In Feldman's piece, he uses a graphic score to describe tones, lengths of sound and clusters of notes. Cage, on the other hand, develops graphic systems that incorporate everyday sounds into music. Both composers sought to include sound excluded by traditional musical notation.

To many, these new sounds lay outside the bounds of music and were regarded as noise. Writer David Novak defines noise as "the opposite of shared public consensus," and in relation to music this is particularly true. Music is essentially spread through consensus. In his book *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, philosopher Jacques Attali argues that "the entire history of tonal music, like that of the political economy, amounts to an attempt to make people believe in a consensual representation of the world."[2] Tonal music supports this consensus by using a series of notes of specific pitch combined with a written format that allows only for the expression of these pitches. The mapping of sound on paper evolved into a formal language that has been rendered invisible by its ubiquity. The rules and structures of traditional music notation were invented long before recorded sound and distinguished music and composition from environmental sound. Ironically, the eight-tone scale originally proposed by Pythagoras around 500 BC was derived from the ringing of blacksmiths' anvils and was used to provide the beginnings of a rational framework for writing and reproducing music. This formatting of music was done at a fairly heavy cost. As Attali

details, from here successive rationalisations within music progressively sought to exclude the polyphonic rumble that accompanied human activity. This "leftover" was to be considered noise and, as such, outside of the bounds of music. The exclusion of noise from definitions of music represents not only a dramatic reduction in the sonic materials available to the composer, but a drastic reframing of sound for the listener. Noise was effectively turned to silence as the tools of music were used to impose a kind of cultural deafness.

There are many alternate ways to visually map sound. Traditional musical notation may have excluded a great deal from music, but other methods of writing sound have at times drawn attention to sound as a basic building block in the formation of music. In 1787, physicist and musician Ernst Chladni placed sand on a plate of glass. When he bowed the edge of the glass the sand formed into regular patterns and in so doing demonstrated visual traces of pitch, incorporating physical process into the representation of sound.[3]

Representing sound visually is a form of mapping, and the mapping of experience onto paper can take many different forms, all creating their own retelling of the experience, adding or omitting information consistent with their style or format. Ten years before Chladni, Captain James Cook was commissioned by the British Royal Society to search for an undiscovered continent that many speculated was located in the southern ocean. Charged with the responsibility of finding and mapping this mythical continent, *Terra Australis*, Cook translated his experience into a series of marks, patterns and diaries that form a detailed mapping of the contours of each land he encountered. Viewed as a whole, the marks and entries join together to generate an impression of a location. Like the graphic score, these markings become like a paper machine that takes experience and regenerates it in an alternate form. Cook's journeys were exploratory by nature; he used the skills and instruments at hand to translate his experiences in uncharted waters. Similarly, the graphic scores of Feldman and Cage form a graphic language in relation to the changing fields of uncharted sound that were opening up before them, forming maps to be read, interpreted and used to generate new music.

PART TWO – GRAPHIC TECHNOLOGIES

"More essential than composing by means of chance operations, it seems to me now, is composing in such a way that what one does is indeterminate of its performance. In such a case one can work directly, for nothing one does gives rise to anything that is preconceived."[6]

A map, like a graphic score, is a technology in that it both mediates and orders experience. Graphic scores navigate paths through sound and image, excluding or including information in accordance with their structure. John Cage sought to expand the field of music by creating scores that drew attention to the sounds that surrounded the listener, maximising aspects of indeterminacy into his works in an attempt to lessen the importance of the composer. His composition *4'33"* (1952) presents four minutes and 33 seconds of silence and is a clear example of Cage's intention to create a piece in which the audience formed music from what he called "an attention to the activity of sound." The original performance of this piece consisted of pianist David Tudor sitting at a piano. Divided into three sections of varying length, each section is marked by the opening and closing of the piano lid, with the only sound provided by the surrounding environment. In *4'33"* Cage uses silence and time to draw music from noise by providing a listening space of specific duration. The piece is notated in words and numerals rather than notes and bars. Music is returned to its analogue continuity, taken back from the discrete data of notes on paper.

Differences between conventional musical notations and many of Cage's scores could be seen in terms of the difference between following a map and plotting navigation. Cage's scores often differ from other graphic scores in that rather than creating a visual map of sound they set up a series of instructions, which in turn lead to the production of music. Cage initially sought to incorporate chance elements and sounds into his performances, before reworking this idea slightly in order to lessen the importance of the composer. He did this by using graphics and language to loosen the link between the score and its execution and introduce new sound into his music. For example, in *Fontana Mix* (1960) he includes the following instructions:

"Place a sheet with points over a drawing with curves (any position). Over these place the graph. Use the straight line to connect a point within the graph with one outside."[9]

"Measurements horizontally on the top and bottom lines of the graph with respect to the straight line give a 'time bracket' (time within which the event may take place) (Graph units = any time units)."[6]

Fontana Mix is an example of a graphic score that contains a set of instructions for plotting an approach to sound production. The score contains various sheets of paper on which squiggly lines are drawn. Also supplied is a section of a finely gridded graph printed onto mylar. Handwritten instructions specify the placement of the gridded mylar over the piece of paper. The number of squares taken to cross the line twice is used to plot a length of time in which a musical action will occur, to be performed by an unspecified instrument. While providing little in the way of a concrete end point or a tangible link to specific tones or pitches, these simple graphic tools are used to organise sound. Unlike conventional music, they do not provide a recipe that if followed will produce a specific result. The score instead provides a way to proceed in order to produce music, rather than the execution of a set of chronologically ordered notes.

Like Cook's navigational maps, Cage's graphic scores navigate the gulf between graphic material and lived experience and, as with Cook's antipodean explorations, Cage's *Fontana Mix* operates with a map only partially complete. For Cage, this incompletion is an essential part of the map, allowing space not only for the interpretation of the performer but creating a fissure in which unintended sound can be integrated into a performance. In one sense, Cage's graphic tools provide provisions for a journey rather than a map. The score acts more like a thermometer, regulating activity over time by providing sets of limits rather than prescribing specific outcomes.

Cook's second voyage to the Pacific was motivated by a search for an undiscovered continent that, it was speculated, lay somewhere in the lower southern hemisphere. With an incomplete map, Cook proceeded to turn what appears to be a very improvised existence on the open seas into systemised graphic material. One of the fascinating things about Cook's diaries is his description of uncharted territories. These descriptions form diaries that are made as a direct response to the natural phenomena he encountered, chronologically presented as a result of the carefully plotted ship's movement.

"The Clowds near the horizon were of a perfect snow whiteness and were difficult to be distinguished from the ice hills whose lofty summits reached the clowds. The outer or northern edge of this immense ice field was composed of loose or broken ice so close packed together that nothing could enter it."[7]

In this description of a ship's journey into uncharted waters, names and places give way to pure description. Like Cook's mapping, Cage's scores can be seen in terms of methodical plottings and frameworks, forming new meaning in relation to the chaotic elements of noise. The documentation of the journey becomes a kind of dance between methodical recordings, plotted as coordinates on an evolving map, and his subjective descriptions of uncharted waters.

Unlike Cook, Cage's goal is not an attempt to order the known universe but to invent a graphic notation that allows for the inclusion not only of sound excluded by conventional musical notation, but sound not dictated by the composer. To put it into nautical terms, Cook maps a journey whereas Cage uses graphic tools to extend the ocean. What interested Cage most was sound and the experience of listening. Many of his works create a context in which the audience is invited to pay attention to the sounds that surround them. The idea is that this noise is turned into music through paying attention to it. In doing this, he actively acknowledges the audience's attention in the construction of the music. The point for Cage was that sounds were always to be found in relation to other sounds and to the environment around them. Where traditional notation isolated sounds by tying them to specific symbols within a fixed framework, Cage used the graphic score to reinsert noise back into music. One way to understand the impact of Cage's scores is to look at those of his peers.

Karlheinz Stockhausen, in works like *Study 2*, uses blocks of tone to make a graphic representation of sound. Bar lines are retained from conventional musical notation to represent the passing of time. Rectangles are blocked in with specific dimensions prescribing set durations, pitches and tonal values. Although not using conventional graphic notation, Stockhausen's work could be seen as similar to Cook's approach to mapping. His marks use tone and scale to map a direct visual translation of sound onto paper. Like Cage, Stockhausen seeks the integration of new sound into his work, and his works do integrate a certain amount of performer interpretation but, unlike Cage, his works do not present the possibility for the generation of sound independent of the score. Cage's scores often involve instructions which, ironically, he uses to generate indeterminacy within his works. In some ways, language is the ideal medium for Cage in that it has the ability to structure things while still retaining a great level of indeterminacy.

Philosopher Alfred Korzybski points out in his book *Science and Sanity* how indeterminate language can be. He observes that "A map is not the territory it represents."[8] He uses this phrase to point out that language is the structure that we use to rationalise the things that we perceive and it should never be confused with the objects that it represents. He saw the structure produced by this rationalisation as our link to the world of things. In *Science and Sanity* he states that: "If words are not things, or maps are not the actual territory, then, obviously, the only possible link between the objective world and the linguistic world is found in structure, and structure alone."[9] Korzybski saw the structure of language as having a fundamental impact on our perception of the world. In one of his lectures, he demonstrated this principle by offering his students some homemade biscuits before showing them the dog-biscuit bag they had come from. Until the bag was produced the general consensus was that the biscuits were very tasty; many of the students had an almost physical reaction to the sight of the bag, and so Korzybski demonstrated the power language has on our relationship to the world around us. Cage combines language with mark-making to reintroduce noise into music, producing an indeterminate meditation on the relationship between language and sound.

Cage's introduction of noise into music forces a re-examination of noise. In his 2006 Columbia University PhD thesis "Japan Noise: Global Media Circulation and Experimental Music," David Novak talks of the way Japanese Noise music (an underground electronic music genre popular in the 1990s) organises the movements of participants in a Noise culture in Tokyo. He demonstrates that no map is singular and that the movements of subcultures of people between venues constitutes a new mapping of spaces traversed by thousands of people every day following their own maps. Novak's ideas of mapping blur the lines between drawing and culture. Following a map dictates a series of experiences as much as a direction. Whereas Cook was an explorer, mapping by the stars from a moving ship, Novak shows multiple people individually remapping a city, following noise as it forms into music through use.

This reinforces Attali's claim that noise "constitutes the audible waveband of the vibrations and signs that make up society." Attali elaborates on the idea of music being a consensual representation of sound by implying that the size and connectedness of this consensus affects the speed at which sound will travel through populations.

In Attali and Novak, music shifts as a result of activity. With Cook and Cage, the activity that produces music or information is generated from a machine made of paper and ink and the way in which these paper machines generate activity. Cook and Cage's journeys into the unknown differ significantly in intention. Cook seeks to impose order on a world yet unknown; 150 years later a great deal of the unknown has been leached out of Cage's world, and yet, with the right tools, the chaos is still to be found. A map, like a history or a language, is in the end a machine for generating experience. Intersections between Cook and Cage occur in composition, a transition of materials through process. With Cage, sound moves through the score, forming a composition in relation to people. With Cook, the composition is drawn through the translation of natural phenomenon through graphic form, returning from the outer edges of the map to the centre of an expansionist monarchy. In the end, the real fascination and connection between the two is concerned with process and modes of transmission as much as it is with the final sound.

Nathan Thompson is an artist, videomaker and musician from Port Chalmers, New Zealand. He is a lecturer in communication design (drawing and illustration) at Otago Polytechnic. His work centers on the relationships between sound, noise, time and the visual image, and includes histories of modern music, experimental sound and film. His art employs a multidisciplinary approach incorporating sound, video, sculpture, drawing and painting. Key to all his work is the relationship between time, sound, noise and signal.

He has exhibited in numerous artist-run spaces and public galleries since 1993. He has had solo exhibitions in New Zealand and Australia, including *twilight* at The Physics Room, Christchurch, in 2004. His most recent solo exhibition was at the ATVP Gallery in Sydney. Thompson has had work selected for exhibition at the Exit International Film Festival (2004) in Auckland, and dLux media's *D>ART* exhibition at the Sydney Opera House (2005). He has also exhibited with Scott Donovan Gallery, Sydney (2004), Enjoy Public Art Gallery, Wellington (2008), and the Dunedin Public Art Gallery (2008).

Thompson is a founding member of several New Zealand-based sound improvising ensembles including The Sandoz Lab Technicians and Sleep and Eye. He currently also performs with PSN Electronic and performs solo under the name Expansion Bay. A program of his short films recently toured the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, Enjoy Gallery, Wellington, and The Physics Room, Christchurch. He has released recordings with Spanish Magic, Last Visible Dog, Kning disk, C.PSI.P, and Metonymic. He has played at many invited festivals and is a regular participant in New Zealand's premiere experimental music festival, Lines of Flight.

1   *Morton Feldman Says: Selected Interviews and Lectures 1964-1987*, ed. Chris Villars (London: Hyphen Press, 2006), 32.

2   Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977).

3   Thomas Levin, "'Tones from out of Nowhere:' Rudolf Pfenninger and the Archaeology of Synthetic Sound," in *New Media, Old Media: A History and Theory Reader*, eds Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Thomas Keenan (New York: Routledge, 2006), 45-81 at 49.

4   John Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 69.

5   John Cage, *Fontana Mix* (New York: Henmar Press, 1960).

6   Ibid.

7   James Cook, *Hunt for the Southern Continent*, ed. Philip Edwards (London: Penguin, 2007), 15.

8   Alfred Korzybski, *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics*, 4th ed. (Lakeville, CT: International Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Company, 1973/1933), 58.

9   Ibid., 61.

ACTS OF INTERRUPTION:
DÉRIVES AND *DÉTOURNEMENTS* IN PAINTING

Alexandra Kennedy

Daniel Buren, Photo-souvenir: "5 travaux dans Paris", work *in situ*, Paris, July, 1971. Detail.
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Following on from Yves Klein's 1958 empty gallery show "The Void," in January 1967 a group of painters – Daniel Buren (b. 1938), Oliver Mosset (b. 1944) Michel Parmentier (1938-2000) and Niele Toroni (b. 1937) (collectively known as the BMPT group) – collaborated in "Manifestation No. 1" – an exhibition which consisted of the absence of the artists' work. Intended as a statement of institutional critique – and of painting's role within this – the exhibition consisted of the making of work in the gallery space and the subsequent dismantling of this work on the opening night, with the gallery remaining empty for the duration of the show. This "action" can be understood in terms of the "zero degree" in painting – that is, painting which takes as its subject matter the so-called "death of painting." Each member of the group has also pursued other forms of "zero degree" painting. In Buren's case this extended to the taking of art out of the gallery and into the space of the city in acts of *dérive* and *détournement*. In his conceiving of the city as a place of action, Buren's practice is aligned with the artistic/political actions of the *Internationale Situationniste* (Situationist International or SI), a network of art activists operating in Europe during the 1950s and 1960s. This paper contexualises Buren's practice in relation to other instances of painting which demonstrates the ability to critically reflect on its own history and traditions. There will be a consideration of the relevance of this position as one from which to begin in the current teaching of painting. As such, addressing the concerns of conceptual artists of the 1960s is relevant, and further examples are drawn from contemporary painting practice. Hence a range of varying practices in painting are brought together and identified as participating in forms of "interruption" of painting.

Klein's "void" exhibition, along with the actions of BMPT, are occasions in a history of negative gestures in painting within the Western tradition. For example, from the period of early modernity Kazimir Malevich's (1878-1935) *Black Square* (1915) can be viewed as a zero gesture, reducing painting, as it did, to a simplified geometric form.

And in discussing the work of the Russian avant-garde artist Aleksander Rodchencko (1891-1956), Hal Foster et al. state: "Rodchenko said farewell to this art (painting) after having shown his famous monochrome triptych at the exhibition '5 x 5 = 25' in September 1921: 'I reduced painting to its logical conclusion and exhibited three canvases: red, blue and yellow' he later wrote. 'I affirmed: It's all over'."[1] Other artists through the period of modernity also made various "zero" gestures. Joan Miró (1893-1983) in 1931 stated that his aim was "to destroy everything that exists in painting."[2] Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) proposed the dissolution of all art forms, including painting, into art as environment,[3] and painting lost favour with the Surrealists and Dadaists, whose environments and events – their "life as art" gestures – were precursors to Fluxus, Happenings and Performance Art of the 1960s. These represented a rejection – as did a number of the strategies of Conceptual Art[4] emerging in the 1960s and 1970s – of painting – a field considered to have lost all relevance and all potential for criticality or self-reflexivity.[5] Ann Rorimer said of the group of painters who emerged in the 1960s – and whose practices demonstrate a continuing engagement with the field of painting – that they "introduced new possibilities for painted content in the process of questioning accepted means and methods for its delivery."[6] The practice of these painters can be understood not as an "end" to painting, but in terms of "painting about painting," and represents further instances of a self-critical approach to the histories, conventions and continued act of painting. In the 1960s Ad Reinhardt (1913-67) "reduced" painting to a black square. Nancy Spector suggests that "Reinhardt's writings on art read like a litany of negative aphorisms."[7] Reinhardt, however, did not view these works as declaring any sort of "death of painting." Rather, he "was instead affirming painting's potential to transcend the contradictory rhetoric that surrounded it in contemporary criticism and the increasing commercial influences of the market."[8] Along the same lines, the American artist Robert Ryman said in 1969: "there is never a question of what to paint, but only how to paint." Ryman's practice, based in an engagement with the materials of painting, has as its aim "the ideational capacity of painting to look at itself."[9]

We can therefore identify, by the 1960s, at least three positions for painting practice. Firstly there continued on practices which can be identified as neo-romantic, that is, those practices which in an unquestioning manner rework conventions of the past. Secondly, practices associated with a view that painting was an outmoded field no longer capable of renewal or critical potential, and which therefore should be abandoned. Thirdly, practices aligned with some of the examples I have presented here, ones which sought to find new means, materials and ideals for painting.

In 1965 Buren decided that henceforth he would make only artwork that was comprised of two-toned stripes, 8.7 centimeters wide, for the rest of his career. For Buren this represented a form of institutional critique. This act of repeating the "same act" indefinitely could be viewed as addressing notions of "progress" in art and, in this case, painting in particular. Buren began placing his signature "stripes" throughout the streets of Paris in places normally reserved for advertising. Intended as a critique of, and intervention against, the rapidly increasing amount of advertising occurring throughout the city at the time, these were fugitive, transgressive and ephemeral actions. Simultaneously inverting an established role for painting as an object and also as subject (of analysis and/or experience), such actions turned the question back onto not just the physical location of painting, but also its conceptual position. The legacy of Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) – who viewed the readymade as a negation of painting – and in particular the placing of his readymade *Urinal* (1914) into an art gallery, is clearly evident. For, as Rosalind E. Krauss (b. 1941) suggests, something is "triggered by the object but is somehow not *about* the object."[10] Duchamp's "turning back" – following Krauss' thinking – takes the form of a quandary, one which makes the experience of the artwork not one which is about the linear passage of time – that is, the time taken from seeing to understanding the work – but rather turns it into a question concerning the nature of art itself.

Charissa N Terranova suggests that BMPT's "empty gallery show" – and Buren's further actions – are "performance(s) of sorts" of painting and represent acts of "*détournement.*" Buren's actions were inspired by the work and political action of his contemporaries, the activist group *Internationale Situationniste* (SI),[11] and it is possible to see the tactics of this group being played out in Buren's actions. Political and artistic agitators, Situationist International had their roots in early-twentieth-century European artistic and political avant-gardes. They promoted analysis of the contemporary world from the point of view of everyday life. Of primary interest to the SI was the construction of situations. Guy Debord (1931-94), a key figure in the group, developed the concept of psychogeography, a study

of – and simultaneous intervention into and against – the effects of the urban environment on the individual, both physically and psychologically.[12] Associated with this was Debord's concept of the *dérive*, which he describes as "one of the basic situationist practices … a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiences."[13] In discussing the concept of *détournement* Debord says:

> Any elements, no matter where they are taken from, can be used to make new combinations. The discoveries of modern poetry regarding the analogical structure of images demonstrate that when two objects are brought together, no matter how far apart their original contexts may be, a relationship is always formed. … The mutual interference of two worlds of feeling, or the juxtaposition of two independent expressions, supersedes the original elements and produces a synthetic organization of greater efficacy. Anything can be used.[14]

Following on from Buren's acts of *détournement,* it is possible to identify in the practices of contemporary painters who continue to "make paintings" an understanding of and engagement with this critical legacy. In the 1970s German artist Gerhard Richter (b.1932) began a series of grey monochrome paintings. He commented about the work that it "makes no statement whatsoever … so wretched a start could lead to nothing meaningful."[15] Here, Richter evokes the failure of painterly abstraction that occurred in the late 1960s, as well as wider histories of the failure of painting itself. John Gaiger suggests that Richter has "made the problem of how to continue painting central to his work as an artist, producing a body of work that incorporates a critical and reflexive understanding of the history of painting alongside a close engagement with the forms and structures of the modern, mediatised world."[16]

Such a position could be viewed as a disruption, or interruption, at the level of the meta-discourse of painting. Buren's evocation of the failure of painting took the form of a physical interruption in acts of *détournement*. Consideration is given in the remainder of this paper to artists whose practices demonstrate, like Richter, interruptions in painting whilst continuing to "make paintings." The practices of Luc Tuymans (b. 1958) and Wilhelm Sasnal (b. 1972) can be viewed as representative of painting as a type of *détournement*. Tuymans' art appears as an eliding of the modernist project of the "death of painting" and also the gestures of conceptual artists such as Buren. However, as Emma Dexter states, "his painting betrays an awareness of the discourse of the endgame of painting, which hovers over it like a malevolent angel."[17] Both Tuymans and Sasnal employ strategies, transgressions if you like, against painting and its histories: "new combinations" (to quote Debord), heterogeneous approaches which effect a denial of painting through outcomes which read as anachronisms.

Albert Oehlen (b. 1954) follows on from Tuymans in the manner that his work often has "the look of the amateur," deliberately employing an aesthetic of awkwardness.[18] Patricia Ellis suggests that Oehlen "borrows from the tropes of traditional abstract painting"[19] and also that he is "motivated by the notion of the failure of art, and of painting … suggesting that in this his practice embodies a form of self-critique of painting, reinventing 'its life as a manic zombie state'."[20] Central to Oehlen's practice is his position against historical and established values and hierarchies in painting, and in this he shares with Buren a radical, political motivation and stance. His "interruptions" take the form of contradictions, "figuration … against abstraction, form against anti-form."[21]

Raphael Rubinstein suggests that there is "a tendency in recent (and not so recent) painting … [which] spurns high craft and finish in favour of a more makeshift, seemingly anti-market, esthetic."[22] Jonathon Lasker's (b. 1948) manner, that of having the look of the "deliberately unvirtuosic"[23] and his suggestion that his work "has an idiosyncratic dialogue with the history of painting,"[24] is an example of such an approach. Here the notion of interruption can be understood as a "provisional" position. The bringing together of the field of painting, with all its attendant "problems" – its histories, established conventions (whether it be of the erudite, carefully planned and executed variety or that of the transgressive, anti-establishment positions of the modernist avant-garde), its tropes, its eliding of "strong" painting and the re-investing of this with a sense of imminent failure, a sense of not trying to do anything at all – is a *détournement* in Debord's sense in that there is "the emptying-out of the original meaning of a given form and the refilling of that form with a new meaning."[25] Rubinstein suggests of this approach that it is "casual, dashed-off, tentative, unfinished or self-cancelling,"[26] and that such a position could also be viewed as a turning away from the art market, as a form of institutional critique. Raoul De Keyser's (b. 1930) interruptions – to cite the French curator

Jean-Charles Vergne – take the form of "mistakes, accidents … second tries and failures"[27] in a practice which appears to go against the art market's "appetite for smart, stylish, well executed canvases."[28] Michael Krebber's (b. 1954) paintings, positioned in an ambiguous space between representation and non-representation, are made up of fragments of brushwork, and sometimes shapes on supports which are often made of "kitschy bed linens, or glued newspaper spread onto cursorily painted grounds."[29] Rubenstein suggests that Krebber's work is "ostensibly about painting, [but] uses none of its accepted components."[30]

The work of these artists represents "a conceptual approach to painting that questions the fundamental roots of the medium."[31] Such painting could be viewed as another moment in the discourse of the death of painting. But, as with other instances, it is "not about making last paintings, nor is it about the deconstruction of painting. … It's the finished product disguised as a preliminary stage."[32] It is "major painting masquerading as minor painting."[33] In the concluding paragraph of his essay on provisional painting, Rubenstein suggests that many contemporary painters find themselves in a "minor" position. Here he cites Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, drawing a comparision between the position of many painters today and the position of Kafka they describe in their book *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1986). Kafka found himself in a "minor" position, his cultural position as an outsider making it "impossible" to participate in the established and culturally dominant discourse. At the same time, it was impossible for Kafka to not write. Rubenstein suggests that "recent painters may have found themselves in similarly 'minor' situations; the provisionality of their work is an index of the impossibility of painting and the equally persistent impossibility of not painting."[34]

Alexandra Kennedy is a painter and lecturer in theory and history of art at the Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic, Dunedin, New Zealand. Her practice is located between painting and drawing, between object and process. Kennedy's project is also located within a context which engages with the "zero gesture" in painting, addressing the critical relevancy of painting and its ability to reflect upon and engage with its own histories. Appearing as random marks and erasures on a field which forms part of a larger, potentially limitless field, her works are suggestive of digital junk, voids and empty spaces and can be "read" as being in the middle of something, as process, as becoming. Hence the work makes use of the notion of the "holes in space" created by electronic and digital technologies, reworking them as an "aesthetic of the void." Her practice also encompasses writing on contemporary painting. Recent published articles and conference papers also focus on issues such as the "end of subject matter" and contemporary "zero gestures" in painting.

1   Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, Benjamin HD Buchloh, *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Anti Modernism, Post Modernism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 178.

2   Raphael Rubinstein, "Provisional Painting," *Art in America*, May 2009, 127. Here Rubinstein quotes Anne Umland, *Joan Miró: Painting and Anti-Painting 1927-1937* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2008), 2.

3   Piet Mondrian, "Neo-Plasticism: The General Principle of Plastic Equivalence" (1920), quoted in *Art in Theory 1900-1990: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, eds Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell, 1992/2004), 291. Mondrian states: "The New Plastic … *creates the unity of all the arts*" (author's emphasis).

4   With Conceptual Art a range of practices emerged. These included instruction, performance and documentation, process art, art and language, appropriation and intervention, and engagement with politics, ideology and institutional critique.

5   Thus, the sentiment of wanting to break with the past in a political and social sense extended to the rejection of the forms of art which were perceived to be representative of – and as playing a part in maintaining – an old order.

6   Anne Rorimer, "Painting at Issue after 1965," in her *New Art in the '60s and '70s: Redefining Reality* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001), 37.

7   Nancy Spector, http://painting.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ&sdn=painting&cdn=hobbies&tm=21&f=00&tt=33 &bt=0&bts=0&zu=http%3A//www.guggenheimcollection.org/site/artist_work_md_133A_1.html, accessed 23 August 2009.

8   Ibid.

9   Rorimer, "Painting at Issue after 1965," 42.

10   Rosalind E Krauss, "Forms of Readymade: Duchamp and Brancusi," in her *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, Mass. & London: MIT Press, 1977/1981), 78.

11   Shortlived, the group formed in 1957 and disbanded in 1972. Active in Europe through the 1960s, they aspired to major social and political transformations and promoted the principle that there was no separation between aesthetics and politics. Guy Debord (1931-94), a key figure in the group, published *The Society of the Spectacle* in 1967 and established Situationism as a Marxist critical theory.

12   Psychogeography was defined by Debord as the study of the effects of the environment on the behaviour and emotions of individuals. He also described it as a strategy for intervening in the structures of the city, something designed to take city dwellers out of their usual awareness, or lack of awareness of the environment they live in, with the purpose of creating a new awareness of the urban landscape. There are links in his thinking to groups which promoted a revolutionary attitude to architecture.

13   Guy Debord, "Theory of the Dérive" (1958), quoted in his *Bureau of Public Secrets*, http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/2.derive.htm, accessed 16 August 2009. First published as "Théorie de la dérive" in *Internationale Situationniste* #2 (Paris, December 1958). Here Debord describes *dérive* as "awareness of psychogeographical effects, and … thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll. In a *dérive* one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there."

14   Ibid.

15   Gerhard Richter, "From a Letter to Edy de Wilde, 23 February 1975," in his *The Daily Practice of Painting: Writings 1962-1993*, ed. D Britt, trans. HU Obrist (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1995), 82.

16   John Gaiger, "Post Conceptual Painting: Gerhard Richter's Extended Leave Taking," in *Themes in Contemporary Art*, eds Gill Perry and Paul Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press and the Open University, 2004), 99.

17   Emma Dexter, "The Interconnectedness of All Things: Between History, Still Life and the Uncanny" in *Luc Tuymans*, eds Emma Dexter and Julian Heynen (London: Tate Publishing, 2004), 16.

18   Patricia Ellis suggests that Oehlen's work is "rife with 'mistakes' and 'second tries'." Patricia Ellis, *About Albert Oehlen and his Art*, http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/artists/albert_oehlen_about.html, accessed 4 February 2009.

19   Ibid.

20   Ibid.

21   Ibid.

22   Rubinstein, "Provisional Painting," 123.

23   Jonathan Lasker, quoted in Raphael Rubinstein, "Counter-Resolution," *Art in America*, April 1995, 85.

24   Jonathan Lasker, interviewed by Francesco Bonami in *Flash Art*, 176 (May/June 1994); quoted in *Contemporary Visual Arts*, 28 (2000), 26.

25   Charissa N Terranova, "Performing the Frame: Daniel Buren, Degree Zero Painting and a Politics of Beauty," http://www.stretcher.org/reviews/images/2002/symposia/performingtheframe.html, accessed 24 August 2009.

26   Rubinstein, "Provisional Painting," 123.

27   Ibid. Here Rubinstein quotes Jean-Charles Vergne's view that De Keyser's work "constantly asserts the impossibility of painting free of touch ups, mistakes, accidents, set on laying bare the seams, the second tries and the failures." See Jean-Charles Vergne, "Small things aspirate the world and they become the world" in his *Raoul de Keyser* (Clermont-Ferrand: FRAC Auvergne, 2008), 15.

28   Rubinstein, "Provisional Painting," 124.

29   Ibid, 126-7.

30   Ibid, 126.

31   Liverpool Tate, *Rhinegold: Art from Cologne, Michael Krebber*, 12 June–22 August 2004, http://www.tate.org.uk/liverpool/exhibitions/rhinegold/krebber.htm, accessed 23 August 2009.

32   Rubinstein, "Provisional Painting," 134.

33   Ibid.

34   Ibid, 135.

ADAM DOUGLASS' ALIEN HAPPENING

Francis Plagne

In his project, …*and the Gods made Blue* (2009), peripatetic New Zealand-born artist Adam Douglass has transformed the interior of an abandoned house in Melbourne's inner northern suburbs into a major installation work. From each of the four sides of every one of the house's windows stretched canvases extend into the rooms, evenly and uniformly painted in what has become the artist's signature Malibu Blue. Finding support in the opposite walls, which have been partially destroyed to accommodate them, these canvases radically disrupt the viewer's movement through the house and his or her cognitive map of its layout.

Cautiously navigating one's way to the wreck's back door, taking care to remain hidden from the eyes of the street's inhabitants, one enters the house, torch in hand if night has fallen, only to be immediately confronted with an enormous blue panel. The blue glow of the torchlight through the canvases lends the

Figure 1: Adam Douglass, *...and the Gods made Blue,* Alien Happening/Guerrilla art project 2009. 18 Henty Street, Brunswick, Victoria, Australia.

space an uncanny aspect, an impression strengthened when one realises the rooms are impassable by any method other than crawling. On the floor lies the remaining detritus of the house's last occupants: odd bits of crockery, receipts, photographs, fragments of a credit card, a single cigarette. Having wriggled underneath the canvas, one stands up only to be dazzled by another and, taking to the floor again, the navigation of the house continues in this rhythm, the visitor rising from the floor to be greeted by a canvas either in front of their eyes or beside them, with the spaces between them varying from around 50 centimetres to a couple of metres.

Crawling through the space, one loses any sense of the layout of the room just crossed, and retracing the movements that brought one to the end of the possible pathway through the house (the front door no longer serving as an exit) is a series of actions in no way imbued with a feeling of familiarity. But alongside and in contradiction to this experience of spatial disorientation comes a heightened awareness of the building's design in which, having realised that the blue panels protrude from the house's windows, one comes to see them as concrete results of the house's blueprint, as if the sightlines between window and wall have been solidified. In this respect, Douglass' work performs a similar operation to that of Gordon Matta-Clark's 1974 *Splitting,* in which the artist cut a suburban house in New Jersey in half vertically and then lowered the far end of each half in order to cause the two pieces to come away from each other and display a gap. For Matta-Clark, this work, far from being purely destructive, "reveals information" about the building by making "the space more articulated."[1] Through the physical operation of probing and making visible the structures beneath the surfaces of the
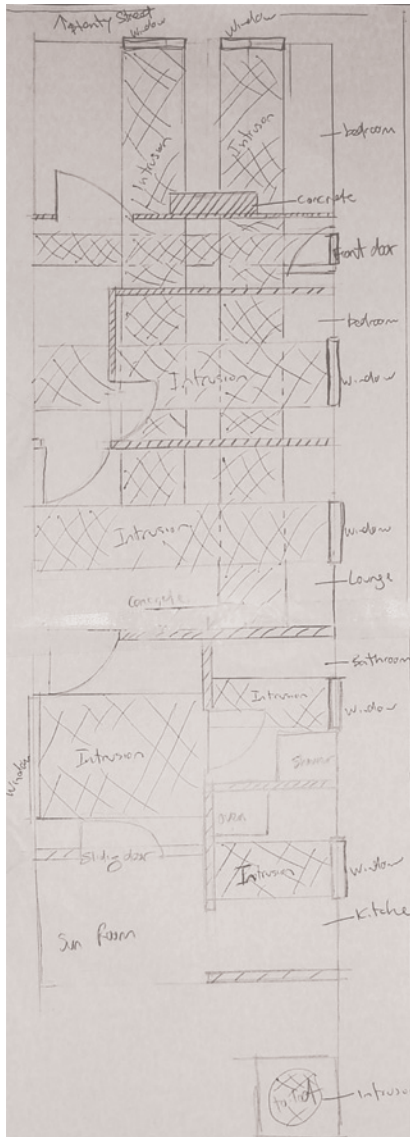
Figure 2: Adam Douglass, Map of the property, including intrusions. ...*and the Gods made Blue,* 2009. 18 Henty Street, Brunswick, Victoria, Australia.

house, the connection between its segments become visible, both architecturally and through providing a self-reflective moment in which one glimpses a relationship between the building's physical space and its social use. To use Viktor Shklovsky's terminology, we could see the house has been "enstranged" in that the cutting "changes its form without changing its essence"[2] and, in so doing, allows a new light to be cast on both its physical structure and use.

Neither Douglass nor Matta-Clark are interested in using their work simply as a springboard to a Situationist-lineage critique of residential architecture as "fortified exploitation," a translation "into spatial terms … of the fundamental principles of alienation and constraint" which govern late capitalism.[3] Matta-Clark stated quite directly that his work was invested in something "more elusive" than demonstrating "an alternate attitude to … the attitudes that determine containerisation of useable space,"[4] and Douglass is more likely to relate his blue monochrome invasion to the sublime expanses of sea and sky than to any social project. What interests Douglass is less a critique of architecture and urbanism than the creation of a situation in which the sublime and the quotidian, the metaphysical and the material, can, at least metaphorically, meet directly.

While the histories of religion, mysticism and mythology provide bountiful examples of the way this meeting has been conceptualised in culture, Douglass chooses to place his work in relation to what he sees as a contemporary expression of the same impulse: science fiction. The paintings in his 2007-8 *Tomahawk* series demonstrate one way of coming to grasps with the conjunction of metaphysical meaning and material reality. Referring to such iconic sci-fi pop culture as *Star Wars* and *Planet of the Apes*, yet in a manner so vague as to be almost subliminal, these paintings use their fantastical subjects as formal devices — less allusive representations than motivations for a playful oscillation between painted materiality and the signifying potential of mark-making. *Flaaaaaa Kaaaaacctt Flaa* (2007) for example, invites us to read a hole ripped in the canvas as the weapon wielded by a floating white mass, gesturing toward both the relationship between sci-fi's love of concepts such as "antimatter" and the theological quandary over how to conceptualise a God who intervenes in the physical

Figure 3: Adam Douglass, Legs behind dissecting intrusions, *...and the Gods made Blue,* 2009.

Figure 4: Adam Douglass, two intrusions, front bedroom. *...and the Gods made Blue*, 2009. Photo credit: Alister Mew.

world, yet whose being is supra-material, and the cut and punctured abstract canvases of Lucio Fontana. In these paintings, Douglass marks the intertwining of the quotidian and the sublime on two levels: first, in his use of motifs taken from popular science fiction which, stripped of any specificity in content or context, float in blue expanses which seem to stress their cosmological resonances; and secondly, through their affirmation of the figurative potential of blunt materiality, as in Francis Bacon's theory of affective yet "non-illustrative" painting,[5] cited approvingly by Douglass, in which, ideally, the original "subject" of a painting survives in the completed work only as an emotional response in the viewer to what appears to be an essentially abstract work.

...and the Gods made Blue, described by Douglass as a "transcendental/apocalyptic sci-fi happening of sorts," presents a more oblique engagement with science fiction. Early supporters of the scientific romances of HG Wells often pointed out that their success lay not only in their conformity with existing scientific knowledge, but in the effort expended by Wells to make the everyday background to the fantastical events plausible. In this respect, *The War of the Worlds* of 1898 is his masterpiece: Wells has his Martian invasion begin in the Surrey countryside between Horsell, Ottershaw and Woking, and proceeds to chronicle the many shades of human response to this remarkable happening in the manner of a realist novelist.[6] A review by John St Loe Strachey in a contemporary edition of the *Spectator* goes to great lengths of praise in explicating this aspect of Wells' talent:

> As a rule, those who pass beyond the poles and deal with non-terrestrial matters take their readers to the planets or the moon. Mr Wells does not 'err so greatly' in the art of securing the sympathy of his readers. He brings the awful creatures of another sphere to Woking Junction, and places them with all their abhorred dexterity, in the most homely familiar surroundings. A Martian dropped in the centre of Africa would be completely unendurable. One feels, with the grave-diggers in *Hamlet*, that they are all mad and bad and awful there, or, if not, it is no great matter.[7]

Despite bearing the unmistakable imprint of colonial racism, Strachey's review is instructive in allowing us to see what it is that Douglass' obstructed suburban house and the best science fiction have in common: the shared conviction that a more authentic contact with the sublime or supernatural can be made if these are placed within an everyday context.

Figure 5: Adam Douglass, dissecting intrusion, projected from door *...and the Gods made Blue*, 2009.

Figure 6: Adam Douglass, *Flaaaaaa Kaaaccct Flaaa*, 2007.

As Giorgio Agamben has argued, the art gallery or museum is an "ideal space" in which an attempt is made to neutralise the creative principle, radically alien to the viewer, that has come to define art in modernity: the art gallery is "like a perfectly self-sufficient world where the canvases resemble the sleeping princess of the fairy tale."[8] The impact of Douglass' work depends on the viewer not encountering it in the space of the art gallery, a space defined by its attempt to neutralise the alien creative principle that has eventuated its construction. The sublime intrusion of Douglass' canvases (almost appearing, in keeping with the sci-fi imagery he favours, as if the water which runs through suburban pipes had been freed and then solidified into a hitherto unknown substance – both alien and acting as a reminder that pipe water, usually thought of purely instrumentally, eventually flows into the boundless ocean beloved of nineteenth-century painters) would lose all its attraction in a gallery, a space where poetic gestures, albeit neutralised, are the order of the day. Like the Wellsian scientific romance, …*and the Gods made Blue* can only succeed if it takes quotidian space as its setting.

As we have seen, although Douglass has a preference for a raw visual style, the existence of …*and the Gods made Blue* outside the gallery system is not motivated simply by aesthetic concerns on the artist's part, but is chiefly inspired by the desire to create appropriate conditions for the reception of the work by its viewers. Declining to install his panels in a gallery and refraining from any official promotion of his project, Douglass has ensured that news of his piece will spread by other than the normal channels. In his *When Faith Moves Mountains* of 2004, Francis Alÿs organised 500 Peruvian volunteers to "move" a sand dune by a few inches. Commenting on the work, he wrote that, "in our era of the ceaseless reproduction of images … the action hopes to … momentarily restitute an oral community"[9] through its mythical resonances, encouraging gossip and rumour. Alÿs and Douglass' works are united in a shared aspiration to transcend the artwork and become myth, but while Alÿs hesitates and capitulates to the personality-driven art of modernity when he organises his performance as an auteur might direct a film, the participants merely another material, Douglass' work allows for the possibility of experiences in which viewers may have no idea about the author behind the work, experiencing it as akin to an alien invasion, which may then be mythologised in terms entirely unconnected to art.

To avoid advertising and the "ceaseless reproduction of images" in favour of rumour and myth is indeed, as Alÿs sees his work, to attempt some sort of restitution of "an oral community," and it is important to see that this impulse is not necessarily invested in any sort of sham primitivism. As Agamben argues in a commentary on the work of Guy Debord, the ultimate goal of spectacle-capitalism is not simply the exploitation of labour power but also, "and above all," the "alienation of language itself, of the linguistic and communicative nature of human beings, of that *logos* in which Heraclitus identifies the Common."[10] In the ceaseless media traffic of the spectacle, modern humanity experiences its own communicative potential as something ungraspable and foreign. In its most profound aspect, Douglass has situated his work outside of the artistic sphere in order to allow for a fleeting communicative network to spring up autonomously around it, a utopian model leaving the discursive frame of the art world behind while retaining an essential link with poetic wonder.

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Figure 7: Adam Douglass, oven and intrusion, *...and the Gods made Blue*, 2009.

1   Gordon Matta-Clark and Liza Bear, "Splitting the Humphrey Street Building," in *Gordon Matta-Clark*, ed. Corinne Diserens (London: Phaidon, 2003), 165-8.

2   See Viktor Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, trans. Benjamin Sher (London: Dalkey Press Archive, 1991), 6. While this phrase originally appears in a discussion of Tolstoy's "Shame," the movement of thought here is evidently similar to that in Matta-Clark's work which would move him to state that, while the cutting was done "to make the space more articulated … the identity of the building as a place, as an object, is strongly preserved, enhanced." Bear and Matta-Clark, "Splitting the Humphrey Street House," 168.

3   See the anonymous "Critique of Urbanism," originally published in 1961, reprinted in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*, ed. Tom McDonough (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 108-13.

4   Bear and Matta-Clark, "Splitting the Humphrey House," 164.

5   See Walter Heke's catalogue text for Adam Douglass' exhibition *Tomahawk* (Dunedin: Blue Oyster Project Space, 2008), n.p.

6   Wells' intention of contrasting the two spheres of an alien invasion incomprehensible to his characters and the everyday life which forms its stage is at times spelled out with remarkable clarity: "But the trouble," his narrator writes, reflecting on a moment of peace during the invasion, "was the blank incongruity of this serenity and the swift death flying yonder, not two miles away." HG Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (London: Penguin, 2005), 32.

7   Cited in *HG Wells: the Critical Heritage*, ed. Patrick Parrinder (London: Routledge, 1972), 64.

8   Giorgio Agamben, *The Man Without Content*, trans. Georgia Albert (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 31.

9   Francis Alÿs, *When Faith Moves Mountains* (Madrid: Turner, 2005), 158.

10 Giorgio Agamben, "Marginal Notes on *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*," in his *Means Without End: Notes on Politics*, trans. Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 82.

AN ARRESTING AFFECT

Catharine Hodson

The verb "arrest" includes the definitions "to seize; to catch and to fix attention; to bring to a standstill."[1] In my experience, art at its most potent does all of that and on many occasions has "pinned me to the spot." In 2002 I learnt that an image that had previously seized and caught my attention was so fixed in my memory that it influenced my response to a crisis. The crisis was illness. To be urgently treated for breast cancer is quite shocking and, when compounded by serious post-surgical complications, day-to-day functioning is reduced to the visceral and "a kind of incoherence."[2] As I began to emerge out of that "country of the ill,"[3] I found myself trying to remember whether I had ever seen nurses represented in contemporary art with the qualities of extraordinary warmth and openness that I was experiencing in the hospital.

What I recalled was *Eight Student Nurses*, 1966,[4] a painted version of newspaper photographs by the German artist Gerhard Richter. An accompanying essay revealed that all the nurses represented had been murdered. The "wounding"[5] of this work lay for me in the studied "class photograph" look of the young nurses with their bouffant hairstyles and their poised, contained quality – in stark contrast to their terrible end. These "yearbook" images contained none of the attentive concern and purposeful energy that I was observing at the hospital, but nor was that Richter's intention. I decided that I would *appropriate* and recontextualise his painting to convey some of the tenderness and humour, warmth and vitality I was encountering. Reflecting back now, seven years later, I realise I was also making an assertion about life.

Roland Barthes, in *Camera Lucida*, discusses the power of the photograph in terms of "punctum," defined as that "which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)."[6] This initial process of "wounding" could be described as an "arresting affect," with a contained poignancy or "disturbance"[7] that lingers long after. Barthes also notes that the punctum is often "revealed after the fact" when the signifier, the photograph, is no longer in front of a spectator, but when the spectator "thinks back on it."[8]

In his book, Barthes looked for the punctum in each individual photograph discussed and did not examine associated essays or additional material. My interest lay in extending Barthes' notion of the punctum to include consideration of images within a broader context, one embracing other images, artifacts and writings. Wanting to explore some of the multilayered resonances of illness and the clinic, I began to think on the possibility of creating a series of works that would situate my version of nurses alongside other stories, in both visual and word form.

To create my portraits, I sought the involvement of the ward nurses with whom I was having a substantial connection. I explained my idea, promising to contact them before I began developing a final work and photographed only those who were keen to be involved. It was a hilarious photo shoot: the patient manoeuvring a manual SLR camera around a hospital gown and wound drainage paraphernalia, and the nurses on ward duties making a quick detour into my curtained cubicle for a rapid portrait shot.

Photographing the nurses was the start of a project that, two and a half years later, culminated in an installation based around the world of the hospital – *Touching the Unthinkable*. This essay considers the four underpinning strategies made in this work: appropriation, collaboration, installation and metonymy.

Figure 1: *Nurse, Touching the Unthinkable*, 2005, The Suter Art Gallery (photograph by Daniel Allen).

Figure 2: *Touching the Unthinkable,* 2005, The Suter Art Gallery, Te Aratoi o Whakatu, Nelson (photograph by Daniel Allen).

PROPAGATION

The *Nurse* photographic image was more than the first element; it was the stimulus for developing a new working methodology. After commencing this image I began to muse, in a very spontaneous, undirected way, about other artwork in relation to the condition of breast cancer, its treatment, the hospital and what the participants – patients, their supporters and the medical professionals – said and did. I was astonished by my spontaneous response to this crisis. It surprised me that I was thinking about art that I had seen, studied and read about. I did not expect to be generating ideas for making new work. Considering my long involvement with the arts it makes sense, but at the time I was amazed because I felt so ill.

An important early stimulus was the hospital cubicle – a single room with a solitary bed surrounded by curtains that I was transferred to when I developed critical complications. The light there was distinctive: a wall of windows was covered by pastel curtains which filtered the sun and heat and tinted the colour in the room. Under these conditions flowers dried rapidly and, not wanting to throw them away, I collected them with their ribbons and cellophane in an adjacent cupboard. Fascinated by the discards from medical treatment and the words the staff used to talk with me and one another, I began to collect them, too; words in a notebook, pottles and syringe tops in the drawer. There was no plan initially, just a gathering of materials and words that I continued long after I left the curtained cubicle.

As my treatment progressed though post-surgery and chemotherapy, my musings ranged from work I had seen in galleries to work I knew through reproduction. Sometimes there were overt links – such as Richter's nurses, Fridha Kahlo's bed and Robert Rauschenberg's quilt. On other occasions, the connections were more oblique – for example, contemporary artists working with flora or light or everyday objects such as Anya Gallacio, Bill Culbert and Rosemarie Trockel. Later that year, I had recovered enough to travel on a scholarship to London and saw Tracey Emin's bed. Initially, this work and many others were filtered through a part-intuitive, part-deliberated process. After a while, I began to feel and think my way into a response. Michael Foucault describes *appropriation*

as a process of "linking," as if through a "medium of propagation."[9] My "adoption of preexisting elements into a new artwork,"[10] of quoting art, museum and medical modalities, was to provide an entry point into a discussion about the practice of art in relation to the clinic. This process also provided a conceptual, aesthetic and formal vocabulary.

I have always had an interest in the traditional genres of landscape, portrait and still life. In the installation, I use this knowledge: landscapes become "windows," photographs and audio are portraits, still life finds form in the arrangements of vessels and in "table

Figure 3: *Bed* from *Bed Cubicle, Touching the Unthinkable*, 2005, The Suter Art Gallery (photograph by Daniel Allen).

games." In *Test*, a balancing game is transformed into a tower of fragile ceramic blocks. The commercial wooden blocks are printed with a trademark but, in my pale green ceramic version, the words "balance," "still," "life" and "luck" are embossed. Through these words I make links with the original game's philosophy, the vanitas still-life tradition, and scenarios around the medical condition.

Vessels are also a significant motif and I work with them in the form of hats, jars, vases and hospital equipment. In one of the corridors, two long light-box shelves carry rows of plastic pill pottles, metonymically conjuring up the quantities of pharmaceuticals delivered by the nurses. The title I have chosen for the piece, *Carry*, is double-edged. Like many of the installation titles it is both verb and noun, acknowledging both the active and the passive state. *Carry* denotes the activity, but metaphorically it reverberates with both the carrying of anxieties, the tribulations and risks of the illness, and with the support inherent in the actions of the carers.

I extend this signification when considering the form of this work and its partner piece, *Hold*. The title *Hold* alludes to the process of the patient "holding herself together" and of "being held [together]" by the caring staff. As rows of plastic vessels on shelves, that are also light boxes, they are of themselves pottles and bowls yet they can be seen to stand for the multiples of necessary equipment in the ward treatment room. They also link back to the works of Bill Culbert and Jim Speers, whose light works I had contemplated in exhibitions years before.

These allusions to *Light Art* and *Minimalism* I explore in other works: the square wall lights in *Day Room* and the exact rows of circular syringe compression pads on a board in *Foyer*. In her art practice, Rosemary Trockel used a stove-top motif to navigate between sign systems. Gregory Burke described these works as shifting between "display platform, minimal sculpture and ethnographic sample." This "mutability factor"[11] is a strategy that I also employ in the selection of many of the elements of *Touching the Unthinkable*. I locate wall lights in *Day Room* as a low, glowing ambience suitable for sitting and listening without feeling "on show" in the show. At the same time, they refer to abstract paintings exploring the square, and fluorescent tubes mimicking the painting. They are also very similar to the hospital interior-decorated wall-light fittings that were installed during the hospital refurbishment that was occurring while I was undergoing treatment.

Figure 4: *Hold, Touching the Unthinkable*, 2005, The Suter Art Gallery (photograph by Daniel Allen).

A COLLABORATIVE CONTEXT

Although my initial ideas were in response to my own unexpected hospitalisation, I quickly developed a greater curiosity about the experiences of others in the world of the clinic. As I grew stronger, this circle of contacts extended. My ideas evolved through an ongoing communication with the communities linked by the disease: patients, families, friends and the professionals who diagnose and treat the condition. I began to ask the patients, their families and friends, as well as medical people, if they would write about or allow me to record their perspectives. In all these groups, some individuals were particularly intrigued by this nascent project and were keen to gather the quantities of medical discards or personal mementoes that I needed. Others made insightful observations or asked telling questions, which stimulated the creation of more work. Some offered additional materials and or gave me access to equipment "in case I might find something useful." One such offer provided the hospital trolleys on which I place the games of *Check*, *Touch* and *Test*. In all aspects of developing and realising the work, and engaging with the gallery visitor, relationships are central to this project.

In 1991, the American art critic, lecturer and writer Suzi Gablik, in her book *The Reenchantment of Art,* discussed art as a social practice and her aspiration that "relationship become the centre of contemporary art."[12] She wrote about artists working with communities to create value-based work. Citing examples of shared ideas, insights and local material, Gablik illustrated the expressive richness of collaboration in the production of art. She concluded that art is completed through relationship; that in making connections a sense of community is created.[13] As the *Touching the Unthinkable* project evolved, I noticed that many of the participants, including myself as the artist/co-coordinator, shifted from our singular *Weltanschauung*[14] to a working in an "expanded context,"[15] seeking "to share another's plight, to make their conditions our own, seeing art as a "relational dynamic."[16]

Figure 5: Southern *Corridor, Touching the Unthinkable*, 2005, The Suter Art Gallery (photograph by Daniel Allen).

In 1998 Nicholas Bourriaud, a French art curator, wrote *Relational Aesthetics*. He also proposed that contemporary art practice could produce "relations between people and the world."[17] While Gablik emphasises the interrelationships of artist and community working together in the production of art, Bourriaud's particular focus is the interconnection between audience and the artist. This relationship is predicated on the aesthetic objects and experiences the artist creates. Bourriaud writes of collaboration in terms of the beholder's "emotional, behavioural and historical response," involving a substantial "time of manipulation, understanding, decision-making, going beyond … looking … to formulate … meaning."[18] Bourriaud's insights are particularly pertinent in relation to the final form of *Touching the Unthinkable*, with its elements selected for their experiential resonance, interactivity and layers of meaning.

I read *The Reenchantment of Art* in 1993, but my own art practice did not extend to working with other people until I felt compelled to make the work that culminated in *Touching the Unthinkable* in 2005. By then I had forgotten about Gablik's writings, consciously at least, and only remembered after the work was exhibited in The Suter Art Gallery/ Te Aratoi o Whakatu, where a visitor introduced me to Nicholas Bourriaud's ideas and I began to read on relational practices. I have no doubt that Gablik's writing was subliminally underpinning my choices, but working with those three distinct yet overlapping communities of patients, supporters and medical professionals also made sense, because dealing with cancer isn't just an isolated experience – it involves many others.

AN ACTOR IN THE "PAINTING"

In 2000, the year before my diagnosis, I encountered Ilya and Emilia Kabakov's *Monument to a Lost Civilization* at the Sydney Biennale. Ilya Kabakov describes his approach to installation as one of creating "a painting that the viewer falls into,"[19] mobilising "the wheel of associations" through a narrative akin to the "novelist tradition"[20] or that of theatre, with the artist being the "director" of a "well structured play."[21] He refers to the viewer as an "actor" and describes the effect of the "total installation" as one of "engulfment" in which the actor is not just surrounded by a physical scenario, but is "submerged" by the work."[22]

When I began this project, I conceived and developed individual pieces. My decision to integrate the separately evolving elements in an installation emerged gradually. This came about as recollection and research, and shared information and materials began to coalesce. Once I focused on the notion of "the clinic," all the elements and the activities of the participants were drawn to that effect. The final result is a series of spaces – *Waiting Room, Day Room*, *Foyer*, *Examination Space, Curtained Bed Cubicle, Flower Room* and *Corridors* – all "containing" objects and stories of the communities that inhabit that space. Like interweaving plots, their narratives play out directly and symbolically.

In *Day Room*, it is the patients that tell their own stories. I set up a private space in the corner of "the clinic," with comfortable chairs and soft lighting. Headphones operate collectively as speakers to create an atmospheric audio chatter common to a hospital day room. Individually they reveal a specific voice and tale and the encounter-er can listen, as one would with a friend.

"My oncologist explained the treatment options, saying it was my choice and that it wasn't appropriate for him to recommend one path over another. But then he laughed, and so did I as he went on to say: 'If I was at a cocktail party and talking about your case, I would tell my colleagues that the best treatment option is …'"[23]

Figure 6: *Day Room, Touching the Unthinkable,* 2005, The Suter Art Gallery (photograph by Daniel Allen).

In *Waiting Room*, I place sky-landscape paintings on the wall, and chairs with a magazine table for children's books and a publication entitled *You Are Not Alone*.[24] This booklet carries the writings of family members and health professionals. My intent is that the installation visitor/"actor" or, as Arthur Danto describes, the "encounter-er," will engage with the work on its own terms and not merely as a visual, distancing experience.[25] They will also become actors in the installation "painting"[26] as they sit and read the writers' accounts.

In the booklet, the 19-year-old son of a patient describes the impact of his mother's diagnosis: "A form of disconnected pragmatism set in that didn't seem to lift for days. Work remained an escape but it was still pretty hellish."[27]

Figure 7: *Waiting Room, Touching the Unthinkable*, 2005, The Suter Art Gallery (photograph by Daniel Allen).

A GP reveals: "A lump pushes up under my fingers. Not a 'was that something' sort of lump but a 'this shouldn't be here' certainty. Sometimes this catches me with such surprise I feel a physical lurch in my chest."[28]

PLOT FUNCTION

Ilya and Emilia Kababov construct their installations as if they were a novel or a theatrical production in which all the elements "have a 'plot' function."[29] Many of their works represent places and characters through "the ephemera they have left behind."[30] They set up collections of articles to stage a narrative or to "mimic museums."[31]

In *Touching the Unthinkable*, my approach to telling stories through objects and the juxtapositions of furniture and equipment is informed by the Kabakovs' work. The unity of my installation lies in the matrix of "the clinic;" however, the pieces are disparate in their narrative and conceptual resonances, as well as their source, temporality and aesthetic form. Hospital materials range from state-of-the-art clinical elements, such as IV equipment and syringe pads to plastic ward jugs, to trolleys and a bed that have seen better days. These elements invoke both a high-tech approach to medical treatment and a health system with insufficient funding or hospital memories as a "highly familiar past."[32] Other items are "personal" or domestic such as beads, hair, wishbones or dried flowers. Every element presents its actuality but also contains an emblematic function through the inevitable, unavoidable wheels of association. Their symbolic language is that of metaphor and metonym.

In a vitrine I formally display back-lit prostheses, circled by necklaces that I invented. "Museumised, even ethnologised,"[33] this layout presents the taxonomy of the necklaces, to be "examined" for their history and their symbolism. Antonio Barcelona, citing his cognitive linguistic colleagues, defines metonym as a mapping within a schema or complex domain structure.[34] Under this definition of metonym, the small balls of hair I use in the necklace titled *Drop* can be seen to represent the heads of hair that falls out as a result of chemotherapy. The lead weights in the *Shield* necklace can stand for the lead template that protects healthy tissue from radiotherapy. At the same time, both the hair balls and the lead sinkers mimic necklace beads.

But I also work with other signs – the *metaphorical* resonance. According to Barcelona, a visual metaphor has the capacity to inject one sign with the meanings of another; it is a mapping between two domains that are not part of the same matrix.[35] By using lead in the necklace, I metaphorically link the characteristic poison of lead to the poison of both cancer and chemotherapy. The actual elemental weight of lead extends to the heaviness of the condition –

Figure 8: *Shield* Necklace, *Touching the Unthinkable*, 2005, The Suter Art Gallery (photograph by Daniel Allen).

the psychological, physiological and economic impact on patients and families. These metaphors are underscored by the teardrop shape of the metal and the actual function of the lead as "a sinker."

Through the ten quite different prosthesis and conceptual necklaces I make implicit and explicit links to the body. These references to the breast [bone] and narratives around femininity and sexuality draw together the patient, partner and professional. And yet there is a dislocating too, as their location in the vitrine invokes the "scientific specimen and artifact,"[36] and the inclusion of medical equipment in many of the necklaces disrupts the sense of intimacy with the realities of clinical examination and treatment.

RESONANCES

The photograph of the ward nurses which was the first element of *Touching the Unthinkable* was developed in response to a personal medical experience, the enthusiasm of clinical staff and my recollection of a work by Gerhard Richter. It also involved engaging with a title and text and reflection on the notion of roles in the clinical environment. The potency of Richter's work stimulated me to think on Roland Barthes' concept of the punctum, focusing on three aspects, that "which pricks me … bruises me … and is poignant to me;" the punctum's metonymic qualities, the "power of expansion;"[37] and its quality as "an addition: it is what I add … and *what is nonetheless already there.*"[38]

After the initial photographs, I continued to explore my responses and those of others to the hospital experience in a series of works which were largely based around appropriations of art, its modalities and the clinical environment. My approach to appropriation was both intuitive and as "revealed after the fact" – when the signifier was no longer visible, but when I thought "back on it."[39]

The outcome – *Touching the Unthinkable* – is an installation in which I explore the representation and coding of illness in the context of contemporary art practice, community engagement and metaphorical and metonymic communication. As a relational artwork, I pivot the installation around relationships – that is, the flux between contributors and encounter-ers. In this immersive environment, those who directly engage with the interactive activities of sitting and listening or reading both connect with the work and become part of the work.

Through the appropriated spaces and elements of *Touching the Unthinkable* I merge the actual with the invented, the clinical with the art world, and the touchable with the unthinkable. Just as Barthes did not reveal the photograph of his dead mother, who lies at the core of his notion of the punctum, I do not reveal the unthinkable. My intent is to conjure a wide interpretative realm and engagement. Written responses in the comments book reveal that diversity of this connection and interpretation: "transforming," "comforting," "provoking," "honouring," "disquieting," "reassuring."[40, 41] By operating in different registers, the work facilitates "meaning to arise through individual affective and verbal connections."[42] These "various communication processes" act "as tools … to link individuals and human groups together"[43] and invoke "the intangible,"[44] that which I venture to call the "punctum" of the work.

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1   Catherine Schwarz, *The Chambers Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Chambers Harrap, 1993), 1563.

2   Anatole Broyard, cited in David B Morris, *Illness and Culture in the Postmodern Age* (California: University of California Press, 1998), 22.

3   Ibid., 21-49.

4   Gerhard Richter, in Ronald Nasgaard, *Gerhard Richter: Paintings* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 57.

5   Ibid., 41.

6   Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 27.

7   Ibid, 51.

8   Ibid., 53.

9   Robert Nelson, s.v. "Appropriation," citing Michael Foucault, in *Critical Terms in Art History*, eds Robert Nelson and Richard Schiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 118.

10   Ibid.

11   Gregory Burke, "Figuring it Out: Re-collections of Rosemarie Trockel," in Rosemarie Trockel and Gregory Burke, *Rosemarie Trockel* (Wellington: Wellington City Art Gallery, 1993), 17.

12   Suzi Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1991), 96-114.

13   Ibid, 158.

14   For a relevant definition, see Allan Bullock and Stephen Trombley, *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (London: Harper Collins, 1988), 220.

15   Gablik, *Reenchantment*, 9.

16   Ibid., 106.

17   Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Paris: Les presses du reel, 2002), 42.

18   Ibid., 59.

19   Ilay Kabakov, in Boris Groys, David A Ross and Iwona Blawick, *Ilya Kabakov* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 128.

20   Ibid., 54.

21   Claire Bishop, *Installation Art: A Critical History* (London: Tate Publishing, 2005), 14.

22   Ilay Kababov, in ibid., 14.

23   Katie Sellers in a 40-minute recording in *Touching the Unthinkable.*

24   Catharine Hodson, Lydia Wevers, Melissa da Souza and Andy Clover, *You Are Not Alone* (Nelson: Stump Creek Publishing, 2005).

25   Arthur Danto, "Hegel, Biedermeier and the Intractable Avant-Garde," in Linda Weintraub, *Art on the Edge and Over: Searching for Art's Meaning in Contemporary Society 1970s-1990s* (Litchfield, CT: Art Insights,1996), 16.

26   Groys et al., *Ilya Kabakov*, 128.

27   Son of a patient in Hodson et al., *You Are Not Alone*, 4-5.

28   GP in ibid., 3.

29   Bishop, *Installation Art*, 14.

30   Ibid., 17.

31   Ibid.

32   Kabakov in Bishop, *Installation Art*, 17.

33   Burke, *Figuring it Out*, 15.

34   George Lakoff, Ronald Langacker, Zoltan Koveceses and Gunter Raddon, cited in Antonio Barcelona, *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads: A Cognitive Perspective (Trends in Linguistics)* (New York: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 4.

35   George Lakoff, Mark Johntone and Mark Turner, cited in Barcelona, *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads*, 6.

36   Burke, *Figuring it Out*, 14.

37   Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 45.

38   Ibid., 55

39   Ibid., 53.

40   Contributors, *Comments Book*, "Touching the Unthinkable," 2005, The Suter Art Gallery/ Te Aratoi o Whakatu. For example, the quilt of cards was described by one viewer as a "patchwork" of love.

41   Judy Crowe, *The Nelson Evening Mail*, 27 June 2005, wrote of "the dedication and care … of medical teams"

42   Bishop, *Installation Art*, 16.

43   Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 43.

44   Ibid., 55.

Essay

AWKWARD BEDFELLOWS?
VISUAL ART AND ANALOGY

Peter Belton

"Seeing is about being struck that something is, or can be, connected to something else."[1]

This essay is my response to reading "Art After Philosophy" (Joseph Kosuth, 1969). Kosuth tells us that, to be meaningful, art must necessarily make statements and that these declamations tend to present as tautologies. My argument starts with the proposition that analogy has no resemblance to tautology.

In his essay "Art After Philosophy" Joseph Kosuth uses the terms "use" and "function" throughout his text. My understanding is that art was, and is, circumscribed by its function. Function defined the value of such traditional practices as architecture, sculpture, painting and printmaking. Functions have their rationale in socially prescribed behaviours such as rituals and served the necessary preservation and transmission of cultural memory. Functions were understood to be reflections of belief and therefore required defence. In this paradigm art was, and is, central to the existence and survival of culture, as culture is to society. That there were – in the interests of continuity and the transmission of ideas – conventions of art practice was central to this defence. These conventions were enveloped in forms which came to be understood as aesthetic signifiers and signs.

Kosuth's argument is that aesthetics should be separated from art in our thinking, because aesthetics deals with *opinions* on perception of the world in general. Historically, any philosophical discussion referring to beauty and taste had been bound to discuss art as well. Kosuth states that any claim to a conceptual connection between art and aesthetics did not, however, stand up to philosophical scrutiny. The reason, he said, why the notion of a connection was never seriously challenged before recent times (Duchamp) was "not only that the morphological characteristics of art perpetuated the continuity of this error, but also because the apparent functions of art (depiction of religious themes, portraiture of aristocrats, etc.) used art to cover up art."[2]

Kosuth's rejection of art being defined through the language of "formalist" aesthetics fudges the point that formalism never was or is an end in itself. Formalism was, and is, essentially a linguistic means to an end, or ends. In the light of this, his argument that (historically) the apparent functions of art used art to cover up art also opens up questions about means to ends. Morphology and formalisation are means to the communication and interpretation of ideas. We can recognise an artist's intent because … .

Curiously, having asserted that "if one is questioning the nature of painting one cannot be questioning the nature of art," Kosuth concedes in the same paragraph that "painting is a kind of art."[3] What is he trying to say? Painting is a transactional process in which we are cognisant of traditions of working with media and with histories of ideas. Value and identity are, and were, established with reference to these working traditions and to the ideas which give them form. Any art product may challenge tradition, yet the point of its production is that it is culturally situated.

Kosuth: "In fact it is Marcel Duchamp whom we can credit with first giving art its identity. One can certainly see a tendency toward this self-identification in art beginning with Manet and Cézanne through to Cubism, but their

works were timid and ambiguous by comparison with Duchamp."[4] How is this really so? And how come the apparent ambiguity in Manet and Cézanne is deprecated? In both cases, the ambiguities presented were to be found in the *way* seeing was presented. There were ambiguities of structure which destabilised concrete form and brought the viewer to question the representation of space and, by association, time. The idea was seen as something to be found through a negotiation of seeing. In Cézanne's case the declamatory has been replaced by the question: "is this what I see?" Cézanne's shift from declamation was not a timid response to an idea about representation, it was revolutionary.

"Art operates through a logic," we are told, "derived from the formal consequences of our definitions of Art."[5] Hence Kosuth's pronouncement that art must become tautological. If art – as Cézanne demonstrates – proposes questions, is it necessarily tautological? Do propositions, by definition, amount to tautologies? Maybe, in the "speak" of academics, they become so. Kosuth sees the "unreality" of realist art as due to its being framed as an art proposition in synthetic terms; a clever, if facile, *entendre* by which he claims the realist paradigm in art must be verified empirically, as in "it looks like, so it must be." He asserts that realism's synthetic state does not return one to a dialogue with the larger framework of questions about the nature of art.[6] In his argument, the artist must be an analyst who is not directly concerned with the physical properties of things, but rather with the way in which art is concerned with conceptual growth and how propositions are seen to be logically following their growth. And, he goes on to say that, as these propositions are identified as linguistic, but not factual, they do not describe the behaviour of physical or mental objects. Rather, they "express definitions of art or the formal consequences of any definition of art."[7]

If any definition of art presents as a tautology, this suggests a practice which cannot risk the "expressive" heresies suggested by synthesis or analogy. Kosuth's dismissal of Pollock's self-expression "because those kinds of subjective meanings are useless to anyone other than those involved with him personally"[8] ignores the fact that we all have those "me too" moments of recognition and relating to things. Indeed, connecting is what makes us human. This leads me to look at analogy in relation to the process of visualising as a function of being.

If metaphor is explicit, at least in its structural resemblance to its referent, analogy is its loose child inasmuch as there are "spaces" of ambiguity created through the language used. In visual art this amounts to saying that the "how" of depiction suggests rather than closes meaning.[9] An example of analogical drawing is described by Michael Phillipson and Chris Fisher in their essay "Seeing Becoming Drawing" (1999) when discussing Bonnard's landscape drawing practice:

> And yet it is precisely (this) "place," the place of our everyday existence, that Bonnard's drawings unsettle. It seems that all the conditions which Bonnard assembled as terms of his working practice culminate in ways of making that constitute his drawing as a strategy (but not a method) of avoidance. The little fixings that his marks are, are dedicated to the avoidance of place and placing. For perhaps what Bonnard draws out of the intensities of his looking is not the Real as some thing "over there," but what Deleuze and Guattari call the "precept," which is the intensity of the sensible; this intensity is "what acts in depth and is incarnated in the visible world." Intensity provoked not by the resemblance of 1+1 (drawing as mimesis), but the affinity of a merging, a coalescing, an interpenetration via contiguity, a breaking down of boundaries – drawing's immersion in the Real. Bonnard is revealing to us that what drawing reveals to us is not "nature" but the precept whose intensity tears it away from the conventions of perception that tie the latter to resemblance. Drawing gives us the difference that intensity of the sensible makes our becoming. The marks set up not place but perhaps "atmosphere," where "atmosphere" is that which, while we can see through it, heats, cools, suffuses, and overwhelms us. Atmosphere has a thickness which encloses and supports our becoming. This is what we feel in the drawings – the thickness and solidity of the atmosphere that we have to see through in order to recognize "place."[10]

If analogy is not a closure of meaning but rather functions as a means to recognition and communicating "identity with," this is because the compass of suggestion employed by analogy reaches some part of all of us. At an intuitive

level we feel we have been there. That moment of recognition attaches the image to us. We are paused in its moment. From that moment, given that we are captured by interest, we will begin to attach our own meanings to the event, to reflect, compare and contrast, adjust perception and, possibly, find new connections. Analogy, therefore, is a means rather than an end and in the process of being it destabilises its referents. Analogy presents us with ambiguities of reading and with negotiable understandings. Analogy requires us to make an effort to meet a proposition. Analogy, it follows, functions in a state of "in-between-ness."

Yet, we live in a world where in-between-ness seems to be suspect. If analysis is valued over synthesis must we construct, in order to rationalise an understanding, explicit meaning even where there is uncertainty, ambivalence and ambiguity? If so, this is the nightmare universe visualised by William Blake and given form in his demiurge creation, Urizen, who represented for Blake the originating materialist spirit of the Industrial Revolution and its consequence of monolithic ideological and social orderings.

With regard to production and consumption, art practices will reflect the mores of the society where they are to be found. In all forms of art, including music as well as visual art, dance and spoken or written communications through which we depict, we have seen analogy displaced by unambiguous declamations, with a resulting loss of connection to the qualities of ideas. We should question to what extent the in-between-ness of conversation has been displaced by declamation. We might question how it has come about that both spoken and visual poetry seems to have lost much of its power to reach us. Declamation, it would seem, allows no ambiguity. It is not dealing with approximations, with in-between-ness. A declamation – as found in allegory – is not interested in the negotiation of meaning proffered by *entendre*. It is specific. This signals that.

> In contrast to the intrinsic textuality and non-representational abstraction of allegory… analogy is demonstrative or evidentiary practice – putting the visible into relationship with the invisible and manifesting the effect of that momentary unison. From the iconophile perspective, the earthly or natural image establishes a temporary resemblance with a hidden mystery that one cannot otherwise see. All of analogy's simile-generalizing figures are thus incarnational. They materialize, display and disseminate an enigma that escapes words.[11]

So where does Barbara Stafford's insight put us if we are to define function in art? The stakes in this question determine how we see ourselves to be. This is about self-determination through taking the responsibility to make our own connections, to relate, to recognise and to follow a quiet inner voice of conscience. This transcends questions about "use." It qualifies them, the quantifiable.

If one accepts this line of argument, an artwork can function as both allegory which we read in the *"what"* of its subject and theme, and as analogy in the *"how"* of its depiction. Can we ever present a subject, or theme, neutrally? *How* a subject or theme is presented becomes an ethical question. The point of my essay has been to argue that if art is to make sense for us, analogy, which is about connection, proffers a way which is not prescriptive, not proscriptive, and which allows us to negotiate, by means of the way we depict, a reconciliation of seeing and knowing.

WHERE DO I SEE ANALOGY IN MY OWN PRACTICE?

How and in what way might the process and resulting form of this painting be analogical? Although I have worked the body with a heavy oil stick, which gives it a certain stillness, the figure is, in parts, dissolving into

Image 1: *Flying Man*, Te Anau (1998-2008), oils, varnish and tissue on paper, on board 1600 × 1200 mm (diptych).

its setting. Is the man broken, breaking, immaterial and yet somehow immanent? The drawing does not particularise so much as suggest. We might ask how this presents?

With regard to the depicted moment, the working of materials to suggest mountains and lake are treated with a similar idea. We see tissue paper suffused with varnish, paint and casting sand, intended to present us with materiality; physical stuff. Yet, the shapes which are worked into the ground of the painting also remind us of a process of form becoming; being fashioned out of stuff. The "air" is palpable too. Is the "stuff" holding the man in suspension resisting any aspiration to fly? The shapes in the "stuff" which suggest a site are unclosed, open to reading. The tensions in this work are between its materiality and weight, on the one hand, and the allusive and the ungrounded. Is this about becoming light? If there is an analogical process in the making of this painting, it is to be found in the play of opposed elements of matter and "space." It might be found, too, in the character of the mark-making which signals the decision of the making hand. Colour and tonal shifts simply suggest the void in which the figure seems to be held in a state of suspension and the painted surface becomes the "fixing" of a moment.

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Solo and group exhibitions with Peter Belton's work have been held at the Suter Gallery, Nelson; Dunedin Public Art Gallery; Gallery 101, Collins Street, Melbourne; The Dowse; the Sargeant Gallery; CoCa Gallery, Christchurch; Elva Bett Gallery, Wellington; Gallery 5, Dunedin; Peter Rae Gallery; and the Otago Museum Gallery, amongst others. His most recent solo exhibition was at the Peter Rae Gallery, Dunedin, in October 2007. Peter has work in public collections in Nelson and Dunedin and in private collections in New Zealand, Australia, the UK, France and the US.

Peter also works as set and properties designer for Daniel Belton & Good Company, producers of contemporary dance performances and dance films which have won acclaim on the international festivals circuit, particularly in Europe.

1   BM Stafford, *Visual Analogy: Consciousness as the Art of Connecting* (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), 138.

2   J Kosuth, "Art After Philosophy" in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, eds K Stiles and P Selz (Berkeley and Los Angeles: California University Press, 1969), 841-6, at 841.

3   Ibid., 842.

4   Ibid., 844.

5   Ibid.

6   Ibid.

7   Ibid.

8   Ibid.

9   P Belton, "Making Sense of Depiction," Scope: Art, *1* (November 2006), 16-24.

10   M Phillipson and C Fisher, "Seeing Becoming Drawing: The Interplay of Eyes, Hands and Surfaces in the Drawings of Pierre Bonnard," in *Interpreting Visual Culture: Explorations in the Hermeneutics of the Visual*, eds I Heywood and B Sandywell (New York: Routledge, 1999), 123-42, at 136.

11   Stafford, *Visual Analogy*, 10.

Practice Review

MICROCOSMS

Max Bellamy

Figure 1: *Microcosms* (photograph by Emily Cannan).

In a culture where the steadfast traditions of myth and storytelling are integral to language, communication and production of meaning, screen-based narrative has become second nature for me. The challenge of defining and crafting substantial stories is a compelling task, and one I'm only beginning to understand. Memories of television shows, films and video games dissolve into memories of "real" life. I'm the same age as the Simpsons, and I took advantage of the internet and the freedom of information it offered as soon as I could. Making movies by 14, the language of montage quickly overtook my lacklustre attempt at Japanese. Nearly a decade later, the wider implications of a society of people characterised by their fixation with screens of all sizes is profoundly intriguing for my research and art practice. Slavoj Zizek asks: "What remains of reality after reality is deprived of its support in fantasy?"[1] Exploring this question through making is central to my practice. My investigation into the cultural, social and environmental politics embedded between our modern human condition and the moving image has helped to clarify my motivations and goals as an artist.

I work predominantly as a filmmaker, and the sculptural project *Microcosms* was born partially from a latent frustration with spending what can often feel like a lifetime in front of a screen in an editing suite. Minutes easily become hours and hours easily become days when you're dealing with the rearrangement of reality in a non-linear timeline. After long days and nights embraced in computer editing, real time inconsistently drags and meanders – as when one focuses on the second hand of a ticking clock.

The first work in the *Microcosms* series, entitled *Silencing the Lambs*, is a depiction of a drive-in movie theatre set in a dystopic "scorched earth" locale. The gaze of the audience in this work is focused entirely on this re-authored pastiche of media that assumes a banal non-meaning with my repositioning of its context. Effective channel surfing! The audience in this work is so engaged on a pre-conscious level that the presence and might of the military right behind them is unrealised. Brian Massumi elaborates: "Television assumes and fosters a certain inattention, as the viewing body is invited to zap channels or slip relays into other activities into the commercial slots and slow patches."[2]

This piece is partly a reaction to what I feel is a lazy reluctance on the part of the wider audience to engage with the screen on the level of active intelligence – a situation which unfortunately allows centralised sources of content production (often with questionable vested interests) to proliferate nonsense signs without signification. Effective collective hypnosis. This apathy can be a metaphor for a broader social zeitgeist. The Invisible Committee, an anonymous French collective, write that "today western imperialism is the imperialism of relativism, of the 'it all depends on your point of view'; it's the eye rolling or the wounded indignation at anyone who's stupid, primitive, or presumptuous enough to still believe in something, to affirm anything at all."[3]

Figures 2 & 3: *Silencing the Lambs* (photographs by the author).

The next sculpture, *The Last Infatuation*, is a polar image of this cognitive apathy and bodily magnetism: a pessimistic portrait of the last gasp of the human race. Asses parked in front of a flat screen watching an enticingly glossy recording of the last life-giving flickers of an open fire exhausting itself.

I was pleasantly surprised by an unexpected reading of this work at an exhibition opening earlier in the year when a friend and classmate described it as "very romantic."

Figure 4: *The Last Infatuation* (photograph by the author).

Some Wonder is the third in the series. This remote and unforgiving outpost is an unexpected point of interest to a stream of visitors on a pilgrimage of religious proportions. Families and individuals from half a world away employ the knowledge of locals to guide them to this crack in the earth where a distorted, liquefied pool of seductive imagery stares out at them as they stare back.

The installation of this work has been particularly successful, the bodily relationship at the heart of my subject matter mirrored by the way my art audience interacts with this head-high pocket universe. The horizontal positioning of the screen in this work forces adults to stretch and to tiptoe with intrigue, and children to jump and peer or pester their parents to be held aloft.

Figure 5 & 6: *Some Wonder* (photographs by the author).

The screen in *Medioxumous,* the fourth and final piece so far, is deliberately absent. This has had a particular effect when the works are installed with a left-to-right narrative flow, the first three works leading the audience on a wild goose chase for the screen in the fourth.

Medioxumous ("intermediate") alludes to the perceived sociopolitical barriers reinforced by dominant media institutions. Particularly with news and current affairs reportage, overtly subjective perceptions and hierarchical power structures play on a postmodern skepticism by assuming what I feel is too much social influence. Paul Virilio warns: "Due to its overwhelming power, the totalitarianism of the information-medium is going to be even more powerful than the traditional political totalitarianism of the old national-socialist or communist hues. The dangers are looming larger."[4]

This work is also an attempt to reframe sobering statistics in a more striking format. The statement that "20% of the world's wealthiest consume 86% of the world's resources while the poorest 20% consume just a miniscule 1.3%"[5] takes on a new impact when the numbers come off the page and into a diagramorama like this. The term "global" is often perceived in excusive terms in the public imagination and negates the wider implications of the privileged way of life we experience in wealthy countries like New Zealand.

Figure 7 & 8: *Medioxumous* (photographs by the author).

The causative power of screened narrative has an important and direct correlation with how we understand societal constructs and invent new alternatives. It has become glaringly obvious that the infinite economic and social growth I've been nurtured by as a child and teenager will not exist as I grow older, if the world's finite physical resources will continue to be wastefully depleted.

It's too easy to become wrapped up in the ethereal nature of digital technologies and forget their reliance on and connection to existing modes of production and consumption. Beyond the immense symptoms of distraction and apathy provoked by the screen lie possibilities for effective, humanising connection and conversation on a vast scale. The democratisation inherent in affordable digital video production is however a double-edged sword, as it potentially creates a plateau of meaninglessness, with the viewer drowning in banal content.

It is human nature to yearn for narratives; a modern consequence of the combination of the conditions of distraction, apathy and skepticism can be a failure to recognise and act on more legitimate, useful knowledge.

I'm using the growing hunger for a more diverse and balanced screen culture to my advantage. As artists like me, and the many others with a comparable agenda, strive to provide this opportunity and deligitimate existing dialogical paradigms of the screen, the desperation of the homogenising enterprises we seek to subvert increases and, in some parts of the world, this is accompanied by a rising intensity of authoritarian culture. Grant Kester states: "Mass media are condemned, not because they signal the bad taste (or limited leisure time) of the working class, but because they suppress working class consciousness of the operations of social power."[6] A contest for meaning is being performed, and the screen is a stage for all to see.

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1   Slavoj Zizek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London and New York: Verso, 1997).

2   Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

3   The Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection,* 2009, http://tarnac9.wordpress.com., accessed 11 August 2009.

4   Carlos Oliveira and Paul Virilio, *Global Algorithm 1.7: The Silence of the Lambs: Paul Virilio in Conversation,* 1996, www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=38, accessed 11 August 2009.

5   Anup Shah, *Wasted Wealth, Capital, Labor and Resources,* 2001, http://www.globalissues.org/article/242/wasted-wealth-capital-labor-and-resources, accessed 11 August 2009.

6   Grant H Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004).

Project Review

TEACHING, LEARNING AND
THE GREATEST IDIOT IN NEW ZEALAND

Marcus Williams

This paper discusses the collaborative aspects of the New Zealand projects of the 2009 Artists in Residence at Unitec, the Factory of Found Clothing (FNO) from Russia. It begins with an introduction to the practice of FNO and goes on to give an account of the project "they" made while here, *The Greatest Idiot in New Zealand*. Finally, with an emphasis on learning, the paper examines the collaborative interface between eight recent Unitec graduates, the visiting artists and the *Greatest Idiot* herself.

Diffused in a variably sized and constituted collective, renouncing authorship and working across discipline and media, yet celebrating the aura of the artistic object and operating from a position of moral certainty, Natalya Pershina (or Gluklya) and Olga Egorova (or Tsaplya) engage in art-making which is a nascent form of modernism (as opposed to the idea that modernity is finished, *post-*) – highly politicised, involving ongoing collaborative projects and public interventions. The outcomes involve situational performance, video, installation and their longest running project, the *Shop of Utopian Clothing*. Their work is overtly engaged in a program of social emancipation and resistance to the oppressive and alienating forces of neoliberal capitalism. As such, their practice must be considered in the context of modern Russian history and its associated critical discourses. Unsurprisingly, FNO has a manifesto:

> The place of the artist is on the side of the weak. Weakness makes a person human, and it is by overcoming weakness that heroes are born. We do not extol weakness, but rather appeal to kindheartedness and humanity. The time has come to return compassion to art! Compassion is an understanding of the weakness of others and a joint victory over that weakness.[1]

Figure 1: Clothes from the *Shop of Utopian Clothing*, Factory of Found Clothing (FNO), Pushkinskaya Art Centre, St Petersburg, 2002.

The manifesto, a phenomenon associated with modernity, is a statement of the absolute – a notion of universal truth emerging from a religious paradigm, as ordained by a transcendental entity. The FNO manifesto is characterised by utterances on morality and art. The idea that morality is a universal condition is carried over into the influential enlightenment philosophy of Immanuel Kant and his categorical imperative: "Therefore, every rational being must

so act as if he were through this maxim always a legislating member in the universal kingdom of ends."[2] This notion of morality has been severely critiqued in the context of postmodern theory – almost to the point of theoretical redundancy. *Morality is a social construct, contingent upon the specifics of the socio-linguistic context and the protagonists involved; how can one speaking subject stand for all subjects?*

I argue that the collaborative dimension of FNO practice, which is a focus of this paper, is exactly what extricates their grandiose essentialism from such a problematic. FNO projects are context-dependent and derived from a participating public/audience. They consist of a kind of *action research* where knowledge is obtained from systemic, empirical observation, and the resulting information can form the basis for direct social or political intervention on the part of the researcher, rather than implying anything imperative.

The longest running FNO project, the *Shop of Utopian Clothing*, aims to provide, both symbolically and in practice, an alternative paradigm to the prevailing consumerism of the new Russia.[3] The project produces and retails reconstituted clothes and art objects made and sold by young working-class female volunteers from regional Russian locations, and typifies the way in which Gluklya and Tsaplya reclaim the sociopolitical legacy of their country's own brand of modernism. Here are some excerpts from the mission statement of the shop:

> This shop was created in order to remind people (be they men, women, girls or boys) that they are free, that there is true love on earth, and that they are not obligated to follow what others say, neither their parents nor the boss at work, but rather, they can find ways to solve all problems, ways to exist in this world. Their internal world (including all weaknesses, fears, and illusions) is a treasure, despite the brutal reality of everyday life, which often argues against this tenderness.[4]

In addition to object production the project's young collaborators, who typically lack any art training, are facilitated in realising their own sociopolitical aspirations through workshops leading to various art projects. They are empowered to embrace alternative strategies for personal identity, free from the financially crippling consumerism of the new Russia.

Figure 2: Volunteer from the *Shop of Utopian Clothing*, FNO, Pushkinskaya Art Centre, St Petersburg, 2001.

The shop unashamedly embraces the principles of modernity's grand emancipation project. It declares itself as utopian, it is run collectively and its products are authored as such.

The things in the store try to "converse" with the observer about his or her desires, longings, unquenchable hopes and dreams. These things differ from ordinary objects in that they have already conversed with people (other people wore them, and the artist pondered over them). They are wiser than ordinary things and, it follows, much closer to the human heart.[5]

Like the socialist constructivism of post-revolutionary Russia, aspiring to emancipation through art, FNO's shop bridges the gap between artist and worker, glorifies objects which represent the common people, and generates art which might be useful to society (clothing instead of painting, for example).[6] "The FNO Shop can bravely be called a project, because it also functions as a teaching program …."[7]

The *project* is motivated to reach out and spread its ideological position. It is comparable, perhaps, to the Soviet impulse for a revolutionary diaspora spreading the doctrine worldwide, to ensure the survival of the new, hard-won state.

> It could be said, that the FNO Shop sells things "inside out," because unlike ordinary clothing that hides the sensitivities of its wearer as an apparatus of the collective mindset, this clothing actually reveals it. By showing a glimpse of the wearer's soul, it manifests a relationship to the world as to an ideal lover who understands and accepts you as you are, or even as more than you are.[8]

These associations with constructivism and utopian idealism are quite clear, yet they might appear much more simplistic than they really are. There is a different emphasis in the shop's statement compared with the FNO manifesto, one that focuses on tenderness and the human heart rather than solidarity and class struggle. Clothing operates as a central signifier in these early FNO works, suggesting the inner being and its relationship with governing social structures such as the state. Although the Utopian Shop carried on until late in 2008, after the 1990s Gluklya and Tsaplya increasingly emphasised the political aspect of their work, as their thinking shifted to the potential of clothing as an interface with a wider range of more public collaborators than the "girls" in the shop. Performance, public intervention and video became increasingly important in exploring the role of clothing as a signifier of personal fragility in relationship to the external world. In the artist's own words:

> Gluklya and I began to think that we also found clothing interesting because it's the boundary between the individual and the world. Clothing is a person's frame. This means working with the essence of individuality, with the way it's constructed. The question arose: how can we carry out this work? We did an action, "The Dress's Voyage." We took a silly polka-dot dress, made it our literary heroine, and sent it to the Crimea, where it did things we couldn't do.[9]

What emerged is a kind of hybrid between sculpture and performance; performing with objects from the shop, in a manner of speaking.

Figure 3: *Triumph of Fragility*, still from video, 11' 42," FNO, St Petersburg, 2002.

This mode of practice is epitomised in the *Triumph of Fragility* (2002), in which the familiar sight of St Petersburg's navel cadets marching through the streets is symbolically transgressed as they hold white fabric shapes emblematic of little girls' dresses, only coming to a halt at the eternal flame of the Soviet, which still burns in what was once Leningrad. The conceptual thread of the relationship between internal fragility and organised society or "state" is carried forward in this piece, which was performed in the streets. The iconographic power of the images from this work lies in the confluence of the openness of the baby-faced military cadets, the glory of the Tsarist fortified city of St Petersburg, elemental Soviet symbolism and the held objects themselves – objects which possess in equal quantity their own signifying content, not only as "white dresses" (femininity, simplicity, vulnerability, grace) but also as constructivist objects from the Factory (of Found Clothing), where objects are made or found and resurrected by female workers. As sculptural art objects, they can be read in the context of their production – devolving the relationship between art and labour, making objects of societal use, venerating the object as symbol of the worker (mother, nurturer, nurse) and spreading resistance to the consuming symptoms of materialism.

The appropriation and alteration of clothing within the *Utopian Shop* is part of a broader sociological action, which aimed to educate and empower through art; the object is a function of this, not an end in itself. The integration of object into performance, although deeply psychological, is ultimately political and not concerned with extending the form of contemporary art. The signifying potential of the object (the dresses) is exploited as a veneration of the role of women in the spirit of constructivism and integrated into a non-object idiom which is born of both necessity and political motivation.

This interplay between performance and sculptural object is played out again in *Garden for Businessmen* (2004), where immaculately suited professionals extemporise and perform with children's clothing in a quintessentially modern corporate environment. In both cases, the protagonists play a central role in determining the nature of the work, which again explores the complex interaction between a sensitive, internal humanity and its public face. Like the naval cadets, the businessmen in a personal theatre of "dress play," express potential layers of tenderness and even powerlessness, in spite of their costumes of authority. They are helplessly drawn into a paradigm perhaps to some degree outside of their grasp, becoming signifiers in their own collaborative morality play, narrating a perspective (cognisance of vulnerability) which is largely alien to the market-driven model of business. This strategy of directly engaging businessmen as authors of the art, symbolically and literally, challenges the widespread neoliberal accusation of essentialism commonly levelled at any critique of "free market" behaviour based on morality. This systematic indictment of any notion of universal or objective morality conveniently ignores human fragility, favouring ironically the freedom of the individual. In a subtle twist, the elegantly suited protagonists in *Garden for Businessmen* suggest that the individual, for whom freedom is so sacred, is in fact *himself* fragile – a fragility signified by a transgression of the expected codes of

Figure 4: *Garden for Businessmen*, FNO, still from video, 6' 58," Stockholm, 2004.

behaviour bestowed upon him by his social position. A transgression, yet at the same time his own expression, subliminal to a certain extent and played out in *the* garden. This bivalent psychosocial expression is perhaps akin to the notion of *semanalysis* in the writings of Julia Kristeva, where meaning is conceived as a signifying process rather than a sign-system. A theory of meaning where "the speaking subject (is) a divided subject (conscious/unconscious) … simultaneously exposed to the types of influences … extraneous to the logic of the systematic … but at the same time to the constraints of social structure. Within this process one might see the release and subsequent articulation of the drives as constrained by the social code yet not reducible to the language system."[10]

In the context of the overall FNO project, operating as it does within the framework of a highly didactic manifesto, this collaborative dimension is the mitigating consideration in a neoliberal, postmodern critique of essentialism:

> The artist is not a mentor or tutor, but a friend; not a genius, but an accomplice. Rather than enacting didactic social projects, we must help people to stop fearing themselves, help them to accept themselves and grow better. Society is made up of people. Only by helping these people follow the path of self-transformation, do we change society. There is no other way.[11]

As curator and, in many respects, collaborator, it has been intriguing to observe this intersubjective, collaborative process at first hand in the place-specific project *The Greatest Idiot in New Zealand*. An FNO project developed with eight young New Zealand artists, the project involves searching for "New Zealand's greatest idiot" – an idiot not in the sense we might think, but instead based on Fyodor Dostoyevsky's enigmatic character Prince Myshkin, from his novel *The Idiot* (1868). In the national call for nominations for the greatest idiot, Gluklya and Tsaplya described their task as "to find and identify New Zealanders who embody the qualities of Myshkin and apply those traits in order to solve contemporary social problems."[12]
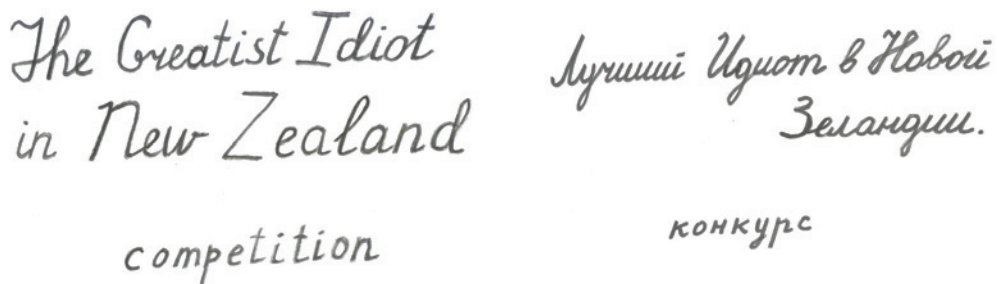

Figure 5: Text from *The Greatest Idiot in New Zealand*, FNO, http://theidiotproject.blogspot.com/, FNO, 2009.

In Dostoyevsky's damning critique of Russia's nineteenth-century ruling class, Prince Myshkin is a dreamy, guileless character who arrives onto a self-serving aristocratic scene penniless and without object. His belief in truth and beauty and his open and direct speech soon land him the title of "idiot." Yet even as he is ridiculed, he is privately respected and some seek solace and advice in his company. Although a complex and ambiguous character, he stands for compassion, tolerance, love and friendship amidst a bitter contest for wealth and status.

FNO and their young New Zealand collaborators collectively decided from the 25 nominations on who would be New Zealand's greatest idiot, shortlisting five people before choosing the winner. "Since Myshkin's New Zealand heirs are constitutionally incapable of identifying themselves, we call upon you to nominate your own candidates for your country's Greatest Idiot."[13]

Figure 6: Collaborators from the *Shop of Utopian Clothing, Idiot Branch* – Hannah Thompson, Rachel Bell, Emily Clarke, Leanne Williams, Dina Arakelian, Olga Egorova, Yael Gesentsvey, Natalya Pershina, Snowwhite Gallery, Unitec, Auckland, 2009 (photo: Marcus Williams).

The newly assembled collective then developed works in honour of the nominees and the Greatest Idiot for two Auckland galleries, MIC Toi Rerehiko and Snowwhite at Unitec. This collective process was complex, as the group explored their own cultural and generational differences in defining "the idiot;" differences were also apparent between Dostoyevsky's nineteenth-century morality and the very different morality of today. This complexity increased as the art began to be produced. As with *Garden for Businessmen*, the idiot nominees, who unsurprisingly turned out to be strong individuals themselves, increasingly provided significant conceptual and aesthetic content as the project evolved. For example, Ivy Smith and her extended family of fostered teenagers wrote rap songs and choreographed performance and dance for the video work. In addition, Ivy's "kids," who had been variously abandoned and sometimes brutalised, manufactured a series of masks which ended up as an integral storytelling device in the video piece and were later shown in the exhibition.

Figure 7: Ivy Smith – *The Greatest Idiot in New Zealand*, MIC Toi Rerehiko, 2009 (photo: Marcus Williams).

Figure 8: Two of Ivy's foster children masked for video shoot, Pt Chevalier, Auckland, 2009 (photo: Olga Egorova).

Figure 9: Modified clothing of "Dr Robin," idiot nominee, Snowwhite Gallery, Unitec, Auckland, 2009 (photo: Marcus Williams).

Figure 10: Hannah Thompson printing on found clothing for the *Shop of Utopian Clothing, Idiot Branch*, Snowwhite Gallery, Unitec, Auckland, 2009 (photo: Marcus Williams).

In the *Shop of Utopian Clothing, Idiot Branch*, exhibited at Unitec's Snowwhite Gallery, FNO and the students procured clothing from each of the shortlisted nominees, and the New Zealand artists then modified each item with texts and symbols related to their specific stories of compassionate idiocy. In addition, right up until the exhibition finished and after FNO had left the country, the collaborators continued to modify old clothing and sell the work in the shop. All the profits from the sale of the artworks went to support Ivy and her household of rescued souls.

Located within this collaborative milieu, the essentialism of a statement like "Only by helping these people follow the path of self-transformation, do we change society. There is no other way"[14] is somewhat mitigated by such an artistic strategy. The delineation or definition of authorship, authenticity and even privacy becomes unclear. The most poignant question arising from this situation, I believe, is, when the above statement is chorused by such a collective, what possible mutations have occurred to the weave and weft of essentialism?

The calling into question of essentialist knowledge has concomitantly played out in the educational arena. Broadly speaking, this is evidenced by a shift in importance from the top-down delivery of knowledge to a mode of actively engaged discovery with greater emphasis on the process of learning rather than on the knowledge itself. This is a phenomenon that we are very familiar with and is the keystone of education's modernity. Perhaps the apotheosis of this educational dimension of "humanity's great emancipation project" is English educationalist AS Neill's experimental school, Summerhill.[15]

Equivalent alternative and experimental schools all over the world include Auckland's Metro and Christchurch's Four Avenues in New Zealand.[16] These schools withered and died in the 1980s and '90s. Metro became a dumping ground for students repeatedly rejected from the mainstream, literally expelled by an education system which had reached the limit of its ability to deal with those who fall outside the circle of the useful –a system which cannot reasonably be blamed for the faltering and ultimate collapse of modernity's long-term historical trajectory, modestly characterised as the emancipation of all mankind. This was something of a tough call for the New Zealand Ministry of Education. What Jean Francois Lyotard describes as an increasing scepticism toward the grand narrative of humanity's emancipation provides the conditions for an incongruous blend of Continental philosophy and radical monetarist reform[17] – strange ideological bedmates which, to a significant extent, ended or at least seriously curtailed the development of this modernist trajectory.

Jeff Koons – the quintessentially American neoliberal stockbroker and futures market player turned artist – is in many respects the most succinct artistic signifier of this time. Taking Andy Warhol's factory into mass fabrication, Koons's eighties junk-bond version of art production churns out the kitsch objects of an unapologetic materialist idolatry, typifying Hal Foster's notion of an art of cynical reason.[18] Why offer an American exemplar in a discussion of New Zealand education, you might reasonably ask? The eighties uptake of junk-bond trading and the liquefying of people-owned assets in New Zealand were unequalled anywhere else in the world. Overseas, Reagan and Thatcher were paradigm-shifting politicians; here they were the messiahs of an evangelical church.

Health and education were next in line, remaining in the public domain only by a quirk of history – the emergence of a pragmatic politician from the centre-left. The cynical reasoning of this time saw the systematic squeezing out of progressive initiatives such as the roving education adviser, the introduction of student loans and the framework "tick-box" educational model with its risks of highly prescribed learning experiences. The notion that education might be an end in itself, a process of self-development, empowerment of the individual – a cultural equaliser, which ultimately improves the fabric of society, became as non-de rigueur as the language of the FNO manifesto: "only by helping these people follow the path of self transformation, do we change society. There is no other way…."[19]

The neocon looked at you through her Dolce and Cabana sunglasses and said, "user pays, honey; to hell with emancipation." The poststructuralists said in intertextual code, "it is a subjective universe; whose version of emancipation are we talking about, anyway?" Yet ironically in the postmodern era, a mode of actively engaged exploratory learning would seem to have even more relevance – where the half-life of knowledge is exponentially accelerated and so short that knowing how to *get* the fact is of far greater significance than knowing the fact itself. Furthermore, the application of facts to an individual's situation is radically fluid. The US Department of Labour estimates that today's learners will have had 10-14 jobs by the time they are 38. These situations make educating toward a consistent, durable knowledge set, or a stable vocational structure, clearly redundant.

Art education has generally, due largely to certain necessities essential to the business of making art, utilised the most progressive forms of pedagogy – forms which, taken for granted in the art room, have been inducted into other disciplines with a degree of revelation that amuses the art teacher. Active learning, various collaborative models and critical pedagogy are some examples. The emergence of the ready-made and pop art in the twentieth century saw the themes of classical antiquity and Christianity swept aside, bringing art closer to everyday life. The large, plastic hamburger of Claes Oldenburg replaced the idealised human form rendered exquisitely by Michelangelo in Frantiscritti marble. The ubiquity of relational aesthetics in contemporary art pushes the boundaries further as

community-based actions, public interventions and interdisciplinary collaborations gain kudos in arts infrastructures. Engagement with the rapidly expanding public domain of hyperspace and new, highly accessible media further blurs the fine line (more than 50% of 21-year-olds have produced content for the web). Art education must also rise to this emerging new paradigm. Teaching is fundamental to the practice of the Factory of Found Clothing — helping people "follow the path of self transformation"[20] sounds awfully like the facilitation of constructivist learning to me. *The Greatest Idiot in New Zealand* was an experiment in experiential education as well as a contemporary art project.

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1   Olga Egorova and Natalya Pershina, *Factory of Found Clothing*, manifesto, 2002.

2   Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. James W Ellington, 3rd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993/1785), 43.

3   A term commonly used to describe post-glasnost Russia, specifically alluding to the unfettered capitalism characteristic of this period.

4   Egorova and Pershina, *Factory of Found Clothing*, manifesto.

5   Olga Egorova and Natalya Pershina, *Shop of Utopian Clothing*, manifesto, 2000.

6   Initially described as an industrial, angular approach to art, Russian constructivism was first identified in Naum Gabo's *Realistic Manifesto* of 1920. Aligned with revolutionary ideas, the movement became integrated into the Bolshevik government's teaching academy and spread into other areas of expression such as design and architecture. In theory, and instrumentally through industrial design, fabric design and public art, constructivism came to be an important material embodiment of socialist ideology and in some cases a mechanism for its implementation.

7   Egorova and Pershina, *Shop of Utopian Clothing*, manifesto.

8   Egorova and Pershina, Factory of Found Clothing, manifesto.

9   Anjelika Artyukh, *The Labor & Breath of Romanticism*, 2008, http://chtodelat.wordpress.com/. Egorova and Pershina, *Factory of Found* Clothing, manifesto.

10   Egorova and Pershina, *Factory of Found* Clothing, manifesto.

11   Ibid.

12   Olga Egorova and Natalya Pershina, *The Greatest Idiot in New Zealand*, http://theidiotproject.blogspot.com/, 2009.

13   Ibid.

14   Egorova and Pershina, *Factory of Found* Clothing, manifesto.

15   AS Neill's Summerhill School, a co-educational boarding school in Suffolk, England, is the original alternative "free" school. Founded in 1921, it continues to be an influential model for progressive, democratic education around the world.

16   Two alternative New Zealand schools influenced by AS Neill's ideas on experiential learning and the empowerment of children. Metro was state-funded.

17   Jean Francoise Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. G Bennington and B Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984/1979).

18   Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996).

19   Egorova and Pershina, *Factory of Found* Clothing, manifesto.

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REGIONAL ART SCHOOLS: A MODEL FOR SURVIVAL AND SUCCESS

Stephen Naylor

The merger of many creative arts schools into universities under the Unified National System of universities in Australia in the late 1980s and early 1990s brought about major changes to both the schools and the universities, some positive and some negative … For some universities it was a case of the "poor cousins coming to stay" and "another hungry mouth to feed," as the schools brought little in the way of research resources with them. In addition, many universities were having to operate their research programmes with reduced funds.[1]

Before the merger between colleges (or institutes) of advanced education (CAEs) into the university system, the creative arts held a sustainable presence in many regional cities throughout Australia. Art schools provided many things for regional centres; they gave non-metropolitan students the opportunity to study higher levels of art training without leaving their region in specialised schools or departments, with specialist lecturers and facilities.[2] Art students began their careers in the arts with formal art history and theory, plus high-level skill and conceptual development. Students engaged with visiting lecturers, artists in residence, art excursions, formal reviews or critique seminars and a host of additional art-based activities that allowed regional students to commence a professional career in the arts or associated industries.

Many art schools had strong relationships with regional galleries and artist collectives; they also linked into community arts centres serving the community and contributing to a cultural presence outside of the capital cities.[3] The provision of art training and the presence of non-metropolitan artists was highlighted by the contribution of the "bohemian regional artists,"[4] many of whom taught part-time in regional art schools to augment their incomes and conjured the allure of the "artist on the periphery" that inspired the careers of many young country students seeking an identity outside of the rural norms. However, the opportunities for graduates to follow these career paths have been siphoned off into the creative industries sector, where innovation, technology and business skills are seen as significant players in the profile of new artists in many communities.[5] Naturally, communities still desire a range of contributors to the cultural discourse and the "traditional bohemian artist" is valued; however, the opportunities for surviving solely upon artistic employment do not absorb significant numbers of our graduates and cannot constitute a rationale for maintaining a highly specialist curriculum in every art school across the nation.

The commitment of many regional centres to attract tertiary creative arts education, as both an opportunity for country students to study at home and as a mark of cultural credibility, has been central to the plight of regional communities for decades.[6] Both innovation and cunning have allowed art schools to develop, even after the Dawkins' reforms in higher education.[7] TAFE and regional campuses of major universities afforded some of the earlier cultural and training opportunities; however, in recent times economic rationalism regulating minimum class sizes, more rigorous compliance to OH&S and the changing face of arts education in a digital age have made the old models of creative arts provision in the regions either unviable or marginal at best.[8]

In 2004 the College of Music, Theatre and Visual Arts (COMVAT) at James Cook University (JCU) was reviewed by an external panel to determine if the college was viable under the university's strategic goals. The college's Townsville operations, located at the Vincent Campus, were suffering from declining enrolments, poor facilities and

infrastructure, unviable budget projections and a perceived absence of research outputs.[9] The review observed an art school attempting to replicate the offerings of major academies in capital cities by providing similar experiences available to students in the 1970s and 1980s. As a result of this review, a radical redevelopment was undertaken to reposition the college within the Faculty of Law, Business and Creative Arts. The proposal was to look at a different approach, one that emphasised regional experiences and new ways of learning to ensure the continuation of creative arts provision in North Queensland.

Ongoing research revealed the need for a tertiary creative arts training within the university's course provision.[10] Initially this was viable, as enrolments were steady and basic infrastructure, that had been procured in the pre-Dawkins era, was available. In the last decade however, the increased demands of the digital age have created pressures on arts schools to provide "industry standard" facilities and equipment, in addition to staff who are considered "digital natives" yet still have formal arts training and experience. Academics are also required to contribute to the research output of the university, yet much creative arts practice has not been recognised as a legitimate form of publication, leaving less than 10% of COMVAT academics research-active. Research undertaken in previous years had highlighted the need for change, suggesting that

> learning for its own sake has become a luxury that increasingly few students can afford, and disciplines in the humanities and creative arts are increasingly unable to provide. These disciplines are under pressure from funding contractions; higher staff–student ratios and casualization; the privileging of corporate values over academic values in decision-making; priority areas of research and entrepreneurial imperatives.[11]

Research presented on regional arts schools, including the Strand Report (1998) and COMVAT course review (2004), indicated the need for change; however, this was not uniformly accepted by all stakeholders[12] and, following a complete redevelopment of the curriculum in 2005-6, 40% of the college's staff had left the university.[13] Naturally, there was some resentment over the changing focus of the art school, especially by visual artists, musicians and theatre specialists; however, many school-leavers embraced the new programme, as it was aligned to the technologies of their time and the local TAFE had also tailored courses to meet the skill needs not covered in the new degree. In 2009 COMVAT, now the School of Creative Arts (SoCA), has increased its first-year intake (120+), including a diploma stream to facilitate students who wish to "test the course" before committing to a three-year degree. This enables students to take both core, majors and elective subjects, which provide a foundation which can be articulated into the degree if completed to a credit level. SoCA now has a retention rate of over 90%, new A$10 million state-of-the-art facilities and a streamlined staff, with almost 40% research-active. These changes have occurred largely through the commitment of JCU, the community and the acknowledgement that creative arts provision in regional art schools must move with the times.

In 2005, under the leadership of Professor Des Crawley, the college reassessed its future and decided to "teach out" its five named degrees (in music, photography, theatre, communication design and visual arts) and design a new curriculum under the banner of "new media arts," which would incorporate all disciplines into one course. Curriculum design was the key, with small multi-discipline teams electing to work on specific components of the new course giving greater ownership to all who participated. Within existing curriculum theory, three of the classic models were embraced: scholarly academic ideology (incorporating strict discipline-specific material), social efficiency ideology (skill-sets appropriate to social integration – incorporating graduate attributes), and learner-centred ideology (practical experiential activities and reflection on learning – an aspect of work-integrated learning).[14] By traversing multiple curriculum ideologies, the Bachelor of New Media Arts (BNMA) was designed to achieve outcomes through engaging with multiple learning activities, integration of new digital technologies, cross-disciplinary approaches, some classic single-discipline training and team-driven problem-based learning.

The key to greater outcomes, with less single-discipline teaching, has come through a shift from a training model to a more scholarly project-based system. Previously, much of the curriculum focused on the teaching of discipline-specific skills, and was done in "siloed clusters" at the expense of cross-disciplinary opportunities. Research and

consultation with industry sought a broader set of skills, with graduates capable of thinking for themselves, adapting, being innovative and having the social skills to work in dynamic teams.[15] This new graduate skill-set drove our curriculum design into a more learner-centric model, with greater capacity for students to understand learning through the establishment of eight core subjects which were delivered by small teams of academics.

Discipline-specific theoretical material was largely relinquished from major studio disciplines and dispersed into core subjects including the following papers: Media and Culture (an historical overview of the canon), New Media and the Creative Economy (defining new media, determining employment outcomes, establishment of research and study skills, and reflective learning through the e-portfolio), Contemporary Creative Cultures and Contexts (looking at popular culture), Creative Technologies (an overview of technologies used in contemporary arts), The Reflective Creative Practitioner (focus on research and independent creative practice), Connecting the Creative Arts (collaboration theory) and Professional Practice 1 & 2 (career theory, practical placement and employment preparation).[16] With the bulk of the theoretical material being covered in these large core subjects, studio-based material could be delivered with greater flexibility, allowing students to utilise theory in undertaking their project-based activities. This realigning of a learning model acknowledges that "educators must not assume the validity of their subject, but must elaborate an essential purpose and relationship to culture, community and the economy."[17] In the final year of the degree, students undertake major team-based projects, working with external agencies; this enables them to make industry contacts and develop evidence-based e-portfolios to assist in employment opportunities.[18]

One of the main drivers of this new curriculum was the integration of learning activities, enabling students to develop knowledge without focusing on discipline-based material as was the case in the "scholarly academic ideology"-based curriculum.

> Acts of teaching and learning are part of the curriculum process. It is a translation of knowledge into information that is selected, organised and interpreted by the curriculum developer and then taught to students through another interpretation, which will be reinterpreted by the students as they create their own knowledge.[19]

To monitor the knowledge development within the cohort of students at SoCA, numerous project briefs are presented, negotiated and undertaken; upon completion, both staff and students evaluate the outcomes. In a number of subjects this has been achieved using the reflective learning capacities of the e-portfolio, which has allowed students to see their learning develop over the duration of their course, but also to see the potential of some non-university learning – including part-time work, sport, travel, hobbies and community activities – to build capacity in their graduate attributes.

Much of the change in the new degree focuses on artistic production and developing learning capacity, not solely on the new digital technology. For many students, the learning outcomes in the BNMA are similar to those that would be covered in more traditional art academies; however, many of the tools for artistic production are housed in software packages, rather than hanging on shadow boards or housed in locked cupboards. To enhance practical learning, a range of activities including physical painting, sculpting, printing, model-making, music and theatrical performance are included in the curriculum. The distinction is that we no longer work on large-scale analogue production in the first two years of the undergraduate programme; however, subjects taken in the third-year majors have greater capacity to allow students to work in both digital and analogue modes, depending on their needs and career focus. This can also lead to honours and postgraduate studies within all of the disciplines. The skill development in the early parts of the course enables students to design and collaborate to achieve significant artistic production, often rendered in a digital format; their level of technical and aesthetic development is then tested through a final-year subject called the Creative Exchange,[20] where students work in multi-disciplinary teams to produce work for industry and community organisations. In terms of assessment, these activities, and many of the other projects undertaken in the BNMA, are all scaffolded to build on foundation learning and measured against criteria-based rubrics which not only evaluate creative outputs, but develop a comprehension of the aspects and attributes required to conceive, design, plan, produce and document artistic products.[21]

The newly developed curriculum and study plans are but one component of SoCA's transformation as a viable regional creative arts school; understanding our students, staff and community constitutes the other.

"ACROSS CAMPUS: FIRST YEAR STUDENTS' MENTAL MODELS & RETENTION"

Following a Teaching & Learning Development Conference held at JCU in 2006, a proposal to undertake additional research into student attrition rates in first-year degree programmes was advanced by Associate Professor Lyn Henderson and a small group of interested academics. Using Teaching and Learning Special Grant funding to formulate a survey instrument and employ a research assistant, the team of researchers[22] surveyed approximately 500 first-year students in the schools of Engineering, Education and Business and Creative Arts in 2007 and 2008. The project, "Across Campus: First Year Students' Mental Models & Retention," was designed to map mental models in first year students related to their understanding of tertiary education and to determine their study habits. The research has yielded relevant data that has been used in assisting students make the transition to tertiary education and increase retention.

Students undertaking the Bachelor of New Media Arts were not perceived to be uncharacteristic within the sample, but rather posed the opportunity to analyse a cohort of students in a newly accredited degree programme and make comparisons with other sectors of the university. The study was designed to determine if poor mental models contributed to attrition rates in first-year students.[23] The research was structured around a "pre" and "post" survey undertaken by first-year students using a "Likert test" at the beginning and end of semester 1, 2007. This survey was carried out in one core subject within each degree programme.

As the new cohort of creative arts students enrolled in their courses, they were given vast amounts of perceived essential information about tertiary study to consider; interestingly, this material was provided as a "one size fits all" package, failing to recognise that the cohort presented differing attributes and expectations. The curriculum design for the Bachelor of New Media Arts had already established a mental model of our anticipated students which was workshopped by staff in 2005/6, and which included the following expectations: innovative, savvy, passionate, risk-takers, creative and "out there," geeks, scared, multi-tasking, adventurous, mixed gender, Gen Y. These traits provided the research team with a perceived model of new media art students with which to draw comparisons with the actual data collected.

The following tables present some of the survey findings as gathered over two years of the study.
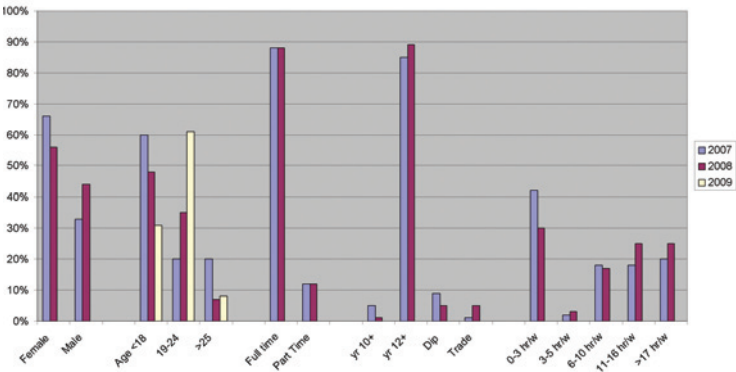

Table 1: General Demographics of new media arts students.

Table 1 indicates that a higher percentage of females than males undertake creative arts degrees in new media, and shows that almost 60-70% of commencing students were 18 years old or under,[24] and that most were undertaking full-time study. Additional data indicated that about 10% of the SoCA cohort were either re-enrolments or returning to study from other degrees.

The research team undertook some detailed analysis of part-time work, identifying that 60% of new media arts students did more than six hours of part-time work per week, with upward of 40% doing in excess of 16 hours per week. In engineering, only 10% of students did more than 16 hours per week. As expected, about 50% of students engaged in part-time work were involved in hospitality/ clerical/ shelving/ checkout/ shop/ labouring-based occupations. The level of education reported generally indicated that almost 90% had completed Year 12, with about 10 % having completed another course of study (SoCA registered an above-average quota of diploma qualifications, perhaps representing the pathway and articulation following TAFE training).

Data on social and employment background revealed more variable information. "Locality" seemed to be broadly interpreted by the students surveyed, with almost 70% listing the city as where they lived; this seemed ambiguous, as it may have been interpreted as their academic address – currently JCU has 39% of students identifying as rural or remote. The data relating to financial support indicated that approximately 10% of students were recipients of government pensions or received Austudy,[25] 65% were supported by their family, with 50% relying on part-time work. New media arts students appeared to have higher dependence on government pensions and lower use of Austudy than the general cohort; this perhaps reinforces the necessity for a minimal resources policy within our courses.

With this information, the School of Creative Arts has begun to map the types of students who undertake creative arts programmes, so that learning activities can be tailored to suit the cohort. This data has significance in mapping attrition to key indicators such as part-time employment, educational background and social demographics.

The second part of the study looked at how students perceived their university experience in terms of their own mental models. Recognising that many of the student cohorts were not aware of mental models theory, 12 primary

Please circle the most accurate response to the statements below. SD= Strongly disagree; D: Disagree; U: Undecided; A: Agree; SA: Strongly agree		SD	D	U	A	SA
1	I know what is required of being a first year university student	1	2	3	4	5
2	I really want work in the Creative Arts field	1	2	3	4	5
3	I believe that if I study hard, I will pass this subject	1	2	3	4	5
4	If I spend a lot of hours on my assignment, I will get a very good mark	1	2	3	4	5
5	I usually do an assignment just before it is due	1	2	3	4	5
6	When it comes to exams, I usually try to memorise the material	1	2	3	4	5
7	If I encounter difficulties and can't quickly solve it, I ignore it	1	2	3	4	5
8	If I do not enjoy the subject, I do not learn	1	2	3	4	5
9	I usually blame someone or something if I do not do well	1	2	3	4	5
10	So that students are not wasting their own time, lecturers should tell students the answers	1	2	3	4	5
11	I want to be at James Cook University	1	2	3	4	5
12	Adjusting to the style of teaching at university will be difficult	1	2	3	4	5

Table 2: Survey questions designed to measure mental models.

questions were designed to gain an insight into how students initially view their engagement with tertiary study. These same questions were then surveyed at the end of the first semester after students had gained a greater experience of tertiary study.

There were predictable results in many of the pre-surveys (series 1), with students displaying confidence in their choice of courses, demonstrating strong mental models. Many displayed mental models that reflected perceived good study habits based on secondary school education and an ideological view of how tertiary education would be experienced. The post-survey (series 2), conducted in week 12 of the semester (a time when folios and other assignments were looming), revealed marked differences in the responses by students to approximately 25% of the questions.
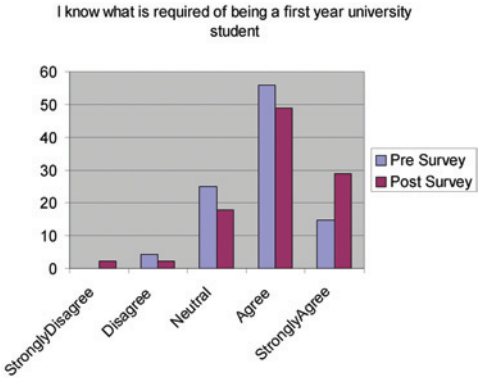
Table 3: Comprehension of tertiary study.

The initial question, regarding understanding what was required to be a first-year student, demonstrated a change in confidence in the cohort, revealing that some students may not have fully comprehended what was expected in tertiary study at the beginning of the year, but now had a greater experiential knowledge and could predict the requirements of the programme. Across the full survey, ANOVA charts revealed very low OPs – or high OPs were least confident in establishing a clear mental model of what to expect from tertiary study.[26] This could be interpreted as showing a capacity to adapt to new situations and evaluate events on merit, rather than relying on a preconceived mental model to achieve the best results. Conversely, it could show an incapacity to break down complex situations into simplified models and thus make students struggle to deal with tasks effectively.
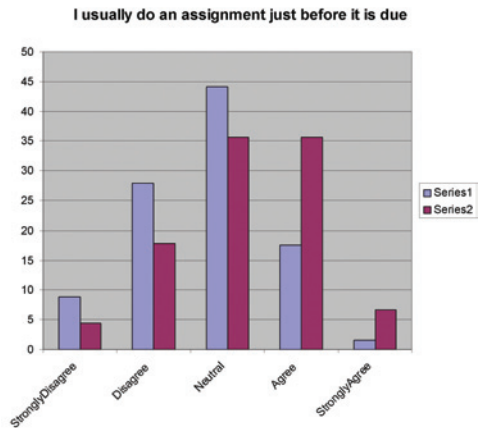

Table 4: Sequencing of study tasks.

The post-survey revealed a marked shift in the way students answered the question regarding when assignments were undertaken; the data revealed an almost complete reversal of the initial response. Thirty-five percent of students in the pre-survey believed that doing an assignment just before it was due was a bad strategy; after 12 weeks of tertiary education, this figure had moved back to 22% ,with 42% acknowledging that they actually do their assignment just before they are due. This result is often paralleled in industry, and in the course students are introduced to the ways artists see these strategies in artistic production.

Questions exploring organisational skills relating to time management and sequencing of assignments initially demonstrated a perceived best practice approach, but after 12 weeks of tertiary study a more pragmatic response was given. This would appear to be a clear case of a shifting mental model and a way of sustaining commitment to learning without feeling defeated by unrealistic expectations.

Questions exploring learning modes and engagement with the subjects studied provided data that also showed how real experiences had shaped students' knowledge of tertiary study within the arts. By the end of semester, the responses to questions looking at expectations of tertiary study had shifted towards a more pragmatic approach.
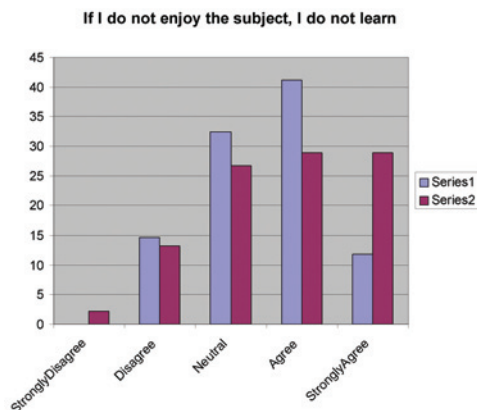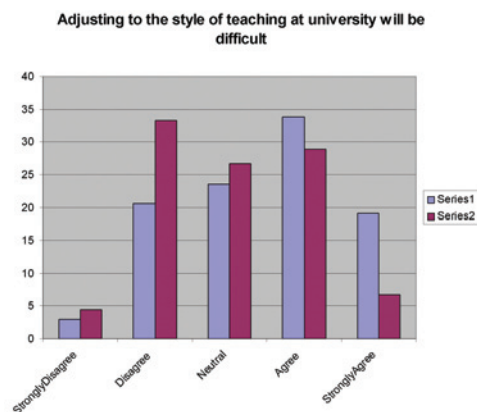
If I do not enjoy the subject, I do not learn

Table 6: Dealing with less enjoyable subjects.

Adjusting to the style of teaching at university will be difficult

Table7: Dealing with different teaching approaches.

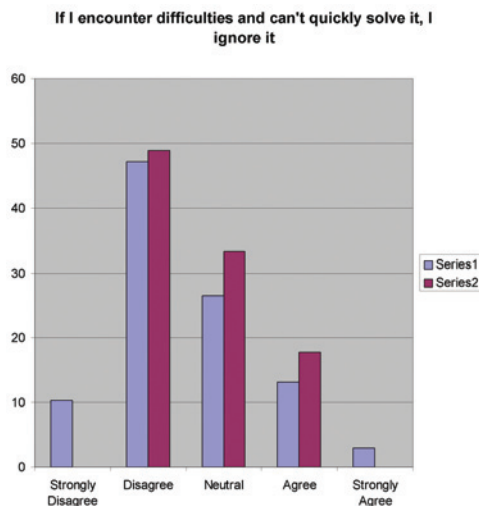**If I encounter difficulties and can't quickly solve it, I ignore it**

Table 5: Approaches to learning challenges.

Attrition rates for students within the SoCA had not been factored into the survey; however, there was only a 3% downturn in students registering their desire to study at James Cook University in SoCA by the end of semester one.

CONCLUSIONS

The survey was fully funded in 2007, with some follow-up material done in 2008 yielding data which supported the BNMA approach to work on students' learning approaches, rather than focusing on discipline-specific skills. The change in SoCA's curriculum has suited students who are creative, motivated, technically proficient in a digital environment, prepared to work independently but having a capacity to work in teams and, above all, having a passion to communicate through the creative arts. The requirement to set up a blend of adaptable facilities with large "maxi-computer labs" and specialist studios with current industry-standard equipment was essential. There was also a strong need for an advisory board to maintain links with industry and follow the careers of our graduates. Academic staff also needed to modify their mental models to embrace a less regulated teaching environment, where assessment measures tested learning rather than specific skills and predicted outcomes. Some staff have recognised that

many of their students have technology skills far superior to their own, and it becomes a challenge to accept that the academic is not the source of all knowledge, but rather a facilitator who can guide learning towards unexpected outcomes.

Perhaps the largest challenge for the regional art school is the reduction in studio-based subjects that teach traditional media-based skills (painting, sculpture, printmaking, ceramics, etc.). It has been possible to deliver some of these subjects as service subjects or electives for other courses which can be cross-subsidised between faculties. In the BNMA, the visual arts have been reduced from the full subjects of painting, sculpture and printmaking into a drawing focus, which grounds an understanding of visual representation and then expands the student's repertoire through project-based folio work in the later years of the course. It is anticipated that drawing skills, attitudes and philosophies will create a solid foundation for future analogue and digital career directions as practitioner, teacher or researcher.

This curriculum shift in the BNMA has enabled many students to see outside of their disciplinary field and recognise the natural synergies across the creative industries and into other employment sectors. The concept behind this was designed to produce adaptable graduates, not specialist artists; some sectors of the community have reservations with this model, as was expressed at the recent Fourth National Public Galleries Summit 2009,[27] where Robyn Archer and Ted Snell questioned the focus on creative industries in the current curriculum at the expense of genuine artistic development. These sentiments in favour of artistic disciplinary rigor and the creating of authentic learning environments for artists can only be met where funding and student numbers are sufficient to make art schools viable in the university setting. For many regional art schools, their mission is to create a foundation for future specialist training, either in postgraduate programmes or though relocation to capital cities where economies of scale can make affordable the specialist facilities and training opportunities sought by some of our regional students.

Without an art school presence in regional centres, much of the cultural context is removed. Artists have always prided themselves as creative thinkers who look at problems through research, data analysis, design, and selection of suitable media and techniques; they then execute their designs and sell them in the marketplace. Regional art schools need to do the same.

Stephen Naylor is the Associate Dean of teaching and learning in the Faculty of Law, Business and Creative Arts at James Cook University. He has worked as an educator and practitioner within the visual arts for more than 25 years, and is an active member and promoter of regional community art activities.

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22 Dr Pierre Benckendorff, Dr Stephen Naylor, Trang Nguyen, Assoc. Prof. Zhongxiao Peng, Sue Russell and Dr Phil Schneider.

23 A good example of a weak mental model is a swimmer determined to swim to the other side of a swiftly moving river. If the swimmer attempts to swim straight across the river to a point at a 90° angle to the riverbank, he will become fatigued as he must swim substantially against the current. If the swimmer alters his weak mental model and walks upstream of the crossing point and swims diagonally with the current to a predetermined point, the swim will be achieved with greater ease. This simple example parallels some students' folly in undertaking tertiary study with unrealistic or flawed mental models of how to succeed at university.

24 Some data from 2009 has been included. with a spike in 18-24-year enrolments; the economic downturn has generated a 21% increase in enrolments at SoCA.

25 Austudy provides financial help if one is aged 25 years or more and studying or undertaking an Australian Apprenticeship full-time. http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/austudy.htm

26 An OP is a student's statewide rank based on overall achievement in QSA-approved subjects. It indicates how well the student has done in comparison to all other OP-eligible students in Queensland. Students are placed in one of 25 OP bands from 1 (highest) to 25 (lowest). In order to achieve an OP1, a student's achievement must be in the top 2% of OP-eligible students in Queensland. http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/tertiaryentrance/630.html.

27 Robyn Archer and Ted Snell, presenters, "Raise Your Voice: Fourth National Public Galleries Summit 2009," Rydges Resort, Townsville, Museum & Gallery Services Queensland, 9-11 September 2009.

CONFRONTING/CONSTRUCTING CURRICULUM: CURRICULUM CONSTRUCTS AND MEETING THE NEEDS OF LEARNERS IN ART EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND

David Bell

THE CONTEXT

Four factors have contributed to the success of teaching and learning in visual art in New Zealand. Visual art has enjoyed core curriculum status. The art curriculum has always been founded on clearly defined conceptual foundations or rationales. Teaching practice in the visual arts has always been informed by a comprehensive preparation in formal teacher training. And implementation of an art curriculum has been supported with appropriate pedagogic strategies.

Thus drawing was a core component of the school syllabus from the 1870s. Curriculum content was founded on a utilitarian rationale. Teacher training was provided through a "pupil-teacher" apprenticeship system from 1864, and a "practising school" model at the Training Department of the Otago Normal School from 1876, with instruction from staff of the Dunedin School of Art.[1] The teaching model was an instructional, teacher-directed pedagogy for copyist learning practice.

From the 1940s to the late 1960s the status of visual art was maintained and invigorated under the benign leadership of Dr Clarence Beeby and the charismatic guidance of Gordon Tovey. It became a compulsory subject from 1943.[2] Tovey's model had complex conceptual foundations. It drew on a range of twentieth-century theoretical perspectives, including the social reconstructivist ideals of Herbert Read, Victor Lowenfeld's Piagetian child developmental paradigm, and the writings of the philosopher Oswald Spengler that had informed Tovey's profound belief in the wholeness of the individual and the over-intellectualisation of Western society.[3] Tovey's approach drew very much on ideals like the Canadian art educator Arthur Lismer's notion of nurturing creative potentials: "all children are endowed by nature with a capacity for creativity which should be given every encouragement to carry through into adult life."[4]

Art education enjoyed rich institutional support during the Tovey era. The importance of subject knowledge as a component in teacher training was recognised in the inclusion of discrete courses for each curriculum area in teacher training colleges. An art specialist third-year option was developed at Dunedin to train art specialist teachers and advisors for primary schools.[5] National art and craft syllabus statements, developed from 1945, 1950 and 1960,[6] were supported by a range of workshop projects, advisory services and published resources, including the Māori arts and crafts booklets published by the Art and Craft Branch of the Department of Education. For Tovey, the pedagogy was a facilitation model for developing art-making facility through motivating (Tovey himself is remembered as a charismatic figure in this respect) and supporting the development of the creative potential of each individual child. It was culturally inclusive, embracing Māori cultural perspectives into a vision for New Zealand art education, and its development of a generation of art specialist advisors informed generalist programmes in schools and supported creative innovations like Elwyn Richardson's integrative approach.[7]

The faux marble classicism of the cover of the *1989 Art Syllabus*[8] suggested legitimacy and permanence (it lasted just over a decade). Art was compulsory to Year 10. Its curriculum was founded on understandings of art as socially constructed experience. It refined discipline-based pedagogic models into domains of "Knowing How" and "Knowing About" and understanding social contexts for art. Its implementation was supported by comprehensive pre-service training. It drew on teachers' sound knowledge of art practice, but challenged them to extend their knowledge of understanding through contextualisation.

From 2000, *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*[9] drew the four arts together within a single curriculum agenda. Arts – rather than just visual art – education was compulsory to end of Year 10. It clearly defined an institutional rationale of art as a socially constructed entity. It prescribed knowledge-based objectives for teaching and learning, and a structural relation to other subjects within the arts and the broader *Curriculum Framework* of 1993[10], and it was supported with a range of implementation strategies including school development contracts, resource development, and the development of web-based supportive networks. It presented teachers with the most comprehensive epistemic model they had ever had. The domains of art knowledge were defined in its four strands of Practical Knowledge, Developing Ideas, Communicating and Interpreting, and Understanding Arts in Context.

In 2007, *The New Zealand Curriculum for English-medium Teaching and Learning in Years 1–13*[11] embraced this subject knowledge model into a newly formulated theoretical foundation and created a systematic paradigm for all compulsory school learning for the foreseeable future. Until this point, the success of art education in New Zealand schools had always been guaranteed by the four dimensions of core subject status, strong rationale, comprehensive training and effective pedagogy outlined at the beginning of this paper. What expectations might we have for the future?

CONFRONTING CURRICULUM

The evolution to today's visual art curriculum structure seems logical, but is it? Do the four foundations of sound curriculum survive today? Is visual art still a compulsory subject? Does it depend on its own subject rationale? Is teaching practice still supported by comprehensive formal training? Has curriculum implementation been enhanced by positive developments in pedagogic strategies?

One distinctive feature of the 2007 document is the prominence given to the fourth condition of pedagogy. In this sense the new curriculum may be more valid than any before it. It favours a constructivist paradigm and co-constructive strategies consistent with those of arts engagements, encouraging teachers to examine anew the construction of art knowledge and negotiating learning pathways within their programmes.

The guiding principles of the art components of this curriculum are no different to those for any other subject. Learning is not formal, or restricted to the absorption of teacher-intended subject matter. Learning is interactive, negotiated, scaffolded and cumulative. Learning is a contextualised experience, and it is an interactive process, defining curriculum through developing interactions between child, teacher, subject knowledge and community cultures. This is a constructivist view in which the learner actively constructs meaning from their understandings of their experiences of their world. What is learned is conditioned by the ecology of the learning environment and the political and sociocultural contexts of the learner. In this model

> programs must wrestle with how to maintain a healthy dialectic between the complementary and sometimes competing goals of teaching toward a common set of curriculum goals and teaching in ways that attend to students' uncommon starting points and pathways.

> If they are to succeed, teachers must become *learner*-centered and *learning*-centered, being clear both about what the nature of the subject matter is (why it is important and what is to be learned) and about how the particular learners they are teaching come to that content (what they know and need to know, how they learn, and what they care about) and then connecting the two.[12]

The 2007 curriculum thus favours co-constructive, negotiated learning pathways founded on the changing construction of meaningful relationships between knowledgeable teachers and knowing students, and developed through caring reciprocal relationships. In doing so it recognises students as its primary focus and embraces students' knowledge, beliefs, cultural and ethnic perspectives and learning interests. It fosters communication through discussion, exchange and the recognition of diverse points of view. It encourages in-depth experiences developed through sustained investigations and relationships that empower students' independent learning dispositions of critical reflection and enquiry, analytical thinking, reflection and evaluation and engagement in conversation or debate. In these ways it can recognise and inform learning as a lifelong process.

The curriculum is ethically responsible, respectful, and equitable: it is inclusive, socially just, and culturally diverse. In recognising and benefiting the participating interests of its whole community, it requires understandings of the complex sociocultural contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand. It recognises differences, both through the bicultural implications of the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi and through the recognition of the diverse multicultural experiences of all participant ethnicities and cultures, genders, classes, abilities, disabilities, or locations. Most importantly, recognition of the diversity of its learners embraces the interests of all, while providing effective conditions for developing the potentials of each.

These are principles fundamental for all healthy learning experiences, not just art. They do, however, provide fertile conditions for visual arts learning. They encourage enjoyment and engagement, play, experiment and invention. They facilitate an integration of art experiences within broader learning contexts that can in turn inform learning about art in relation to its contexts, talking about art, making critical judgements about art. This facilitates the art curriculum shift from a focus on the productive domain (the practical knowledge strand) to that of sociocultural or aesthetic engagement that will have, arguably, a more profound, long-lasting and relevant place in the humanising experience of art learning, and in the future lives of the students.

In promoting learning through knowledge drawn from personal experience and sociocultural contexts, these paradigms can nurture independent enquiry through negotiated pathways fundamental to individual invention in art. Most importantly, they found learning on skills of recognising, describing, analysing, synthesising, critically reflecting, extending, developing, inventing, and evaluation that are precisely the skills upon which art learning and art engagement are founded, and those which recur throughout the achievement objectives of the existing curriculum and the achievement standards by which we measure students' progress.

These art learning dispositions underpin the five "Key Competencies" of the new curriculum.[13] These embrace the competencies of *thinking* – "using creative, critical and metacognitive processes to make sense of information, experiences and ideas;" *using language, symbols and texts* – "languages and symbols are systems for representing and communicating information, experiences and ideas;" *managing self* – to become "enterprising, resourceful, reliable and resilient;" *relating to others* – to inform "new approaches, ideas and ways of thinking;" and *participating and contributing* – within various "social, cultural, physical, and economic environments." These five key competencies embrace the fundamental dispositions that underpin engagement in the arts in developing learning into inventive practice in the visual domain and engaging in the arts as constructions of social and cultural life.

Pedagogic strategies like these correspond closely to the procedures and methods of engagement in the arts. They embrace the subjectivity of arts experiences within the broader frameworks of social and cultural educational and art-world institutions. Most importantly, they recognise the special character of arts as engagements of mind rather than simply of skill.

This is, however, a curriculum that will make far greater demands than before on teacher expertise and knowledge of subjects, students and the worlds of the educational communities they work and often live within. This immediately provokes an important question: Will the other three conditions of curriculum success be able to serve the interests of pedagogies like these?

Firstly, the core status of visual art has changed from that recommended in the 1943 Nelson Report. Although still a compulsory subject *over the course of* Years 1–8, it is no longer compulsory for students at Year 9 or 10.[14] There is also no guarantee that each of its four knowledge strands will receive sufficient attention. Some avoidance of assessing against the 1.1 strand at Year 11 suggests avoidance also of the *Communicating and Interpreting* and *Understanding the Arts in Context* strands, for example:

AS 90018	Investigate Maori and European artworks from established practice	5993 candidates
AS 90019	Use drawing processes and procedures	9817 candidates
AS 90020	Generate and develop ideas in making artworks	9465 candidates

Table 1: 2008 NCEA visual art entries.[15]

Secondly, the specific rationales for a visual art education are no longer clear. In 1998, for example, the philosophical justification for a combined arts curriculum was challenged as a framework that would "effectively eviscerate art education in New Zealand."[16] The problem lay partly in the invalid assumption of a common theoretical, epistemic and pedagogical foundation for all of the four different subject areas it embraced.[17] The 2000 document also tried to find a common ground between decades of diverse, and apparently incompatible, modernist and postmodern theoretical perspectives for visual art education within a comprehensive, if complex, multi-leveled structure.[18] Despite its inclusive intent, the document remained a top-down prescriptive explanation of subject knowledge. It left little room for engaging the contributing participation of local educational communities.

Thirdly, and ironically given the increased knowledge demands it makes of teachers, the current curriculum structure has been accompanied by reduced preparatory training support. Linda Darling-Hammond defines three fundamental principles of learning for developing pedagogic competencies for this kind of curriculum.

1. *Students come to the classroom with prior knowledge that must be addressed if teaching is to be effective.* If what they know and believe is not engaged, learners may fail to grasp the new concepts and information that are taught, or they may learn them for purposes of a test but not be able to apply them elsewhere. This means that teachers must understand what students are thinking and how to connect with their prior knowledge if they are to ensure real learning. Because students from a variety of cultural contexts and language backgrounds come to school with distinctive experiences, they present a range of preconceptions and knowledge bases that teachers must take into account in designing instruction.

2. *Students need to organise and use knowledge conceptually if they are to apply it beyond the classroom.* Memorising is not enough. To develop competence, they must understand how facts and ideas fit together within a conceptual framework, and they must apply what they are learning. This means that teachers must structure the material around core ideas and engage students actively in using the material, incorporating applications and problem solving while continually assessing students' understanding. Successful teachers offer carefully designed "scaffolds" to help students take each step in the learning process with assistance appropriate to each student's needs and progress.

3. *Students learn more effectively if they understand how they learn and how to manage their own learning.* A metacognitive approach to instruction can help students learn to take control of their own learning. Through modeling and coaching, students can see how to use a range of learning strategies, such as predicting outcomes, creating explanations to improve understanding, noting areas of confusion, activating background knowledge, planning ahead, and apportioning time and memory.[19]

Preparation of this kind makes significant demands on developing subject knowledge and understanding and pedagogic dexterity in student teachers. As these requirements have become more explicit however, college of education courses have experienced reductions of epic proportions in the status and time given to art education. This is evident in the loss of subject teaching departments, head of subject department positions, and dedicated advisory services. A decade ago, pre-service primary education students might have enjoyed three full art curriculum courses at 100, 200 and 300 level totaling 156 hours of class time. They might also have extended their learning in the subject to a total of 450 hours through elective papers in art. Today, the total compulsory art experience may be as low as 16 hours during the first year of study. The inevitable consequence must be the marginalisation of art within whole school programmes. This may already be evident in the avoidance of *Communicating and Interpreting* and *Understanding the Arts in Context* strand learning in secondary schools programmes noted earlier.

Teachers have not been left in a vacuum. They enjoy the support of art gallery and museum education programmes, some have engaged in teacher development contracts, and all have been able to access professional development networks and resources through published materials, tki (Te Kete Ipurangi – The Online Learning Centre), or artsonline. They can enjoy the touring art truck, Top Art shows, and the artists-in-schools programmes that in 2009 will see funded participation of 57 artists in 46 schools.[20] All of these can contribute to a reinvigoration of art learning, with a greater focus on art knowledge and how to develop it; yet the loss of compulsory status, clear rationales and rich teacher training may have significant implications for the marginalisation of art in schools in the future.

Perhaps the pedagogies promoted through the new curriculum statement can, in partnership with comprehensive subject knowledge, provide avenues that open to new perspectives in which we teach the students, not just the subject, so that the learner is honoured and individual and inventive learning practice is promoted. Perspectives in which sociocultural contexts of learning and their complex implications are recognised, and in which students' ideas and thinking and enquiry and risk-taking are valued over measurable product. In these ways the principles of positive learning described above, the dispositions or competencies defined for education in general, and the things we value in visual art learning, can be complementary. The broader curriculum framework can then facilitate the three key dimensions of artistic or aesthetic engagement: art as subjective experience, art as sociocultural engagement, and art as a process of mind.

THE CHALLENGES

Since the publication of the 1989 syllabus, art education has required an increasingly diverse range of engagements, especially in its expansion from "making" into the other domains of discussion about art and artworks and their contexts, critical faculty and evaluation. This shift is consistent with a re-evaluation of the rationales of learning about art for enriching our lives beyond the narrow constraints of practice alone. These shifts are, I suggest, completely consistent with the one characteristic of art experience that we value the most, and which distinguishes it from other kinds of learning: its potential for individual engagement and invention as a realm of experience distinguished by the subjectivity rather than by the objectivity of its experience.

If the new curriculum holds some promise for art education, it also brings some challenges and raises new questions. Shifting learning away from objectively focused directive teaching towards subjectively focused co-constructive models has implications for assessment, encouraging a healthy move from assessment-focused learning to student-centred learning. Responsive rather than transmissive teaching and learning strategies, meaningful subject-integration approaches, project- or inquiry-based strategies, co-constructed learning pathways, and meeting the needs of diverse learners, require complex pedagogic skills. Are new teachers sufficiently informed to fulfill these needs? What kinds of subject knowledge do these teachers now need? Do they need more knowledge to be better able to respond to diverse needs? Do they need richer knowledge in contextual and aesthetic domains beyond "making" to meet the multilayered requirements of the curriculum? Do they need to develop strategies for accessing knowledge to

better respond to the changing needs of a negotiated pathway? How can we define and inform innovative, rather than conventional, pedagogies that embrace the principles of the new curriculum?

The success of visual arts education within the 2007 New Zealand Curriculum will be entirely dependent on the validity and effectiveness of the responses we provide to these challenges and questions.

APPENDIX

The presentation of this paper was at the ANZAAE 2009 conference followed by a roundtable discussion in which approximately 70 teachers, mainly secondary visual art specialists, discussed the affordances and challenges of the visual arts curriculum today. This roundtable discussion was developed through the following themes:

In what ways can the current curriculum promise/inform/enhance better teaching and learning in the visual arts?

- In strategies for better teaching and learning in art
- In enhancing learning through subject-knowledge integration
- In meeting the diverse needs and interests of your learning community
- Other

In what ways will the curriculum bring new challenges for you?

- In meeting the challenges of the Key Competencies
- In subject knowledge for each of the four strands
- In strategies for teaching and learning – e.g., integration in secondary
- In meeting the diverse needs of your educational community
- For responding to art needs in co-constructive, integrated or inquiry-based learning approaches
- Other

How well equipped do you feel for evaluating the learning achievements of your students for all four strands of the curriculum?

How would you like to see the challenges the curriculum brings for you met?

- In pre-service training
- In ongoing/in-service training
- In whole-school professional development
- In personal professional development
- In whole-school strategies
- Enhanced professional networks
- Resources
- Other

How do you feel about the aims of the visual art component of the new curriculum in:

- Understanding its philosophy?
- Seeing its promise for enhanced visual arts learning?

In what areas of art knowledge would you welcome more knowledge and resources?

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David's research interests embrace art education and its history, pedagogy for art learning, and art history and theory, particularly in the New Zealand and Japanese visual fields. He has been a regular contributor to art education and art history conferences. He is on the editorial board of Scope (*Art & Design*).

1   Carol Morton Johnston and Harry Morton, *Dunedin Teachers College: The First Hundred Years* (Dunedin: Dunedin Teachers College, 1976), 4, 9-10. The School of Art shared premises with the Training School in Moray Place in Dunedin.

2   The Thomas Report of 1943 recommended that all New Zealand children should enjoy learning in art and craft: *The Thomas Report* (Wellington: New Zealand Department of Education, 1943).

3   Carol Henderson, *A Blaze of Colour: Gordon Tovey, Artist Educator* (Christchurch: Hazard Press, 1998), 77-8.

4   Ibid., 66.

5   Documented in Roger Hardie, *"...the buds of flowering:" An Archive List of Department of Education Art & Crafts Specialist Staff 1938–1989* (Wellington: Alexander Turnbull Library, 2005).

6   Wellington: Department of Education, *An Art Scheme for Primary Schools Tentative*, 1945; *A Draft Syllabus: Art and Craft in the Primary School*, published in 1950; and *The New Zealand Department of Education Primary School Syllabuses: Art and Crafts in the Primary School*, 1961.

7   Elwyn Richardson, *In the Early World* (Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 1964).

8   Ministry of Education, *ART: Art Education Junior Classes to Form 7, Syllabus for Schools* (Wellington: Learning Media, 1989).

9   Ministry of Education, *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum* (Wellington: Learning Media, 2000).

10   Ministry of Education, *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework/Te Anga Marautanga o Aotearoa* (Wellington: Learning Media, 1993).

11   Ministry of Education, *The New Zealand Curriculum for English-medium Teaching and Learning in Years 1–13* (Wellington: Learning Media, 2007).

12   Linda Darling-Hammond, *Powerful Teacher Education: Lessons From Exemplary Programmes* (San Francisco: Josey Bass, 2006), 189.

13   Ministry of Education, *The New Zealand Curriculum for English-medium Teaching*, 12-13.

14   Ibid., 20. Only two of the four arts subjects are required at Years 9 and 10.

15   My thanks to the National Moderator in Visual Arts, Geoff Harris, for this statistic.

16   Ted Bracey, "The New Zealand Curriculum Framework and the Notion of Arts Education", *Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators Newsletter*, February 1998, 2-7.

17   "… the Framework document does not use the term 'the arts' descriptively. Instead, it employs the term in a dumbly and simplistically denotative way which effectively relieves those who wrote the document from the responsibility of providing an intelligent account of how the concept works in language or, even, what it refers to in practice. The effect of this is to render the concept virtually meaningless." Ibid., 4.

18   The 2000 document was developed from a depth analysis of a comprehensive range of perspectives on visual art education, drawing on the earlier 1989 curriculum and extending through the work of Lanier, Chalmers, Duncum, Bracey, Freedman et al. to embrace a range of aesthetic education and visual culture paradigms together with its existing foundation in modernist sensibilities.

19   Darling-Hammond, *Powerful Teacher Education*, 9-10.

20   In the 2009 Budget, presented several weeks after the presentation of this paper at a conference, government funding for the Artists in Schools progamme was cancelled.

TROJAN TACTICS IN THE ART ACADEMY: RETHINKING THE ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCY PROGRAMME

Pamela Zeplin

INTRODUCTION

In the bleak context of "today's corporatized, transnational university" systems, into which Australian art schools have been absorbed over the past two decades,[1] art academies have become increasingly bureaucratised and marginalised. Consequently, they have experienced a radical decline as sites of experimentation and dissident politics as their pedagogy of practice-centred learning is eroded by "free" market policies.[2] As a result, art school communities have lost not only funding, self esteem and artistic autonomy, but whole studio areas as well, which were previously integral to the curriculum.[3]

What art school cultures haven't lost, it seems, is a traditional ethos of competitive individualism, artistic careerism and robustly Eurocentric perspectives; these characteristics remain entrenched and even exacerbated within resource-starved and market-driven academies.[4] Potentially, artist residency programmes provide an external boost to institutional perspectives in terms of quality student learning and school morale. However, without contrary evidence, it is doubtful whether most residences seriously challenge prevailing cults of individuality with extra-Eurocentric or collaborative models of practice.

This discussion considers the impact of an unconventional residency "case study" at the University of South Australia's South Australian School of Art when eminent Indonesian artist, Heri Dono, took up residence for seven weeks in 2007. Although planning processes indicated a reasonably straightforward residency and exhibition project, numerous unforeseeable circumstances arose with profound implications for the residency, the school, the university and local communities. What resulted revealed, in this case at least, the extent to which corporate compliance imposed by Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) policies have penetrated art school cultures, and potentially compromised their capacity to encourage creativity. Entrenched bureaucracy notwithstanding, Dono, with collaborating artists and students, literally and figuratively smuggled a Trojan horse into the heart of the art school via the SASA Gallery. Dono's quiet persistence and wit ultimately outflanked the university's cumbersome "horses of war" lined up against any form of non-compliance. This project's unexpected outcomes offered a rare and important opportunity to rethink the planning and diverse experiences of residency programmes within university art schools and how they are – or more often, are not – documented and designed.

In narrating this tale, the most appropriate means of addressing this unconventional artistic project are found in case study and grounded theory methodologies,[5] complemented by narrative and organisational storytelling theory[6] where "narrative knowledge" may reveal that "[u]ltimately the truth of a story [may lie] not in its accuracy but in its meaning."[7] With little research available on artist residencies, data has been collected from observation, project management experience, and discussions with participants, university management and the public. As co-coordinator of the residency (with Olga Sankey), the author was also project manager and curator of Dono's exhibition, "The Dream Republic."

Figure 1: "The Dream Republic," 2007, SASA Gallery, Adelaide, (Image: Toby Richardson).

In setting the scene for this tale of a horse, a brief account is necessary of the territory entered by this creature and those engaged in the organisation and construction of its short but racy "life," the perplexing realm of bureaucratic "hurdles," and the domain of residency programmes.

Even after two decades, tertiary Australian art education sits awkwardly "upon" rather than comfortably within the domain of managerialist universities, which have difficulty accommodating "creatives"[8] within their corporatist structures. This has occurred despite recent, if grudging, legitimation of practice-led research, where so-called academic "standards" remain dominated by scientistic measurement criteria.[9] For all its rhetoric about graduate qualities (internationalism, collaboration, creativity, and problem solving, etc.),[10] the university sector is driven primarily by economic rationalist ideologies in the race for market share.[11] As a result, increasingly centralised control systems have severely "reined in" non-standardised pedagogical practices such as studio learning or anything that suggests the slightest of risks. To further stretch the equestrian metaphor, art schools have found themselves consigned to the back paddock and bridled by their harsh new masters' carefully contrived corporate-speak.[12]

Commonly regarded as "exotic" if endearing creatures in the hallowed halls of Academe, artists – including the international "thoroughbred" variety – are still hobbled by terms such as "creatives" (read mysterious flaky genius). Occupying a largely decorative – as distinct from decorous – role, artists' visual "displays" are nevertheless showcased on campus in a proliferation of architecturally adventurous new buildings, ostensibly celebrating "creativity" on the home turf of universities. Ironically, these symbolic monuments mask 15 years of dire neglect for art schools under what Jane Kenway calls a "Scrooge state."[13] In this scenario, shrinking funding, curricula and contact hours, escalating class sizes[14] and declining craft subjects[15] have rendered studio teaching an endangered species. Frankham warns of future "reduction in the range and quality of studio offerings available in Australian art schools, to the point where we are no longer able to claim 'traditional studios … thereby ultimately restricting artists' capacity to utilise the full

range of media, materials, techniques and processes traditionally associated with art, craft and design practice."[16]

This situation has been exacerbated by stringent compliance with OH&S demands.[17] Recently looming large in Australian society, extreme manifestations of OH&S epitomise a litigation-averse "safety culture" in a society "[unwilling] to accept that life is inherently risky."[18] The effects impact negatively upon teaching and learning in art schools, which have traditionally encouraged creatively "risky" experimentation. In this climate, essential and adequate studio equipment often fails unrealistic OH&S demands[19] and studios are temporarily closed for minor "infractions."[20] Open footwear, music, mess and after-hours access have been prohibited in studios, and in one case the outlawing of fixative sprays has effectively banned the use of charcoal.[21] A 2005 survey of 28 university art school heads identifying "issues of concern" revealed that "[r]isk aversion within universities" ranked fifth in a field of 18, while 80 percent of respondents believed it "is likely or highly likely that there will be markedly fewer art and design schools in Australia in 10 years."[22]

ARTIST RESIDENCIES

An important "antidote" to the widespread diminishment of art schools has been the artist-in-residency programme.[23] "Since the 1960s … [this] display of the exemplary artist … has been crucial to teaching artists."[24] Within a wide spectrum of opportunities, residencies range from local graduates negotiating studio space to internationally recognised artists like Heri Dono creating highly mobile global practices.[25] As well as benefiting artists through the provision of time, space, and often a stipend, these programmes are considered integral to the enrichment of arts education, where independent visitors offer models of professional practice, stimulate aspiration and, potentially, provide hope. Given their acknowledgement in Australia and abroad as vital,[26] it is surprising how little is known about the experiences within residency programmes,[27] unless they take place overseas.[28] Details of Australian residency processes are not to be found in research or critical literature unless they refer to the finished products, the visitor's art works and/or exhibition. Moreover, unless residents require unpaid labour (often referred to as "collaboration"), there is a mutually understood separation between the artist's work and pedagogical work, unless this is otherwise negotiated.

Providing links between the professional community and the academy, the visitor-participant thus helps to "construct" the host community using the shared language of current magazines and catalogues.[29] In selecting residencies, academies generally aim to attract high-profile artists to enhance their institutional prestige and, in this way, the status quo is maintained, hierarchical pedagogies remain unchallenged and conventional role-modelling can be re-affirmed. Commonly, strategic artist-gurus-in-residence further embed careerist values in impressionable minds, reinforcing familiar Euroamerican-derived theories and practices[30] – in spite of Australia's avowedly multicultural society and two decades of theoretical discourses devoted to difference, postcolonialism, Indigenous and non-Western art.[31]

Amidst a variety of artistic practices,[32] the "normal" model outlined above represents one acceptable residency and career pathway. However, the perpetuation of artistic myths of celebrity encourages emerging artists in unrealistic and/or ethically evacuated aspirations; as Delany reminds us, "art is being sold these days as a branch of the entertainment industry."[33] Legions of students and lecturers may declare their exploration of "towering topic[s]"[34] "dealing with" postcolonialism, rhizomatic indeterminacy (the "ceaseless, fluid and ungovernable becoming of things"[35]) and relational aesthetics,[36] but often ignore the social and political dimensions beneath. Activism is not fashionable. Nevertheless, despite academia's rarefied climate, many graduates successfully manage to become socially aware (if not always confident or economically secure) individuals[37] and lateral thinkers who operate at the forefront of sociopolitical issues. Typically, in the long term they develop resilience in constructing diverse, entrepreneurial practices but, invisibly, many more falter at the first few hurdles.

Figure 2: Heri Dono, *Broken Angel*,
"The Dream Republic," 2007, mixed media,
SASA Gallery, Adelaide, (Image: Tok Basuki).

Figure 3: Heri Dono outside SASA Gallery, Adelaide, 2007,
(Image: Pamela Zeplin).

HERI DONO

Because tertiary art institutions tend to foster competitiveness rather than collaboration or social – as distinct from communication – skills, we decided to engage Heri Dono at the South Australian School of Art (SASA) for seven weeks in March-April 2007. Dono has a unique ability to produce high professional standards of work in a temporary location and actively engage a range of communities, ranging from local Indonesian groups to children. As a bonus, Dono is internationally renowned as the second most invited Biennale/Triennial artist in the world.[38]

Based in the Indonesian city of Yogyakarta, Dono commutes between engagements from Shanghai to Dubai and Venice, and has spent considerable time in Australia, including Adelaide.[39] Unlike many art celebrities, however, Dono remains committed to social intervention in local communities using collaborative processes, within and beyond Eurocentric agendas, while his approach remains open to chance and risk in exploring the "what if?" factor. Furthermore, teaching and learning are embraced within a holistic creative enterprise intertwined with art practice. These qualities were considered particularly important, since funding criteria required the artist to work across three local art schools.[40]

During a previous 2006 SASA visit, Dono's hi tech-enslaved audience enthusiastically demanded a residency following his master class on "Alternative [low] Technologies." Here all university equipment malfunctioned, so that the visitor's "humble" utilisation of whatever was at hand proved to be an invaluable lesson. Dono then altered his schedule to include Adelaide the following year.

A versatile maker, the artist is also a trained *dalang* (master puppeteer) of Wayang shadow puppets and Javanese dance. "My religion is art," declares Dono,[41] who is steeped in Javanese mysticism, drawing freely on animistic beliefs and village folklore to grapple with the cut and thrust of contemporary political activism. Simultaneously, retro-style cartoons like Flash Gordon feature throughout his work. All these elements are embedded in a fluid approach, rendering his form of contemporary art accessible and challenging for many audience levels. "Dono's increasingly impressive opus of installations," notes Carroll, is "always so human, witty, humorous, and politically deadly."[42]

However delightful Dono's reputation may be in working with various communities, including children,[43] his work is anything but naïve. With a dynamic and prolific output, he is renowned for consummate professionalism, but also for letting things happen or appearing to do so. Unfortunately, encouraging students' – let alone broader participants' – experimentation and play is not a "methodology" tolerated under managerialist mechanisms of control. "I think that all people are artists," Dono explains, "all the members of the audience are artists, if they can participate, and not only look at the work."[44]

These qualities would prove invaluable. Due to arrive in Adelaide on 10 March from Berlin via Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Dono postponed his early morning booking for 7 March on the ill-fated Garuda Flight GA200 that crashed at Yogyakarta airport. Although relieved our guest was safe, as curator I viewed his lighter-than-expected luggage at Adelaide airport with alarm. The crash prevented collection of his exhibition artworks from Yogyakarta, but the artist remained curiously unperturbed – a dark horse, I remember thinking. This unfortunate incident was a harbinger of problems to come. Despite negotiating a residency studio within the School in 2006, late postgraduate over-enrolments left appropriate space unavailable, while external funding (deposited months before in a newly "engineered" university cost centre system comparable only to the nineteenth-century Indian civil service) was inaccessible until May. "Thinking sideways,"[45] however, we solved the space crisis with a studio-cum-work-in-progress exhibition in the SASA Gallery, but financial and OH&S constraints remained problematic.

Within two days of arrival Dono's public lecture attracted a large crowd, with 25 students, staff and local artist-collaborators from four Adelaide art schools eager to create what would become a Trojan horse – the ancient Greek vehicle for strategically and surreptitiously entering the gates of Troy, defeating the unsuspecting Trojans and thereby winning the Trojan war. These days "Trojan Horse" denotes a dangerous computer virus that works on the same ancient principle, so this title alone produced resounding reactions amongst university administrators.

Figure 4: Work in progress (March 2007), "The Dream Republic," SASA Gallery, Adelaide, (Image: Pamela Zeplin).

Figure 5: Work in progress (April 2007), "The Dream Republic," SASA Gallery, Adelaide, (Image: Pamela Zeplin).

In atypical volunteer behaviour, most collaborators continued working enthusiastically on the Trojan horse project until the final day, their commitment strengthened by carefully planned organisation (efficiently overseen by Honours graduate mentee, Margo Clark) within Dono's "elastic" work processes. "Organic" networking, as well as numerous social events, further reinforced the importance of community through workplace sociality. Dono's subtle collaborative arrangements, it should be noted, differ from other artist/"masters" who direct the free labour of their assistant/"apprentices"[46] who also benefit through work experience. In contrast, Dono's undefined yet careful methodology seeps organically into "the practices of living;" this approach is interactive and invokes a significant degree of trust, as Papastergiadis explains: "When artists draw from the everyday, then the space between themselves and their subject begins to assume levels of intimacy and attachment that are fundamentally different to the more remote and oppositional stances … of the avant-garde."[47]

The artist's insistence on trust within a respectful environment ensured a safer and more productive environment than policed regulations of "workplace safety." Unlike "apprentices," Dono's collaborators were given an apparently free "rein" in determining the horse's form and materials, but closer observation revealed Dono's professional vision subtly at work with quality control measures constantly but imperceptibly in operation.

The artist's "upside-down logic" responded strategically to bureaucracy-bound challenges arising daily. The pristine SASA Gallery became a public studio, so instead of an opening night, the exhibition culminated with a huge closing celebration, which Dono likened to a "mini-APT" (Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art).[48] Such lateral thinking responded creatively to the immediate circumstances of managerialist impasses: clogged university finance systems couldn't release funds, so donated and scrounged materials came pouring in, transforming – or perhaps "trashing"[49] – the gallery into an industrial work site of ever-increasing workers, mess and noise. Basic safety, however, was maintained and no-one was injured.

Figure 6: Collaborators at work (April 2007), "The Dream Republic," SASA Gallery, Adelaide, (Image: Pamela Zeplin).
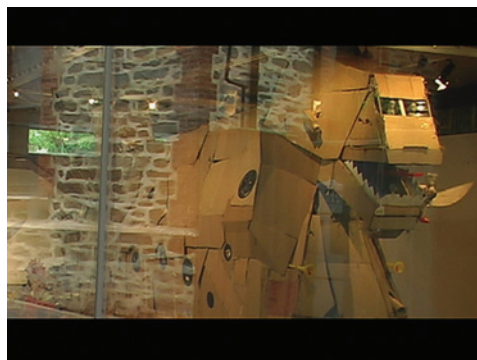

Figure 7: Reflections through gallery window, "The Dream Republic," 2007, SASA Gallery, Adelaide, (Image: Tok Basuki).

If, historically, "the [generic] artist was an institutional problem for the university,"[50] Dono's "nag," as it was affectionately known, certainly created new problems. These were creatively hurdled or subverted – sometimes without authorities noticing – while the project's energy and dynamism continued, abuzz with electric tools, amidst continual institutional prohibitions. From unreasonable restrictions on gallery access, construction and demolition to outsourced removal procedures and "bridging" of inaccessible funds (held by finance "engineers") through community loans, students learned there is always "another way" to get things done. Throughout this bureaucratic nightmare the artist remained calmly bemused, explaining: "this is no problem, I live in Indonesia!"

This approach worked. Too hard, even for the indomitable enforcers of OH&S compliance, Finance and Properties, the Trojan horse "warriors" became officially "invisible." Working day and night, we crashed through regulations while a curious public came to watch this monstrous hybrid creature emerge and fill the cavernous gallery space. Because of collaborative decision-making, the horse eventually spawned wings and, of course, wheels as in the original vehicle. Was it a horse, a plane or a train? Or perhaps an ark or refuge of some kind? Whatever it represented, adults and children alike were fascinated, and one young artist, entirely committed to the Trojan horse's wheels, took them home after the exhibition.

What visitors to this site over six weeks witnessed was a new kind of art "school," as groups from ceramics and textiles set up work "camps" around the installation, created from humble "Asian" construction methods using cardboard, string and other locally sourced detritus; this gave new meaning to "sustainability." Photographers and painters found themselves making sculpture, while other unlikely groups organically coalesced around the project. The paper-making students were charged with manufacturing new "skins" for Dono's internationally famous *Flying Angels* sculptures, which fortunately were in storage in Melbourne and subsequently freighted to Adelaide soon after Dono arrived. This was another instance of the artist's successful networking throughout Australia over a number of years. Astonishingly, the ugly thick grey "coats" these beautiful – and valuable – creatures received from heavy-handed student amateurs left the artist completely unfazed.

Activity was organically and rhizomatically generated between artists, art and crafts students from three local art schools, as well as Dono's existing networks amongst the local Indonesian diaspora. For a time, this blended community dissolved disciplinary boundaries and demonstrated what an art school could be, while re-learning to regard risk and failure as a "gift."[51] In the evenings, a collaborative *wayang* performance developed between dancers and musicians at Flinders University's Asian Studies Department. With Dono and Greek Australian artist Niki Sperou, they created a hybrid of ancient Greek and Indonesian myths which collided with harsh Australian politics and was staged to great acclaim at "The Dream Republic"'s gala closing event.

Prominent contemporary issues of mistreated asylum seekers, US-Australian relations and the fascist bureaucracies spawned by John Howard's Liberal-Coalition government (1996-2007) were critically scrutinised and commented on outside and inside the Trojan horse by artists, students and anyone who cared to contribute. At that time, people expressed passionate views about human rights concerns and wished to offer opposition to government policies. They did this in the belly of this subversive beast, which held a mini gallery where fiercely articulate and socially critical expressions in visual and verbal form were featured; contributions were in Arabic (illustrated with martyrdom tulips), Cambodian, Indonesian, Greek, Latin (poetry) and English.

Paradoxically, the exhibition's final day was even more exciting than the gala closing event the evening before. This was demolition day when the horse was torn down and disposed of in a frenzy of destruction in less than an hour. Bewildered by the chaos of materials and tools flying everywhere, the forces of compliance (represented by officious properties unit and OH&S managers) stood debating how to "manage" the situation, but were finally overwhelmed with the pandemonium and hastily retreated, for the last time. Not unlike their defeated historical Trojan counterparts.

Figure 8: Visitor, interior gallery, 'Trojan Horse, "The Dream Republic," 2007, SASA Gallery, Adelaide, (Image: Pamela Zeplin).

Figure 9: Heri Dono and collaborators, "The Dream Republic," 2007, SASA Gallery, Adelaide, (Image: Pamela Zeplin).

Collaboration is never without challenges,[52] and one problem involved heart-stopping inter-university rivalry when a senior academic-cum-guardian-of-the-gamelan at another university threatened to cancel the public performance hours before the closing ceremony; this was because, as had been previously agreed, the instruments were leaving

their home turf. In the Indonesianist (as distinct from the Indonesian) community, as well, some were perplexed about the "inauthenticity" of Dono's modifications to sacrosanct *wayang* tradition. And not everyone wished to be involved. Some of the more diffident young artists around town adopted a mildly contemptuous attitude to this "third world" artist and the decidedly uncool atmosphere of fun, daggy-ness and laughter pervading the School of Art. That was, until news of the project filtered into the surrounding community. Finally, intrigued by the gigantic construction taking place, the "local heroes" googled "Dono" on the internet and were finally sighted warily entering his ludicrous machine of war. What they may not have anticipated was an electronic fart machine alarm installed in the doorway of the beast's hindquarters. A crucial "found object," this device offered the ultimate comment on pretentious "arty farties" so ubiquitous in the art world, as well as the "horse feathers"/hot air expelled by university bureaucracy.[53]

Certainly, Dono's cross-cultural differences injected some badly needed community-based concepts and strategies for those involved, but the collaborators' individual efforts could be witnessed literally "at play" on and within the completed horse structure. Unsolicited emails by "The Dream Republic" participants testify to remarkable and even "life changing"[54] experiences for some, with one student affirming "the whole collaboration [as] incredibly rewarding … [revealing] glimpses of what can be achieved … this collaborative (or communal) way of working is an incredibly important but increasingly neglected aspect of our lives."[55] Another collaborator noted: "I was truly engaged in the project as if it's part of me the whole installation sicne [sic] it allowed me to express my views and incorporate it within the project … I haven't worked on such a scale before … the whole idea of collaboration was great."[56]

In those few weeks of residency Dono, with his colleagues, had managed to discombobulate the seemingly indomitable forces of university restraint, as well as confounding fixed notions of nation versus community, volunteers versus artists, art practice versus teaching, and tradition versus modernity. Also challenged were assumptions about the practices and attitudes of high-flying global artists. At a time of contracted hopes and dashed dreams during the Howard era, this project expanded a robust sense of what is possible through art. In this way, the residency created a necessary space and voices for those involved. What resulted from the residency was firstly, a fantastic if bizarre sculpture, the likes of which had never been seen in Adelaide. Secondly, there was the lesson of how an art school might function as a community of interest sustained intensely and voluntarily, albeit over a number of weeks. All this

Figure 10: Heri Dono, collaborator, Alexander Waite and periscope inside the "Trojan Horse" gallery, "The Dream Republic," 2007, SASA Gallery, Adelaide. Image: Pamela Zeplin.

hinged on a temporary but structurally sturdy installation, a "broken down nag" built of shoddy materials with (apparently) dodgy methods; along with Dono, collaborators assumed proud ownership of this grand and crazy community project.

Two years on, a growing band of artists from three schools is now experimenting with collaborative art practices that reach beyond the conventional – and competitive – solitude so often fostered in the contemporary art scene. These include participation in subsequent projects by Heri Dono when he returned to Adelaide in 2008 and 2009.[57]

CONCLUSION

In a particularly risk-averse educational environment, this residency project demonstrated how, working together, diverse artists can create alternatives to predominant learning models and environments of cynicism, institutional constriction and competition. In this regard, Grierson reminds us that "an art school is a political institution as much as a cultural one,"[58] declaring the academy to be "a place where the investigation of ideas about the social, cultural and political are not only possible but may be explored with vigour. Engaging ethically with indeterminacy and difference … might then be possible as a condition of practice."[59]

Heri Dono and his collaborators found this may also include dealing with Occupational Health and Safety regimes and other bureaucratic hindrances to the creative *play* of ideas, actions and dreams. As Dono's Adelaide sojourns have demonstrated, art has the power to temporarily suspend the might of bureaucratic systems, even in universities.

For art education to regain confidence as a catalyst for transformation, staff, students, and occasional artists-in-residence can play an active role in "maintain[ing] … robust interrogation [and] exploration … while at the same time … invigorat[ing] and strengthen[ing] relations between art and community."[60] Re-thinking the role of residency programmes and their relation to pedagogy and communities can directly strengthen this endeavour, as can resistance to university systems that potentially hobble such projects. For this we need more stories – positive and otherwise – than the tale of one Trojan horse recounted here. Recording other narratives about the complex, internal dynamics at work within residency enterprises as they intersect with art, people and institutions may yet prove useful in strengthening art schools. Hopefully, in the meantime, this documentation can provide a means of re-invigorating – from within – a university art education sector that is currently under siege.[61]

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2   Elizabeth Grierson, "Art Academy and the Creative Community in a Globalised Place," *Publication of the Conference Papers: ACUADS 2005 Conference: Artists, Designers and Creative Communities. School of Contemporary Arts, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia, 28-30 September 2005*, ed. Su Baker, Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools, 2005, 1-12, http://www.acuads.com.au/conf2005/papers/grierson.pdf, accessed 11 November 11, 2008.

3   Noel Frankham, "Attitudes and Trends in Australian Art and Design Schools," *Refereed Papers from ACUADS 2006 Conference: Thinking the Future: Art, Design and Creativity. Faculty of Art & Design, Monash University: School of Art, Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, Victoria,* ACUADS, 2006, 10-11, 27-29, http://www.acuads.com.au, accessed 3 September 2008. In "Creative Industries" units such as at Queensland University of Technology, the term "open studio" signifies a (so-called) studio without access to skills acquired within a particular discipline.

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13   Jane Kenway, "The Ghosts of the School Curriculum: Past, Present and Future," *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 35:2 (2008), 2, http://www.aare.edu.au/99pap/, accessed 29 May 2009.

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15   Woodrow, "The Lure and Shame," 3. See also Damon Moon, "Ceramics and the Haptic Lapse," *Craft Culture Online*, 2006, http://www.craftculture.org/bench/moon1.htm, accessed 4 June 2009. See also Damon Moon, "A State of Flux: The Future of Australian Ceramics Education," *The Journal of Australian Ceramics*, 47:2 (2008).

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22   Frankham, "Attitudes and Trends," 4.

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28   Rebecca Somerville, "Les tres beaut artist residencies," *Art Review*, February 2006, http://www.artreview.com.au/art/collecting/paris-artist-residencies.aspx, accessed 25 May 2009. See also *Artlink*, "The Big Pond" (2004).

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31   Greg Leong, "Towards a Non-Eurocentric Art History/Theory Curriculum for Australian Art Schools," *Journal of Institutional Research in Australasia*, 5:2 (1996), 35-44, http://www.aair.org.au/jir/Sep96/Leong.pdf, accessed 22 October 2007. See also Christopher Crouch, "Negotiating Cross-cultural Education in the Visual Arts," *Journal of Art and Design Education*, 19:3 (2002), 297-303.

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33   Ella Delany, *The (In)visible Effect: The Deleuzian Age at CCAC*, 2000, http://www.stretcher.org/archives/r9_a/deleuze_ed.php, accessed 5 June 2009.

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36   Mark Pennings, "Relational Aesthetics and Critical Culture," *Proceedings: Transforming Aesthetics (AAANZ Conference)* (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2005), 1-10, http://eprints.qut.edu.au/archive/00006996/01/6996.pdf, accessed 21 November 2007.

37   As at 2003, Australian artists received less than $5000 per annum from their professional skills out of a total income of $20,000 from other arts-related income. See Peter Throsby and Virginia Hollister, *Don't Give Up Your Day Job: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia: A Survey of the Economic Circumstances of 1063 Practising Professional Australian Artists* (Sydney: Australia Council for the Arts, 2003), 45. See also Moore et al., *The Big Picture*, 44-5: "With steadily declining government support, the private sector offers even less support; arts and culture receiving only 0.6% of private philanthropic sponsorship in 1997."

38   Stephanie Britton, "Biennials of the World – Myths, Facts and Questions," *Artlink*, 25:3, September (2005), 34-5.

39   Kevin Murray, "Out of the Bunker: Review of Adelaide Installations," *Broadsheet*, 23:2, (Winter 1994), 18-24, http://www.kitezh.com/texts/bunker.htm, accessed 26 September 2007. See also John Neylon, "Reinvigorating Tradition," *The Adelaide Review*, 2008, http://www.adelaidereview.com.au/archives.php?subaction=showfull&id=1219885546&archive=1222319906&start_from=&ucat=18&, accessed 13 November 2008.

40   Funding by the Helpmann Academy of the Visual and Performing Arts aims to foster collaboration between arts schools in Adelaide – in this instance, The South Australian School of Art, Adelaide Central School of Art, and Adelaide Centre for the Arts (TAFE).

41   Heri Dono, personal communication, Adelaide, 10 March 2007.

42   Alison Carroll, "Asia Pacific Triennial 2002 – Starry Night," *Artlink*, 2002, http://www.artlink.com.au/articles.cfm?id=2040, acessed 2 April 2009.

43   Dono regularly conducts workshops for children, and has worked extensively with programmes at South Kids (South Project) in Melbourne, and Queensland Art Gallery's Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art.

44   Larry Polansky, "Interview with Heri Dono (Shinkhansen Train from Harima to Kobe)," *Harima Sounding Sphere Catalog*, ed. Toshie Kakinuma, 7 October 1997, http://eamusic.dartmouth.edu/~larry/misc_writings/jew_indonesia/heri.dono.interview.ht, accessed 20 December 2008.

45   Heri Dono, personal communication, Adelaide, 12 March 2007. Like "upside-down logic," this is one of the artist's characteristic sayings.

46   Debra Porch, personal comminication (telephone conversation) with the author, 18 February 2008. Porch cites the example of Lee Mingwei who created *Gernika in Sand*, at the Queensland Art Gallery, using art students from Griffith University, but who was not present during construction.

47   Nikos Papastergiadis, cited in Malcolm Quinn, "The Whole World + the Work: Questioning Context through Practice-Led Research," *Working Papers in Art and Design*, 4 (2006), http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/vol4/mqfull.html, accessed 2 December 2008).

48   A major triennial exhibition held in Queensland Art Gallery from 2003 and ongoing.

49   Mary Knights, personal communication (conversation), Adelaide, 25 March 2007.

50   Singerman, *Art Subjects*, 20.

51   Niki Sperou, personal communication with the author, 19 September 2008.

52   Keely Macarow and Philip Samartzis, "Fostering Edgy Practice at the Intersection of Sound Art and Emergency Medicine," *Sites of Activity/On the Edge: Publication of Conference Papers ACUADS 2008*, ed. K Connellan (Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools, 2008), 1, http://www.acuads.com.au/conf2008/papers/macarow_samartzis.pdf, accessed 2 April 2009.

53   Heri Dono, personal communication. Discussion with participants, Adelaide, 28 March 2007. This "machine" was a spontaneous gift to the artist by Gavin Malone.

54   Kay Lawrence, opening speech, "The Dream Republic," SASA Gallery, Adelaide, 17 April 2007. See also email correspondence to author, 17 April 2007.

55   Matt Huppatz, email correspondence to the author, 1 May 2007.

56   Bil El-Youssef, email correspondence to the author, 13 July 2007. El-Youssef continues: "I have made great friends whom [sic] made the atmosphere quiet enjoyable … it was an honour to meet with Heri … I was so committed to the whole project … it was exciting, and to see people kids etc. walking around the Trojan horse had made me feel proud of myself and of my efforts."

57   With some "Dream Republic" participants (including children), Dono completed an OZArts Festival residency, "Ose Tara Lia" (Indonesian for "Australia" and "I see nothing," which refers to Captain Cook's "Terra Nullius" declaration in 1770) at the Adelaide Festival Centre in 2008, and again in 2009 for a Hepatitis C Foundation health workshop and performance during the Womad Festival.

58   Joseph Kosuth, *Art After Philosophy and After: Collected Writings, 1966-1990*, ed. G Guercio (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993), 253. Cited in Grierson, "Art Academy," 1.

59   Grierson, Art Academy," 1, 3.

60   Ibid., 6.

THE STUDIO *SANS FRONTIÈRES*: THE OPEN STUDIO AS AN ANSWER TO THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHING CONTEMPORARY ART

Charles Robb

Interdisciplinarity is the overarching logic of contemporary art practice: today's art assumes a breadth of form and medium as diverse as social reality itself. In this "post-medium" context, fidelity to a specific branch of media is a matter of preference rather than an obligation fostered by the gravity of art historical conventions. This paper will discuss the challenges this openness has for the teaching of art at a tertiary level, by far the most common training ground for aspiring professional artists. Drawing upon my own experience as both a practitioner and studio lecturer, I will discuss how the "open" studio approach developed at QUT provides a highly effective alternative to the discipline-based studio in preparing students for both the professional reality and expressive potential of contemporary art practice.

Even the most superficial survey of contemporary art will reveal the complex and idiosyncratic spectrum of media deployed in the contemporary studio. A brief inspection of *Current: Contemporary Art from Australia and New Zealand*,[1] the most substantial recent survey of practice in our region, will reveal that more than 60 percent of the featured artists work in more than one medium, with more than half of these artists active across more than three. Medium, as a discrete part of art's ontology, has an increasingly tenuous relationship to the practice of contemporary art. This tendency towards interdisciplinarity, process, collaboration and contextuality can be understood as both a rejection of the rigid taxonomies of mid-century modernism and a synthesis of the forces of pluralism, technological convergence and social fluidity that increasingly define contemporary culture.[2] The complex interactions of art and culture have been the subject of much scholarship over the past 40 years. Lucy Lippard's seminal theorisation of the "dematerialisation of art" in the 1960s[3] has been elaborated upon by an array of contemporary critics. Rosalind Krauss's theory of the "post-medium condition,"[4] Nicholas Bourriaud's notions of "Altermodern" hybridity,[5] and the "a-disciplinarity" proposed by Jacques Rancière,[6] among countless other formulations, all acknowledge the highly dynamic and complex interactions that are characteristic of contemporary art practice and propose their own structures for making sense of its unwieldiness. And while there is much disagreement over the relationship between *medium* and the practice of contemporary art, it is widely agreed that the term can no longer be understood as a discrete and meaningful category.

It is natural that theorists will search for frameworks with which to make sense of contemporary art; after all, the job of the art critic is to contextualise and evaluate. As Thierry De Duve has noted in his essay "When Form Has Become Attitude – and Beyond," the restless temperament of contemporary art requires a comprehensive reappraisal of the educational models upon which almost all university art schools are based.[7] De Duve's article was published in the mid-1990s, a decade that saw major changes to visual art schools in our region, courtesy of their incorporation into a financially malnourished university sector with an increasingly vocational agenda. Despite the significant reappraisal of curriculum that has occurred as a result of these external forces, virtually all metropolitan Australian art schools continue to preserve discipline-based teaching approaches in their undergraduate degree programmes.[8]

Before I discuss how the "open" studio model forms a distinctive and appropriate alternative to this status quo, I would like to briefly summarise the character of the discipline-based structure as a way of partially understanding why it has been such an enduring pedagogical model.

THE DISCIPLINE-BASED STUDIO

Discipline-based studios define themselves according to the specifics of studio areas: for example, painting, sculpture, photography, drawing, printmaking and ceramics. There are many different structures, but the overarching organising principle revolves around specificity of skills base (that is, in sculpture studios, students explore sculptural form through workshops that revolve around technical processes – for example, casting, welding, carving and foundry). While theoretical aspects of the discipline may be addressed, the main emphasis is on *techne*, learning about a medium by practicing its craft.

As an educator, I can understand why the discipline-based structure is so common. Originally, it reflected the way in which art was organised historically, culturally and economically. Breaking art down into medium-based skills areas was highly appropriate to the medium-based nature of most modernist and pre-modernist art. But, equally important to studio pedagogy, discipline-based structures provide a structural framework with which to evaluate a work of art. The centrality of *techne* provides clear ways of evaluating performance, not merely in technical terms (for few would claim craft as a key arbiter of expression these days) but also according to the theoretical imperatives of *medium*: the ontological corpus accumulated by the discipline through history. But perhaps most significantly, the discipline foundation also provides a useful way of dealing with the complexity of art – by providing a constrained field via which experimentation can commence. Indeed, many course structures reflect this principle as students progress from externally imposed exercises in the first two years of study to more self-directed approaches in their final year. The discipline structure endures in art schools due to the convergence of historical and pedagogical factors.

However, despite such advantages, the discipline-based studio can be said to organise "studio thinking" in ways that are at odds with the complexity of contemporary studio practice. The act of arranging students according to medium/discipline imposes a tacit organising principle upon the kinds of experimental thinking that students will do. Despite the best appeals to open-endedness supplied by teachers, the structure of a studio will necessarily determine the range of forms it produces. Having previously taught in discipline-based studios, I have seen the way that *discipline* – as the term itself suggests – constrains the scope of the lateral, experimental thinking ostensibly championed by most art schools. In fact, I have come to see that the emphasis on skills-based learning, in defiance of the open-ended processes applied in contemporary art, is to convert the function of the art school from education to *conservation* – reducing the art studio to a place where a range of skills with an increasingly narrow range of applications in art or beyond are maintained for their own sake. I now believe that the logic of the discipline model transforms the art school to the very opposite of the dynamic, creative crucible it should be.

THE "OPEN" STUDIO

How then might the art school better reflect the conditions of contemporary art? How can the art school curriculum apply the interdisciplinary, process-based and collaborative logic of much contemporary art practice? One alternative to the discipline-based model is that of the "open studio" practiced at QUT. The open studio marks a significant departure from the structure of the conventional art school in a number of ways. Firstly, the open studio is non-disciplinary in its approach to art-making: students are not streamed according to medium or discipline. In preference to notions of medium, students are encouraged to engage with the more urgent issue of *practice* – that is, the way in which subjectivity and process unfold as a continuum of enquiry in the art studio. That is, students are immersed from the outset in a studio framework that prioritises the essential problem of developing and sustaining an art practice. The tendency of most discipline-based courses is to introduce

independent practice in the final year of the undergraduate degree. Independent practice is treated **as an advanced** competency that develops out of the sound grounding in a specific medium, to which most undergraduate attention is directed. This lack of immersion in the highly complex process of art practice may account for the fact that relatively few students proceed to independent practice directly from undergraduate studies in Australian universities.[9] The alternative that the QUT open studio proposes is to engage students in the complex challenges of independent practice from the moment they arrive on campus as first-year students.

Instead of discipline-based studio clusters or workshop areas, all students work under the same roof in a continuous network of studio spaces. While students have access to computer labs, recording equipment and workshops, their cubicle is their own "patch of turf," a nodal point in which all their interests and materials, regardless of medium, are collected together. These studio areas are surrounded by a number of satellite exhibition rooms that allow experimentation with scale and site, and provide a venue for collaboration and the documentation of works. Students inevitably work across a variety of sites – for example, the computer lab, library, workshop, home garage and installation room – the outcomes of which come together in their cubicle. The open studio is not a singular space but a network: a complex of sites in which the cubicle is the chief point of convergence.

Importantly, students are encouraged to recognise the advantages that the communal environment of the open studio provides. The lack of medium-based differentiation means that multiple art forms occur alongside one another, allowing the studios to act as genuine sites of incubation and cross-pollination as students are able to consider art-making in a variety of forms. Students are able to observe and consider the different processes and durations involved in different fields of activity and the variety of meanings that different processes elicit. This enables students to develop implicit understandings of art-making in a broad range of circumstances, an aspect of learning that is difficult to obtain in discipline-based studios.

However, this is not to say that the open studio model advocates a completely self-tailored approach to learning where "anything goes." Indeed the opposite is the case, for the success of the open approach to art-making depends on being able to provide students with frameworks for understanding studio practice, building visual literacy and developing a language with which to communicate the forms and objectives of their practice. The three-year undergraduate structure adopts a scaffolded progressive approach as follows:

FIRST YEAR: MEDIA AND SUBJECTIVITY

The vast majority of students arrive at university with a very narrow understanding of media and a very conservative view of art. One of the chief tasks of the first-year studio is that of "deprogramming" the content-driven approach to art-making fostered by the instrumentalism of most Australian secondary art classrooms and the reactionary nature of the mainstream media. In order to make the most of the course and be suitably prepared for a career as a practitioner, students need to relax their dependence on the familiar, to understand the discursive, experimental nature of art practice and to begin the process of self-examination that art-making requires. To achieve these objectives, students are required to experiment across a number of materials framed by a series of guiding tasks that revolve around the analysis of notions of subjectivity – the sense of belonging or differentiation that comprises their identity and how this is dynamic and contingent on a variety of forces.

SECOND YEAR: MATERIAL, PROCESS AND FORM

The experience of first year provides students with a growing folio of works and a broader spectrum of experiences from which their art-making can now commence. Moreover, students are now expected to be able to articulate the personal preferences and prejudices that inform their relationship to practice. This enables students to start considering the notion of practice in deeper terms – as an experiential, experimental continuum that is therefore largely process-driven. This principle of self-reflexivity is accompanied by a programme of lectures, tutorials and

critiques that analyse the formal, material and process aspects of content that occur in a work of art. In so doing, the second-year studio provides students with an apparatus for both interrogating their own works in studio, and interpreting works of art more generally. As a result, the second-year programme not only reflects the principles of visual analysis applied in history-theory units, but provides in-action case studies that deepens students' understanding of the interpretative process – a visual literacy that has application well beyond the domain of art.

THIRD YEAR: CRITICAL CONTEXTS

By the time students reach third year, they have developed a sense of the "connective tissue" that defines their practice (whether based on material, formal, processual or thematic factors) and a capacity to analyse their own work and communicate this to others. Attention then turns to notions of context, the setting of art in institutional, cultural, political and economic terms. In third year, the more rigid structures of lecture/tutorial/critique are relaxed, and a more discursive model is adopted. Group critiques take on a greater centrality than in previous years, and student works are used as case studies for engaging with the raft of issues that proceed from notions of position/location, providing entry points to the complex critical terrain of postgraduate study.

ASSESSMENT

The structure of the studio programme, by focusing on critical method and self-reflection, provides a means via which the experimental abilities of a student – his or her tolerance of "openness" – can be progressively cultivated. Of key concern through this process is providing each student with structures that compensate for the lack of qualitative measures that exist in professional practice. To enable this, students' works are assessed in relation to a "studio rationale," an exegetical document in which a student performs a visual analysis of their work. The exegesis provides a way of seeing whether students have a genuine, thorough and critical understanding of their activities and, as far as is possible, avoids issues of relativism and the "gut feel" that has historically driven the studio assessment process.

For myself, as the coordinator of the second-year studios at QUT, this has forced me to seriously scrutinise the kinds of value judgements that can be made in the face of a body of work, often incomplete and highly idiosyncratic. The process of developing lucid assessment criteria has enabled me to differentiate between value judgements about the *quality* of a work of art and the assessment of experimental method and visual literacy. Issues of quality are poorly served by summative assessment, as inevitably complex and often indefensible issues of substantiation are raised. Instead, these aspects of assessment are engaged with through the formative avenue of critique and consultation in which the speculative, discursive process of what "works" is much better suited. Creative and critical process, on the other hand, can be assessed in terms that are considerably more objective and defensible.

The four main assessment criteria I use when assessing the student's performance in the studio are as follows:

Involvement (30%): Whether the student has demonstrated a level of studio activity that reflects professional expectations. Generally, studio staff require that students devote around 24 hours per week to their practice, a "minimum" figure that balances the need for sustained studio activity with the demands placed on students by employment and other aspects of their studies.

Creative Development (30%): Whether the student is applying him or herself to the process of experimentation. In general, we expect to be continuously engaged in a developmental process: working through concurrent strands of enquiry, experimenting across material, process and form, testing ideas and adapting these based on self-evaluation.

Research and Analysis (30%): Students need to demonstrate a capacity to move beyond their intentions

to analyse the complex of meanings produced by his or her work. Students are required to prepare a "studio rationale," a paper that sets forth these ideas in a clear manner and considers the work in relation to selected relevant examples of contemporary art.

Communication (10%): The minor component of the assessment relates to the clarity of the student's use of language and documentation. Students need to observe correct academic form in their written papers through the use of suitable tone, clear expression (including grammar, punctuation and spelling) and correct referencing style. Folios are assessed via documentation alone (for example, Powerpoint, CD or DVD), not *in situ* inspection, so the quality and composition of documentation is a critical aspect of their folio.

As the above assessment criteria indicate, the exegetical component of the folio becomes a crucial aspect of evaluating students' understandings and connecting the studio process with the standard modes of academic enquiry. The exegesis thus takes the place of the discipline-based theory base, by providing external referents with which to judge student performance. Unlike discipline-based frameworks, the "studio rationale" provides an evolving critical glossary, tailored to the specifics of the student's practice. We encourage students to treat the document as a speculative one – a vehicle for deepening their engagement with practice rather than a dry "stocktake" of encoded content. The exegesis provides a lens through which the student may view his or her own work, enabling the document to function as a vital critical tool in the studio.[10] Developing communication skills also has professional benefits too, given the importance of written communication to funding and exhibition applications.

Moreover, the correlation between theory and practice inherent in the *exegetical folio* prepares students well for the conditions of postgraduate study, and QUT enjoys very strong honours and HDR progressions from its undergraduate cohorts. As Noel Frankham notes in his 2006 ACUADS conference paper, "Attitudes and Trends in Australian Art and Design Schools,"[11] professional success in the art industry is largely determined by the completion of higher study. If this is the case, the exegetical approach to studio training can be said to produce a stronger likelihood of professional success.

CONCLUSION

As has been widely acknowledged by Australian university art educators, the fiscal imperatives of the contemporary university are highly disadvantageous to the conventional mode of discipline-based teaching and compel all tertiary art schools to radically rethink the way in which art is taught. In this climate, the "open" studio as practised at QUT is a highly economical model that focuses increasingly scarce art school resources in the areas most useful to creative development and professional success. In so doing, the QUT "open studio" produces graduates with the capacity to proceed to postgraduate study and establish dynamic careers in the art studio and beyond. It incorporates the complexity of contemporary art and fosters a strong sense of independence, inquisitiveness, criticality and community through a balance between structured and discursive learning.

To not provide young artists with the critical and creative skills to cope with the real world of practice is to deny art its unique role as a cultural, technological and economic form; but, more importantly, it is to deny the student access to the essential richness of art-making – its openendedness and ambiguity.

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1   *Current : Contemporary Art from Australia and New Zealand*, ed. Art & Australia (Sydney: Dott Publishing, 2008).

2   See Victoria Lynn, "Current Fragments," in ibid., 8-10.

3   Lucy R Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

4   Rosalind E Krauss, *"A Voyage on the North Sea": Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999).

5   Nicolas Bourriaud, *Altermodern: Tate Triennial* (London: Tate Britain, 2009).

6   See "On Medium Specificity and Discipline Crossovers in Modern Art: Jacques Rancière Interviewed by Andrew McNamara and Toni Ross," *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Art*, 8:1 (2007), 99.

7   Thierry de Duve, "When Form Has Become Attitude – and Beyond," in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, eds Zoya Kocur and Simon Leung (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 19-31.

8   Based on published course information, ten of the 11 metropolitan Australian tertiary art schools observe a discipline-based studio structure: Victorian College of the Arts, RMIT, Monash University, ANU, Curtin University, University of South Australia, Sydney College of the Arts, College of Fine Arts (Sydney), University of Tasmania and Queensland College of Art (Griffith University). QUT is the only art school in this field to offer a non-discipline-based undergraduate model. (Survey conducted by author, 30 September 2009.)

9   Noel Frankham, "Attitudes and Trends in Australian Art and Design Schools," *Refereed Papers from ACUADS 2006 Conference: Thinking the Future: Art, Design and Creativity. Faculty of Art & Design, Monash University: School of Art, Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, Victoria,* ACUADS, 2006, 8, http://www.acuads.com.au.

10   See Barbara Bolt, "The Magic is in Handling," in *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, ed. Estelle Barrett (New York: IB Tauris, 2007), 27-34.

11   Frankham, "Attitudes and Trends."

⌘P_ THE SITE OF PUBLICATION IN CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE

Fiona Grieve and Monique Redmond

Publication platforms establish an expanded field of contemporary thinking and practice, devising new ways to negotiate design and visual arts discourse. The *publication platform* is a description we have coined to describe what we see as a series of "places," relational to each other in the sense of a geographical cluster – a site of creative speculation and critical reflection. We see the *platform* as a series of venues for discussion, dialogue and presentation of practice, thinking and thought. The *platform* signals our interest in the critically reflective nature of publication practice that we ourselves are engaged in as initiators, collaborators, practitioners. One of the motivations behind this discussion is an observance of how "printed spaces" have encouraged expanded practice to occur by means of collaborative relations.

These sites operate as places to publish work amongst a diversity of discourse and intentionality for the editorial team, their collaborators, artists, designers and writers. The various projects examined in this article can be differentiated from a larger category of art and design magazines in that they are strongly premised on the notion of creative practitioners being both speculative and reflective. Side-by-side, page-to-page, artists and designers exhibit, are profiled and display their artwork, whilst critically reflecting on the nature of practice through interview, reviews, articles, page works, etc. Of significance is the proliferation of opportunity led by creative individuals and teams; artists are engaging in print-based projects, designers are working collaboratively in design teams or with artists – creative practitioners are building their own galleries. What interests us is how the "publishing space" inside these scenarios engineers critically distinctive modes within a spectrum of *platform* possibilities.

Multi-faceted in its make-up, the *platform* or venue of dissemination has shifted to incorporate alternative sites for exhibition, interview, discussion and display.[1] What is distinctive about these categories is the way they both overlap and individualise a self-critical and reflective approach in the context of an editorial stance. For example, the inclusion of a photographic essay; this may simply profile and survey a photographer's artwork – versus a photo-documentary artwork made specifically for print format cognisant of the nature of the "book" form as an exhibition site. The projects we discuss here assume the site of publication as the primary point of viewing in that they each advocate a distinctive "*platform*" mode of criticality that is context-sensitive or, as we see it, "publication-format savvy."

THREADED

Threaded magazine is Fiona Grieve and Kyra Bradcock's collaborative research project. Collaboration is a key focus and occurs in a number of ways. *Threaded* seeks collaboration; guest designers and artists are invited to design their discussion across three double-page spreads. A theme is set for each edition, and previous issues include the themes: *hope and glory*, *for the love of it*, *method in the madness*, *arrivals and departures*. Practitioners can circumvent or intercept the conceptual theme or consciously ignore it as a strategy. The cover and gatefold is a sub-project

Figures 1 & 2: *Threaded* ED.4, *hope and glory*; guest designers, Designworks Enterprise IG. Cover and inside gatefold by guest photographer Holli McEntegart (Bachelor of Design, photography, 2007).

within the *Threaded* scheme – there is a macro-micro theme that runs through the gatefolds of each issue. This particular approach was instigated during collaboration with Designworks Enterprise IG for the *hope and glory* issue (ED.4), which utilised the aesthetic of handcrafted tattoos to illustrate hopes, dreams and success as a mapping and storytelling device.

The *Threaded* editorial ethos deliberately constructs concurrences between the thematic and the conceptual ideation. Consequently, personal references emerge – *for the love of it* incorporated the editor's grandmother by asking her to handwrite the editorial onto one of her recipe book pages, which was then photographed. This succinctly reinforced the theme and the endless years of home baking undertaken "for the love of it."

Figures 3 & 4: *Threaded* ED.5, *for the love of it.* Contents (pages 2-3) and editorial (pages 4-5).

In *Threaded* ED.6, the *method in the madness* issue, Alt Group designed the cover and gatefold. They employed photography to construct a stage of designed artefacts that became an index to their upcoming three double-page spreads, which expanded on the conceptual and contextual "method and madness" of each artefact. The front-page lead-in of "DO DISTURB It doesn't matter what people say, only how they laugh" exudes the distinctive attitude that exists within their design group, which is humourous, quick-witted and conceptually smart. Alt creates a series of commentaries, describes the context behind each artefact and then catalogues this information.

#3 Wine bottles. Seasoned Greetings, Alt Christmas 2007.

Alt likes to cook, eat and talk. Lunch is an institution, sometimes it's early, sometimes late, but it's always different. Meat in its many forms constitutes a large part of the diet, there are neither vegetarian options nor vegetarians, and the only vegan who has ever joined the team has since renounced his beliefs. Christmas is a time of celebration of things that are born in mangers, barns and stables. Just like our kiwi summer, barbeques and

Xmas were meant to go together. For the recipients of this gift, duck, pork and rabbit are this year's seasoned greetings. Each wine variety is paired with a young tasty animal. Quack – flame grilled duck with fresh summer salsa. Crackle – Best pork fillets with grilled asparagus and spicy spuds. Hop – Skewered rabbit in smoked bacon with grilled veg.[2]

Figures 5 & 6: Threaded ED.6, *method in the madness*. Guest designers, Alt Group. Inside gatefold (detail), #3 "Do Disturb" (pages 44-9).

The design for the dialogue that took place between painter Mark Braunias and photographer Paul Johns for ED.7, *method in the madness*, necessitated a different type of collaboration, in the first instance between themselves and secondly with *Threaded*. The layout design undertaken by *Threaded* had to embed the artistic methodologies, sensibilities and attitudes of their collaboration. In conversation, Mark and Paul often amuse themselves with boys' club gossip; hence the title, "The Gail Manifesto – Images Will Dominate" (where they refer to "Gail" on *Coronation Street*). This piece employs a conceptual overlay that binds the interview into a work in its own right. Cell-phone texting documented over three months locates the dialogue as a personal, responsive text. *Threaded* employs the construct of the interview in a number of ways; collaborators are encouraged to exploit critical conventions whilst simultaneously being humorous, highly self-conscious, disruptive or domineering in approach. The interview is essentially used as a critical device through which to critique the nature of the dialogue in action. Practitioners profiled lead and present themselves, as they want to be seen. Often the designer/artist is positioned as both interviewer and interviewee, encouraging an open-ended dialogue between participants.

Figures 7 & 8: *Threaded* ED.6, *method in the madness*. Mark Braunias and Paul Johns, "The Gail Manifesto" (pages 38-43).

PILOT

PILOT is a high-end production new to the *platform*; editor-in-chief is Andy Pickering, editorial design and layout is by Inhouse (Arch MacDonnell), and display typefaces are by Klim Type Foundry. *PILOT* draws on a very particular group of expertise. It is an evolving project; the curatorial aspect is highly selective with regard to whom they profile. This is demonstrated through the inclusion in Issue 1 of critically informed and sophisticated pieces such as *Fetish* by film director David Lynch and shoe designer Christian Louboutin, and James Jean's *Flip Fantasia* for Prada's Spring–Summer 2008 campaign. Both contribute to the authenticity of the Zeitgeist concept *PILOT* champions: they are intent on capturing an elusive quality that purports to embody "the spirit and ambience of an era." "Pilot aspires to be something new by blending different qualities to create a crafted hybrid of manifesto, art gallery, magazine periodical, archive, and yes, book."[3]

PILOT's curatorial approach utilises the editor as director; articles are "curated" in some sense, and there is evidence of highly choreographed art direction via fashion photography styling, and astute management of subject, object and image relationships. This is coupled with the feeling that the directorial policy is responsive to the commissioning of works through the exclusive calibre and selection of featured practitioners. *PILOT* works strongly with the theatrics of the photographic medium to transport stories and pictorial investigations, which in turn intensifies the stylish production quality as demonstrated in "The Origin of Species," an interview with still-life photographer Flora Olbiensis. With "The Cabinet of Curiosities," *PILOT* takes on the original intent of a museum "cabinet" and focuses their design as an iteration of this format. *PILOT* institutes a historical take on the idea of a cabinet of curiosities. The editorial presence is strong in leading the reader through an experience of viewing and uncovering a "collection." The pictorial cabinets impart a museological aesthetic and reinforce the relationship between editor and designer and *PILOT*'s focus on high-end construction.[4] It is this type of articulation and reference to other modalities, such as the museum, the studio subject and the construed object that critically locates *PILOT* on the *platform*.

Figure 9: *PILOT* Issue 1, "Fetish" exhibition. Photography by film director David Lynch, in collaboration with shoe designer Christian Louboutin (pages 90-5).

Figure 10: *PILOT* Issue 1, "Flip Fantasia." James Jean, imagery for Prada's Spring–Summer 2008 campaign (pages 160-67).

Figure 11: *PILOT* Issue 1, "The Origin of Species," interview with still-life photographer Flora Olbiensis by Erwan Frotin (pages 50-57).
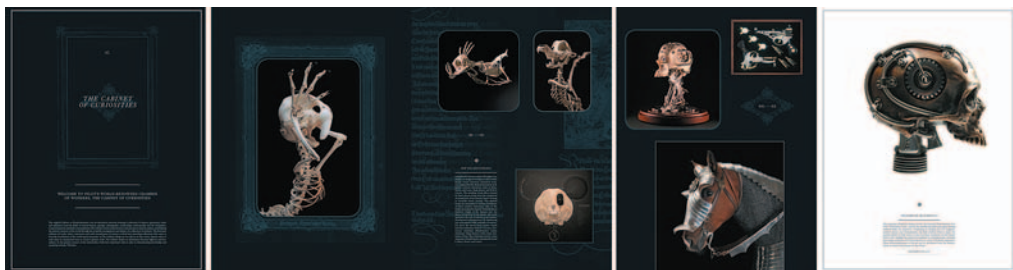

Figure 12: *PILOT* Issue 1, Hyungkoo Lee, "The Cabinet of Curiosities & Animatus" (pages 96-113).

CERTAIN WORDS DRAWN

Certain Words Drawn is the most significant collaboration between designer Arch MacDonnell and John Reynolds to date. The design scopes the diversity of John's practice – drawing, painting, installation, photography, performance – and sensitively responds to the conceptual variance of each of his projects. The book has been deliberately managed through the commissioning of different writers, adding a multi-voiced component to what is essentially a critical anthology. Arch and John together infuse an autographic presence into the publication; as a reader, you are very aware of John's "hand" at play in the design process. The limited-edition series of hand-sprayed covers illustrate the one-off original artwork typical of John's modus operandi, and reveal a quality that replicates the immediacy of his drawing process and artistic approach.

Figures 13 & 14: *Certain Words Drawn*, John Reynolds and Arch McDonnell, limited edition covers, 2008.

The contexts that John's work operates within are key signifiers for understanding and "seeing" John's work. *Certain Words Drawn* exemplifies a form of context-sensitive print practice; different design formats are employed to speak to these qualities. Where John takes on a pseudonym, a character called Marcus Aurelius, the design for this section operates between diary and documentary, and the performance of "being Marcus Aurelius." The format entertains the nature of the character and his subsequent activities and meanderings. "In December 2007, John Reynolds in high shape-shifting mode, travelled to New York and checked for signs of infectious displacement, dizziness and vertigo which he recorded as entries in a travel diary."[5] Daily commentary in the form of random text and observation, alongside snapshots of Marcus Aurelius in New York, form the documentation of the project. Situating this type of "passage" inside a book of artistic practice establishes a critical focus that is distinctive to this publication; it is both anthology and artwork.


Figures 15 & 16: *Certain Words Drawn*, John Reynolds drawing on Marcus Aurelius posters. John Reynolds at Sue Crockford Gallery, Auckland (pages 193-207).

CARDBOARD BOX

Cardboard Box is Auckland-based and is co-edited by Sharon Russell and Nicola McNabb. Both Sharon and Nicola went to art school at AUT University, New Zealand; Sharon majored in photography, Nicola in print. During their time at AUT they rented a space in Canterbury Arcade and ran a gallery for a short time. Their new space is *Cardboard Box*. There is a fun tone to *Cardboard Box*; it is relatively scrapbook-like in its manufacture and outer appearance, and shows a variety of visual arts research and design activity. There is a little bit of an art club feel going on … the regulars are their pals from art and design schools across Auckland. *Cardboard Box* is not overly specific about its contents page, using section divisions such as art, craft, music, fashion, interviews, profiles, rants, reviews of events, blogs. As a platform for "what they have been doing lately," *Cardboard Box* offers a post-art school site for publication. Artist profiles are presented through question-and-answer-type formats. There is a strong influence of the autographic in the cobbling together of interesting stories, write-ups and projects, using devices such as hand-drawn and cut-and-paste.

What is interesting about *Cardboard Box* in reference to the *platform* is the links it makes between sites of production; it moves between art and craft in an explorative deployment of the "art meets craft/ craft meets art" manner, instigating an expanded practice approach. Sharon Russell (co-editor) utilises a craft base in her art practice (drawing and photography). Her graduating show at AUT presented photographs "depict(ing) a young woman clad only in various curiously non-functional items of knitware." The "works create a tension between comfort and discomfort. Where there is the sacredness that knitting connotes, there is then the profanity, albeit familiarity, of the body — the hair, the blemishes, the unkempt nails are all recognizable in their vaguely grotesque yet beautiful monstrosity. In this series I aim to provoke a visceral response by spotlighting a fleshy self-consciousness."[6] Russell's business card states she is a "Knitter Photographer." *Cardboard Box* endorses the new modes of criticality and practice licensed by the *publication platform*.
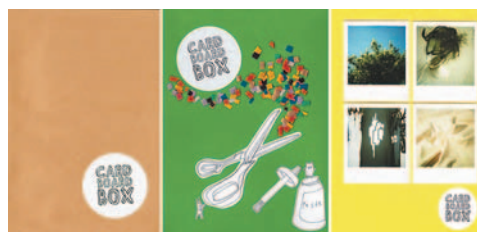
Figures 17 & 18: *Cardboard Box* covers, Issue #1, #2, #3. *Cardboard Box* Issue #2, Natasha Cantwell interview.
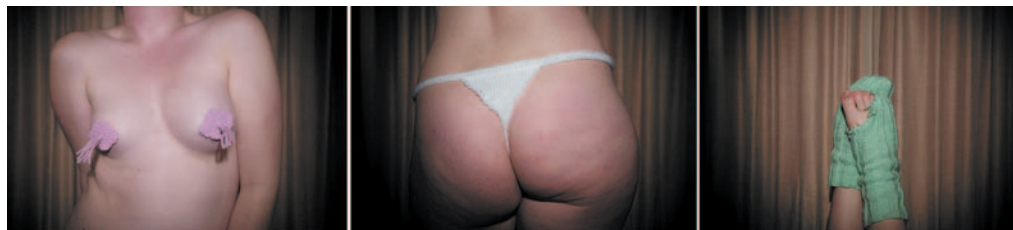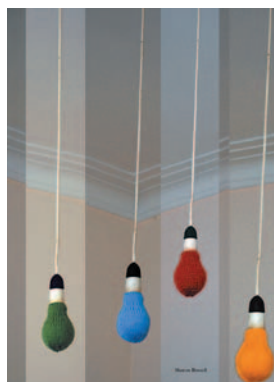
Figure 19: Sharon Russell, series: *A fleshy self: consciousness*, 2007.

Figures 20, 21 & 22. *Cardboard Box* Issue #2 – Sharon Russell, *Profile*; Sharon Russell, *Lightbox*, 2008; Sharon Russell, *Guerilla Knitting* project, K Road Business Association commission, 2009.

THE NATIONAL GRID

The National Grid is Jonty Valentine and Luke Wood. This is a serious "made in New Zealand" international graphic design publication. Serious because these boys are all about graphic design – they both lecture in graphic design and practice as graphic designers. They have a point of view about graphic design and are keen to share it. *The National Grid* is their platform for expounding their ideas. There is a particular design value evident in the editorial statement, which also manifests in the visual look of the publication and the selection of participants and projects. *The National Grid* retrieves historical practice and invests it with a currency through its inclusion of articles on graphic design histories. They invite submissions, stating, "Our interests are varied, but submissions should be (even if tangentially or divergently) relevant to contemporary graphic design."[7] On their website, in the "About Us" section, they have a diagram instead of the usual background blurb. In conversation with Monique Redmond, Jonty Valentine explains their take …

> MR: It reads a bit like a manifesto – is that how you see it? It has a different tone to other "About Us" – it seems more grounded in a research context ... and it has words like cannibalism, alchemy ...

> JV: It is definitely pretty tongue-in-cheek. So we didn't really intend it to mean much initially – more just words we like. However, after doing it, it was weird how it actually did kind of make sense. …The other thing is that the idea of doing a diagram or a map of *The Grid* was partly a dig at the meaningless "Better By Design" report/manifesto from a few years ago. It is a crazy pseudo-scientific salvation narrative funded by the government, and it has all sorts of Venn diagrams and bar graphs explaining how Design is going to save NZ industry. I'll attach it (see pages 30, 34, 36, 50). … And lastly, we have a recurring theme of (nonsense) diagrams going through each issue of *The National Grid*.
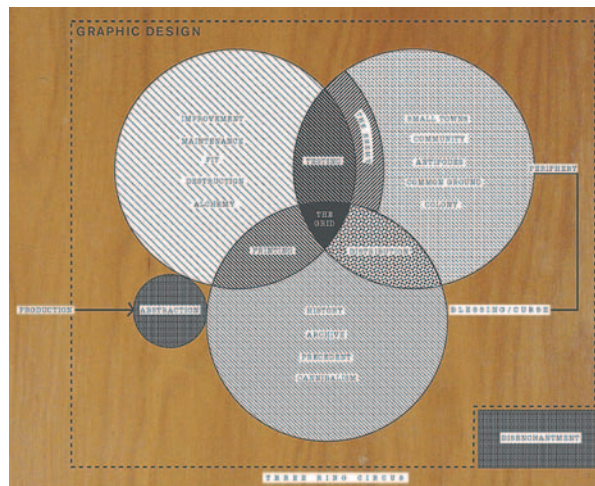

Figure 23: *The National Grid* website, Jonty Valentine and Luke Wood. "About Us," http://www.thenationalgrid.co.nz/.

In *The National Grid*, Issue 1, there is what appears to be an editorial, titled "Index* More paranoid-critical map than editorial."[8] It is embedded with a series of small commentaries listed under various subheadings – these are not ramblings, but articulated concepts that are linked intrinsically through their common conversation.[9] The form of this layout is non-hierarchical, the text reads as the sum of its parts, maintaining the sense that each point is of equal importance.
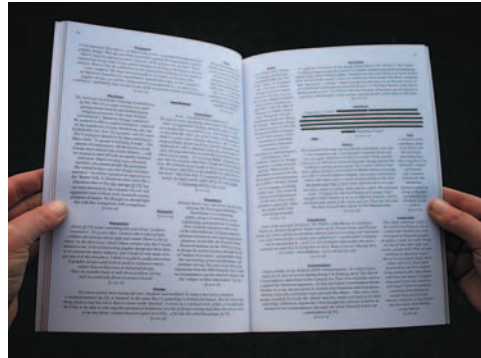
Figures 24 & 25: *The National Grid* #1, Jonty Valentine and Luke Wood. "Index* More paranoid-critical map than editorial," (pages 35-9).

The National Grid #5 presents *Tween*, initiated by Kelvin Soh (who is one half of The Wilderness). *Tween*, the project, is an ongoing intervention in the form of a poster positioned in the slippage of time between shows (dead time) – located out the front of Artspace on K'Rd in Auckland. Referred to as an "inhibition poster" (as opposed to exhibition poster), it operates as a placeholder or intermission.[10] In some sense, it is an exhibition in an "in-between" site. Copies of the posters are inserted at intervals into *The National Grid* #5 – again operating as markers, but in this instance between articles.
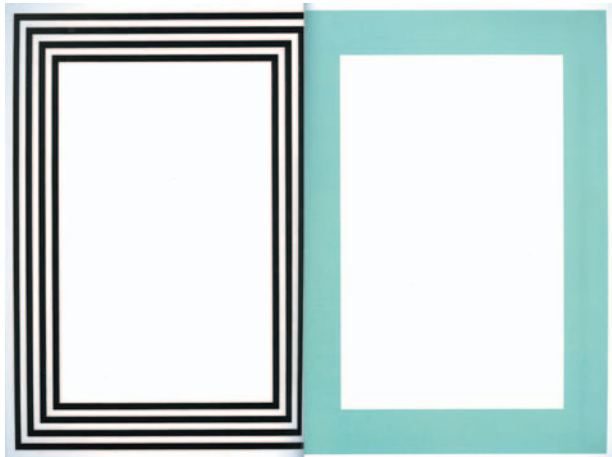
Figures 26 & 27: *The National Grid* #5, Kelvin Soh and Sarah Hopkinson, *Tween* (pages 30-3).

A COMMONPLACE BOOK

The artist publication *A Commonplace Book* was the "first event" for the ATTRIUM project. Attrium is a research collective that comprises eight researchers from AUT and RMIT universities.[11] Jonty Valentine, in describing the proposed design concept for the publication, states "that the conceptual framework for our exploration of the idea of *publication* will be prompted, as a starting point at least, by a re-examination of the concept of the Commonplace Book."[12] The form of *A Commonplace Book* is treated as an everyday item, with reference here to the Collins Diary. The book itself contained no text outside of the imprint and back cover artist text. The first page of each artist's section has 01-08 printed on the bottom right corner, which refers to the "Index" that is embossed in gold on the

back cover. *A Commonplace Book* does not follow the usual form of a book. Whilst it is representative of "book" form, the pages are compiled as a series of folded posters (A1®A4/A5), bound with two edges trimmed. The top edge (perforated fold) has to be ripped open by the viewer. The performative nature of having to "rip open" the poster-pages of each artist section was, in part, a means to engage in a new form of exhibition space as well as a take on the artistic concept for the project – "event."

Figure 28: Attrium project, *A Commonplace Book*. Jonty Valentine, Publication Design, 2008.
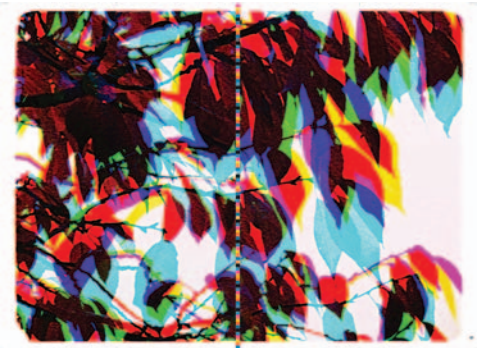
Figures 29 & 30: Attrium project, *A Commonplace Book*. Nova Paul artwork & poster, *Pink and White Terraces*, 2006, 16mm film stills.

Figure 31: Attrium project, *A Commonplace Book*. David Thomas artwork, 2008.

Sally Mannall's *Case*[13] took the notion of the event as a point of "discovery." Sally found a case in a second-hand shop, admiring it for its suitcase character. It was a complete surprise to her to find that this seemingly beautiful object was actually a gun case. This experience in itself came to be seen and understood as an event. The unfolding of the poster, in a literal sense, had the potential to enable a certain level of discovery to occur. The perforations of the poster folds contained the interior view. Sally wanted her pages to conceptually mimic the experience of looking inside the case. Parallel to this, she made a video work for the two Attrium exhibitions[14], where different people were invited to enter a room and investigate the object on a chair, the gun case. The video work both actuates and records this experience.
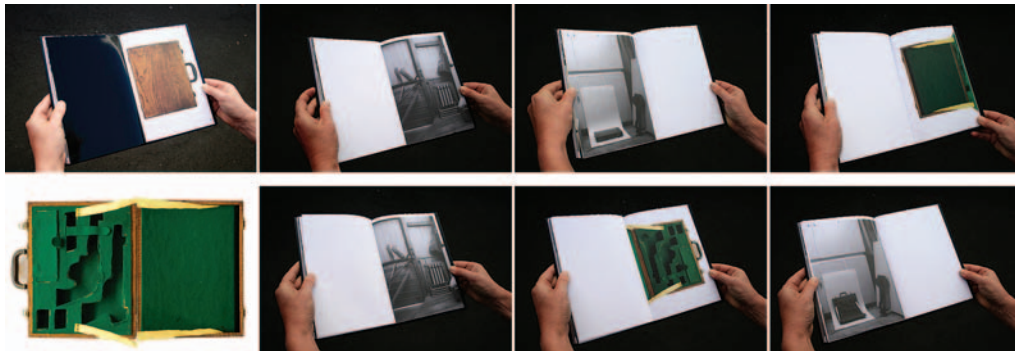

Figure 32: Attrium project, *A Commonplace Book*. Sally Mannall artwork, *Case*, 2008.

Figure 33: Sally Mannall, stills from *Case*, 2008. DVD, 12.14 minutes (exhibited in Attrium exhibitions, July-August 2008).

Monique Redmond's *The Visit*[15] documents a visit to see "Ayrlies" in Whitford on 19 June 2007, a 12-acre country garden near Howick begun in 1964. The work itself is a documentary of a morning outing. Monique was interested in the idea that both the book form and poster could offer an encapsulated experience, a documentary, a re-enactment of the event – and that by viewing the pages the visit would be translated within a section of time. The book pages demand being read in book form, unlike the poster. The first images are moving documentaries, a series of driveby photos that record the glance, the moment of noticing. They track the journey to and from the garden site. The black and white images are an archive of every image taken on the visit. Monique photographed walking, noting everything she saw. "I wanted to create an index of my wanderings."[16] Time recordings are listed under each image to set up a sense of actuality and recall to the event. The colour images are richer; they formalise the experience, objectifying the view, the object and the site, and are in a sense more idyllic in nature. *A Commonplace Book* enables a different type of collaboration to occur. Here the environment of the book positions the artist and designer in a collaborative tryst, the publication a product of this interaction.

Figures 34 & 35: *A Commonplace Book*. Monique Redmond artwork, *The Visit* ["Ayrlies," Whitford, 19 June 2007], 2008.

In surveying *Threaded, PILOT, Certain Words Drawn, Cardboard Box, The National Grid* and *A Commonplace Book*, the key characteristic that interweaves and locates their relevance to the *platform* is a performing of criticality. What is most interesting about these publications is their collaborative undertakings and how they each challenge the conventions of "promotional-style packaging of practice." A central argument in this discussion is the idea that content is in effect practice, and that the criticality of a publication is reliant on the authenticity and intelligence of the collaboration at hand. The idiosyncratic aspects that belong to a publication reveal the aspirations of the editorial group, exposing particular curiosities and attitudes whilst incorporating a sense of criticality and distinctiveness. The *publication platform* consists of a mass of overlapping discourse, intentionality and difference. What we see as being intrinsic and interesting in this discussion is the capacity of publications to interconnect and construct new sites of expanded practice whilst being engaged in critical speculation.

Fiona Grieve is a Senior Lecturer in Graphic Design and Animation at Unitec, Department of Design and Visual Arts, in Auckland. Her interest in design and visual art curriculum development and pedagogy has most recently resulted in the co-authoring of a one-year certificate and a three-year practitioner-focused degree in design and visual arts. Along with Kyra Bradcock, she is a founding member of the Threaded Project that intersects both educational and professional domains of practice.

Monique Redmond lives in Mt Albert, New Zealand. Her art practice is focused on documentary, event and everyday occurrence – particularly in relation to suburban contexts, with an interest in site, habitation, planting and gardening. Recent projects include *Treespotting*, a collaboration with Tanya Eccleston for *Threaded* magazine (July-October 2009); *Pohutukawa Forest* for The Enchanted Garden at the New Gallery, AAG (December 2008-February 2009); and the Attrium Research Collective publication and exhibition project, Project Space, Melbourne and St Paul St Gallery, Auckland (July-August 2008). Monique is a senior lecturer, programme leader and postgraduate strand leader for visual arts at AUT University.

1   "Exhibition" incorporates artist-initiated projects, artists/designer collaboration, work made specifically for publication, photographic essays, artwork, illustration, drawing projects, text-based projects. "Interview:" profiles, questions posed, interview as discussion/exchange, informal conversation, template interviews, profiles that are biographical, autobiographical, based on pseudonyms. "Discussion:" critique and analysis, reflection, response, articles, review, diagrams, research, art projects, design projects. "Display:" artworks, graphic and typographical work, pageworks, book projects, artist/designer/maker profiles, documentation of artistic work. See F Grieve and M Redmond, "⌘P_Intersections in Practice," in *Mahi Toi, ANZAAE Conference*, Dunedin, New Zealand, 2009.

2   Alt Group, "Do Disturb: Seasoned Greetings, Alt Christmas 2007," *Threaded*, ED.6 (2008), 49.

3   Editorial statement, *PILOT*, 1 (2009), 1.

4   "WELCOME TO PILOT'S WORLD-RENOWED CHAMBER OF WONDERS, THE CABINET OF CURIOISITIES. The original Cabinet or Wunderkammer was an alternative universe housing a collection of objects, specimens, relics and ephemera from the fields of natural history, geology, ethnography, archaeology, anthropology and the antiquities. A sacred space for scholarly contemplation, The Cabinet is best understood as a microcosm or memory palace, symbolising the patron's mastery of the world through the symbolic arrangement and display of a collection of artefacts … In The Cabinet things are not always as they seem, objects relate to each other in unexpected ways to reveal a greater truth … Welcome." Ibid., 97-113.

5   John Reynolds, *Certain Words Drawn: John Reynolds Continued*, ed. L Simmons (Auckland: Random House, 2008).

6   From artist's statement on the series *A fleshy self: consciousness* (Russell, 2007).

7   Jonty Valentine and Luke Wood, "Submissions," http://www.thenationalgrid.co.nz/.

8   Jonty Valentine and Luke Wood, "Index," *The National Grid*, 1 (2006), 37-9.

9   Sub-headings: Peripheral, Manifesto, Resonance, Print, New Zealand (*crossed out*), Somewhere, Research, Negotiation, Garage, Better, Borrowing, Intentions (*mostly crossed out*), History, Grid, Pseudonym, Commonplace, Loose-ends, Peripheral, Print, Manifesto, New Zealand (*crossed out*), Somewhere, Resonance, Research, Negotiation, Garage. Ibid.

10 K Soh and S Hopkinson, "Tween," *The National Grid*, 5 (2009), 30-3.

11 Attrium is a research collective/project that comprises eight researchers, four from AUT University, NZ, and four from the 'Art, Time and Space' Research Cluster in the School of Art, RMIT University, Australia. The title of the project, Attrium (an anagram of RMIT and AUT), promotes the sense of a gathering space, an open-ended and negotiable research site.

12 The idea of commonplace books dates back to antiquity. Originally employing them as a memory aid, orators would "go" to metaphorical "places" to gather their arguments. As the *places* took physical form and became literal places (i.e., books), commonplace books became the precursors of modern reference books. They were often personal collections of things that their owners found to be important, but ranged from random collections to thoroughly researched scholarly volumes. See J Valentine and M Redmond, *Event: Artistic Collaboration inside the Research Space of a Publication* (Auckland: AUT University, 2007).

13 "Case" – an intimate environment that encloses a threat that stretches across the world's community, if only in our minds.

14 "Event: The Attrium Project" exhibition at Project Space/Spare Room, Melbourne, and "The Buzzing Confusion of Things" at St Paul St Gallery, Auckland, mid-2008.

15 "The Visit" – the idea of a visit as an event, where you go somewhere just to look at something. An outing.

16 Grieve and Redmond, "⌘P_Intersections in Practice."

IF WE KNEW WHAT WE WERE DOING…

Lesley Duxbury

The title of this article is the first part of a quote by Albert Einstein, which concludes, "… it wouldn't be called research would it?"[1] It seemed particularly apt in the context of research through art, especially within the current climate in schools of art where researchers are required to address real-world issues and relate research topics to those prescribed by the university. How do we relate our work as artists to problems and concerns in the world?

My interest in this subject is informed by my experiences as an artist-academic. I am a practicing, exhibiting artist and academic with an expectation to produce accountable research outcomes and to apply for research income. In arguing that art can contribute to new knowledge and offer new ways of imagining and encountering the world, I will partly reflect upon my own experience as an artist and a researcher and I will also look to the work and ideas of other artists and to some of the current thinking about research through art.

Returning to the title of this article, "If we knew what we were doing …," I would like to consider what it is that artists can bring to research and reveal as knowledge through their, often, idiosyncratic methodologies. Artists enter into many projects with eyes metaphorically closed, diving in with no clear idea of the direction their work might take and opening up the problem or focus to possibility rather than probability. In a recent paper, Graeme Sullivan writes about the ways that imaginative insight can be constructed through a creative approach.[2] He considers the methods of more conventional forms of research, such as having clearly defined intentions or objectives derived through knowing what is already known or what has been done, to which he applies this "positivist mantra": "*if you don't know where you are going, how do you know when you get there?*"[3] or, in other words, if you know what you are aiming for, then you will know when you have the answer. He says that this is how we construct probable theory. Alternatively, plausible theory, according to Sullivan, is constructed when knowledge is explored as a difference in kind or quality, and can be summed up in the maxim, "*if you don't know where you are going, then it is best to surround a problem in order to solve it.*"[4] Neither of these paths, Sullivan suggests, is appropriate to the ways we go about research as artists, and he posits an alternative maxim: "*if you don't know where you are going, then any road will get you there.*"[5] In this way, Sullivan argues, we are able to construct possibility rather than seeing enquiry as linear or an enclosing process. He claims that, "research acts can also be interactive and reflexive whereby imaginative insight is constructed from creative and critical practice. Oftentimes what is known can limit the possibility of what is not and this requires a creative act to see things from a new view."[6]

ART AS KNOWING OR THE ART OF NOT-KNOWING

According to G Refsum, the condition of "not-knowing" is familiar to many artists and may even be considered to be a necessary condition for those who create.[7] By citing this remark I do not mean to imply that artists only create in an unconscious or unthinking way, but that there are gaps that cannot be accounted for in the intersecting network of ideas, thoughts, images and experiences that combine in the creation of artwork. Unlike more conventional forms of research, creative work does not necessarily adhere to objectivity or follow a linear process, and methodology is difficult to determine if it cannot allow for the unpredictable or the ways that art often emerges out of a playful engagement with materials and media. Rather than knowing which road to take, an artist may simply set off and by not-knowing become interested in things.

Although I commenced a PhD having a clearly defined project, in reality and with the benefit of hindsight, it was an immensely speculative investigation. My project was to investigate ways in which atmospheric phenomena, or the conditions of the weather, permeate our lives and condition the ways we see the world both as a physical exterior and as an internalised mental process. An important consideration in my project was my own experiential relationship to the environment; how I experienced the natural world, especially the atmosphere, and how I consequently presented it in artwork to be re-experienced by a viewer. I use the phrase "the ways we see the world" deliberately to denote not only the physical act of looking, but also the relationship of seeing to perception, of using the senses to acquire information about one's surroundings and sense of place. In the context of research it may seem incongruous to include the simple act of walking, but it turned out to be not only an essential activity through which I gathered information for my project but also the way in which I have continued my research.[8]

JUST LUCKY?

We have few examples regarding artists and their relation to research but, as more artist-academics in universities attain creative PhDs and continue to construct research projects within academia, it should become more mainstream and accepted, especially if artists are able to work in interdisciplinary groups. Some countries have already accepted that artists do research and welcome artists' contributions, although there continues to be much debate about the nature of that contribution. In the United Kingdom for example, many artists are financially supported to research.

In 2005 the English artist Simon Starling was awarded the inaugural Cove Park Commission, which is a residency designed to support a period of artistic research rather than to commission a tangible outcome. Starling considers himself to be "just a lucky guy," not only because he won the commission and was awarded the Turner Prize in the same year, but he is also "lucky" in the sense that, while researching, he creates fortuitous conditions that allow for unexpected and uncontrolled coincidences and chance findings to occur. The skill, he says, is in identifying them when they happen and realising their significance. In this way his approach to research is, as he describes it, very un-academic:

> I mean it's not structured in a way that would make sense within the normal understanding of academic research. It's pretty shambolic, to be honest. It takes many, many forms. I mean, there is a degree of rooting round in libraries and that kind of thing, but it's only one small part of the way that the research for each project develops.[9]

Starling goes on to explain the form his research takes: from a confusion of verbal information to things picked up in the pub and things stumbled upon by accident. He describes it as being like "a big Velcro-covered ball" to which some things stick and some fall off and then, out of nowhere, something suddenly becomes the key to the project – but, all in all, it is very difficult to explain: "so, yeah, it's not a clear thing in any way, but it seems, it's just the way it's developed within the practice and it's quite difficult to talk about because it's so unformalised. But perhaps that's true of everybody."[10]

So, according to Starling, luck plays a part in research, but it is also something that he finds hard to put into words; as he describes it, "You just develop a nose for what might at some point be significant."[11] He also articulates the ways in which luck also happens in the science laboratory, but that scientists don't trust it – according to the conventions of scientific research they need to repeat it in order to verify it. Starling's interviewer, Ross Birrell, describes his methodology as "knowing an instrument well enough in advance to allow you to improvise"[12] – many artists, on the other hand, trust their approach as speculative knowledge, a leap of faith; not knowing exactly where it's going but trusting that the process will be worth it.

MELT

In 2008 I initiated *Melt*, a research project-as-exhibition designed to address the pertinent, real-world issues of climate change – the starting point being a long, isolated walk I made two years previously in an extreme environment. The 13-day walk in Baffin Island in the Canadian Arctic along glaciated river valleys – during which I waded across raging, icy torrents and traversed the nose of a glacier wearing crampons – not only kept me alert and acutely aware of my surroundings, but also afforded me time for reverie and unprovoked thoughts and imaginings. Consequently, when I embarked on the research for *Melt*,[13] I drew upon both my physical and mental experiences of this extraordinary walk. I already had a curiosity about the ways that artists might address the topical issue of climate change, and I invited two artists who had been to Antarctica on New Zealand Antarctica Fellowships to join me to explore some of the associated issues through our individual personal experiences of the polar regions – areas which have become important barometers of the warming planet. We didn't collaborate, but our common intentions unified the disparate work.

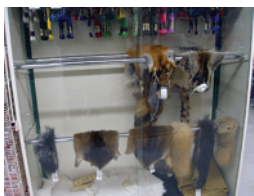Figure 1: View of Qikiqtarjuaq.

Figure 2: In the supermarket, Qikiqtarjuaq.

Figure 3: Polar bear skin, Qikiqtarjuaq.

Figure 4: Seal skin, Qikiqtarjuaq (images courtesy of the author).

To put my part of the project into context: before embarking on the walk, I spent some days in an Inuit community on a tiny island to the north of Baffin Island, waiting for the weather to improve enough to allow a safe boat journey up the fiord to the start of the walk. In Qikiqtarjuaq, I wandered among modern prefabricated houses and shopped in a supermarket that did not want for most of the goods one could find in the more civilised Canadian cities. But among the rows of foodstuffs and domestic items, I found animal skins and spare parts for skidoos. Between the

neat rows of houses hung enormous, gallows-like structures over which polar bear skins were drying and seal pelts were stretched on smaller frames leaning against walls close to doorways. Women squatted in the streets over fish and seals, gutting them and preserving every part. Despite the outward appearance of modernity, the inhabitants were steadfastly preserving their ancient culture and ways of living. My experience of my time in the Arctic was an amalgam of physical encounters with a harsh environment and with an indigenous population who had been adapting to these conditions for hundreds of years. On my return to Australia, I read extensively about the early Arctic explorers and the changing climatic conditions and considered all these facets of my Arctic experience when starting to think about making artwork. My research question in terms of the exhibition became: "In what ways could disparate and phenomenological experiences be accounted for in a project regarding contemporary issues about climate change?"

LOST (FOR) WORDS

While I was tossing around ideas and thoughts for the *Melt* project, what was uppermost in my mind was how the reality of climate change was so inconceivable, so unthinkable, that actually no words could describe it. Even at this early stage of the project I was not thinking in words; in fact, I was not able to think in words. I started to play around

Figure 5: *Lost(for)Words-24 words for snow* (wax, wood, screenprint), 2008.

Figure 6: *Lost(for)Words-24 words for snow* (detail) (wax, wood, screenprint), 2008 (images courtesy of the artist).

with materials that could represent ice, such as chalk and plaster, and eventually I stumbled upon wax. While in the Arctic, I had become fascinated with the Inuit language and text – it has so few vowels and so many consonants used rarely in English – "q," "k" and "j," for example – and in the back of my mind was the fact, or possibly the myth, that they had dozens of words for "snow." On the 13-day walk I took over 500 photographs and, somehow, for the exhibition I distilled these down to three images that represented … what? I'm still not sure what it was about the three selected images that I found so compelling and so representative of the journey. At the time, I was also reading about early explorers' attempts to locate and traverse the North-West Passage – one generation's story overlaid the last until the present day, when it appears the Arctic might be ice-free within just a few years. And I was also reading newspapers, the latest reports and predictions of climate change. I used the term, *Lost(for)Words* as a prefix in the titles of all the works I produced, combining three words to make one "nonsensical" word; if one were to take away the bracketed word, then *Lost Words* would remain – loss of words equalled loss of culture and loss of environment.

In *Lost(for)Words – 24 words for snow*, I cast 24 panels in wax from polyethylene containers, cooling the melted wax in the fridge, which produced ice-like formations in the wax. Into each I carved one of the Baffin Island Inuit words for snow (I discovered that there actually were 24 words for snow in Baffin Island Inuit), barely legible except when

viewed in a raking light. By placing them on shelves, I wanted to indicate the redundancy of the words and the ice – and therefore, eventually, the Inuit culture. I accompanied the panels with a white-on-white screen print of text which contained the key to the wax panels, the meanings of each of the snow words – again, barely readable, lost white words in a lost white background.

I digitally manipulated the three selected photographs mentioned above (*Lost(for)Words-CO2, N2O and CH4*) to remove the "cool" colours – the blues and greens – and left only the reds, the "warm" colours, in response to ideas about global warming, which rendered the images familiar yet eerily strange. A shadow in the sky of each, caused by transparent vinyl lettering on the glass of the frame, indicated one of the three main greenhouse gasses – CO_2 (carbon dioxide), N_2O (nitrous oxide) and CH_4 (methane) – the strange chemical formulas being also a form of unreadable text or lost words.

Figure 7: *Lost)for)Words-CO2,* (inkjet print), 2008.

Figure 8: *Lost(for)Words-N2O,* (inkjet print), 2008.

Figure 9: *Lost(for)Words-CH4,* (inkjet print), 2008 (images courtesy of the artist).

Figure 10: *Lost(for)Words-account* (detail) (9 inkjet prints), 2008 (image courtesy of the artist).

Lost(for)Words – account, was a nine-panel work in which I overlaid many tales of the Arctic exploration, one over the other, which rendered them unreadable except for a single word in each. When read together with the words in the other frames, a mournful, nostalgic phrase was revealed – "yearning for the snow and ice that have disappeared forever." I used the word "account" to apply to the tale that was told through history and also in the sense of "to bring to account" or require an explanation of a mistake or poor performance. As described by Lisa Byrne in the exhibition catalogue essay, the work "Evokes a haunting sense of oblivion. As containers of loss through poetic interplays of language, ephemeral materiality and landscape the works appear to be visually dissolving in front of us …."[14]

WHEN IS A CAR NOT A CAR?

While we have few examples of real-life interdisciplinary, collaborative research projects involving artists, I recently came across an extraordinary one between the German car manufacturer BMW and the artist Olafur Eliasson, which took place in 2008 when Eliasson was commissioned by BMW to "envisage a car based on their hydrogen-powered H2R model."[15]

Eliasson's overarching concerns are with the ways we perceive the world and the relationship between perception and reality, for which he creates installations and sculptures, many based on the landscapes and environment of his familial home in Iceland. In his works he frequently incorporates natural phenomena such as ice, mist and natural light, often artificially constructing them within the gallery to challenge the ways that we encounter the world around us.

His aim with the BMW hydrogen car project was not to produce a new car model for BMW, but to play with and engage with some of the things that a car stands for in order for us to focus on the changing world and the consequences of our role in these changes. Through this project he eschewed the usual precepts for the design of new cars, such as designing them as desirable commodities or fetish objects with no consideration of their relationship to their surroundings. His focus was not on the most profitable way a car can move us around or to be in competition with rival models, but to "reintroduce time as the key producer of our experiences. Reality then becomes temporal reality."[16] In this way, the car becomes more than simply a vehicle for transportation. In Eliasson's hands, it goes beyond being a status symbol and a means of getting from one place to another; it becomes a collective concern. He says that: "By bringing together art, design, social and environmental issues, I hope to contribute to a different way of thinking-feeling-experiencing cars and seeing them in relation to the time and space in which we live."[17]

As part of his research into making the car a collective concern, Eliasson collaborated with and interviewed a disparate group of participants, experts in their respective fields, including an architectural critic and curator, a professor of heterogeneous catalysis, an automobile designer, an astrophysicist, a violin-maker, an artist and media theorist and several architects. For me, the interesting thing here is that he is the one who initiated the collaboration; he is not the artist brought into the project as a kind of token. Through a series of challenging, questioning sessions with his selected contributors, an integral part of the whole project, Eliasson elicited "truly inspiring and acute observations."[18] This is not the place to go into these conversations in detail – after all, they make up a large part of the resulting book – but what awakened my curiosity was the effect that Eliasson's questioning had on his interviewees and the ways their respective fields and expertise were challenged in the process. Many of his contributors would normally undertake research in fairly conservative or traditional ways but, in this project, the artist caused them to think in different ways and reconsider their habitual ways of going about things.

Eliasson's research also included collaborative workshops where he brought together a studio team to work out form development for the car, based on the content he had already determined regarding the car as a thing in the world that occupied our time and space concurrently. In the fabrication of the car, he "sidestepped the usual focus

on function, aerodynamics and technical specificities, venturing instead into various surface studies and experiments with form and light."[19] The actual body of the H2R (Hydrogen Record Car) provided by BMW was allowed to stand in the studio as a presence on the periphery that gave scale and gravity to the work. From there on, he reduced the shape of the car to a sphere and experimented with skins of nets and flexible fabrics in order to suggest movement rather than make a moving object; his focus was on the movement of the spectator that made the appearance of the car change. Other speculative investigations with this non-functional object included freezing the nets after watering them and other ice experiments, the development of steel structures and the use of mirrors and lighting effects. Hardly ever did the resulting form resemble a car but, through the workshops and the experimental constructions, Eliasson and his collaborators continued to explore the ideas that underpinned the car project. In this way, Eliasson applied what he knew through being an artist to what he didn't know about car design, and continued to explore his ongoing concerns regarding the ways we interact with the world through adapting them to a specific research project in the real world.

Although no new car design eventuated, the project impacted not only on his expert contributors but also on art gallery visitors when the object was eventually displayed in museums around the world. As he states:

> I involve myself in a new field almost every time I take on a project, but the topics I research into are always somehow related to our understanding of the individual and to questions of sociality – I'm interested in how we connect with our surrounding world.[20]

RESEARCH AS ART AS KNOWLEDGE

The scientists involved in Eliasson's car project were able to recognise his project as research in the context of what they undertook as research. However, art may yet have a long way to go to be legitimately accepted as a way to address global and local issues – possibly because the ability to linguistically articulate the contribution we might make is evasive, and also because of the ways that art is perceived through the eyes of science.

In 1998 some of the photographs of magnified, delicate residues and other experiments by the English artist, Cornelia Parker, were included in that most respected of scientific journals, *Nature*, over four consecutive issues as genuine research articles. One vociferous reaction from a Leicester University postgraduate student was very telling: "What's this bollocks doing in *Nature*?"[21] Unlike the conventional refereed articles in *Nature*, according to the author, Martin Kemp, "Parker's pieces do not rely on fixed meaning. They do not communicate with the studiedly unambiguous parades of hypothesis, evidence, analysis and demonstration that is the aspiration of articles and letters in this journal."[22]

For many years, Cornelia Parker has played with scientific and museological tropes and analyses and elaborated on them through her work. In an interview with Lisa LeFeuvre at the Tate Gallery in London in May 2008, Parker was able to account profusely for her work, its influences, inspirations and the processes she engages. However, when asked about her intentions for the work she is not so articulate, and is unable to put it into words so coherently and instead uses an analogy. She describes intention as being like a "hole," a hole in material – for example, a marble hole or a wooden hole where the hole obviously is not made of wood, but the hole is what defines it; the hole is defined by the material that surrounds it and it is not possible to quantify it. Intention in this way can only be described by what it isn't, by what surrounds it. In Parker's words, "It's very hard to describe" – her interviewer articulates it as the stuff around the thing that can't be put into words and, if it were, then it would disappear.[23]

The term "experiential knowledge" has been used to describe the embodiment of knowledge that cannot easily be expressed linguistically, and constitutes an important part of the processes and outcomes of art and design practice and research.[24] In a culture such as that which characterises our universities and funding bodies, notions of research are construed to emphasise linguistic communication over visual, whereas the issue of embodied knowledge is of fundamental importance to art practice. Where "traditional" research has come to mean explicit knowledge,

"non-traditional" research, which evades linguistic communication, includes the kinds of knowledge not normally accepted in research – such as experiential, perceptual, procedural, tacit and personal knowledge. Through their activities, research artists can gather together a vast array of references and, through the processes of making, they can generate and distil thoughts and new ideas that can be communicated through the artwork and make genuine contributions to new knowledge.

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1 Tomi K Sawyer, "If We Knew What We Were Doing, it Wouldn't be Called Research Would it?," *Chemical Biology and Drug Design*, 71:1 (2007), http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/119422878/abstract, accessed 12 March 2009.

2 Graeme Sullivan, "Research Acts in Art Practice," *Studies in Art Education: A Journal of Issues and Research*, 48:1 (2006), 19-35, at 19.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., 20.

7 G Refsum, "Contribution to an Understanding of the Knowledge Base in the Field of Visual Arts," *Working Papers in Art and Design*, 2 (2002), http://www.herts.ac.uk/artdes/researc/papers/wpades/vol2/refsumfull.html, accessed 18 June 2007.

8 Extracted from Lesley Duxbury, "The Eye (and Mind) of the Beholder," *Thinking Through Practice: Art as Research in the Academy*, eds L Duxbury, EM Grierson, and D Waite (Melbourne: RMIT University Press, 2007), 17-27, at 19.

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13 The exhibition *Melt* included artists Dee Copland (NZ), Lesley Duxbury and Kirsten Haydon, was held in the RMIT School of Art, Project Space Gallery, 12 September–3 October 2008, and travelled to the University Gallery, Sydney University, 1 February–15 March 2009.

14 Lisa Byrne, catalogue essay, *Melt* (Melbourne: RMIT University Press, 2008).

15 Olafur Eliasson, "Development of your Mobile Expectations: BMW H2R Project," in *Your Mobile Expectations: BMW H2R Project* (Baden: Lars Müller, 2008), 34.

16 Ibid., 19.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., 34.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., 49.

21 Martin Kemp, "Parker's Pieces," *Nature*, 392 (1998), 663, http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v392/n6677/full/392663a0.html, accessed 3 March 2009.

22 Ibid.

23 Transcribed from a Tate Event podcast of a conversation between Cornelia Parker and curator Lisa LeFeuvre, 31 May 2008 (accessed 4 June 2008).

24 The Experiential Knowledge Special Interest Group in the UK is concerned with the understanding and management of knowledge in research and professional practice in design and design-related disciplines in order to clarify fundamental principles and practices of using practice within research, both with regard to research regulations and requirements, and research methodology.

ART AND CREATIVITY – BEHIND THE MERE SHOW

Pat Hoffie

No, I don't like work. I had rather laze about and think of all the fine things that can be done. I don't like work – no man does – but I like what is in the work – the chance to find yourself. Your own reality – for yourself, not for others – what no other man can ever know. They can only see the mere show, and never can tell what it really means.
(Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness with The Congo Diary*)[1]

Perhaps the experience of being involved in the making of art can best be described as happening somewhere in that space between labour and love. So it seems helpful to start off with the quote from Conrad. It's a good, sound, matter-of-fact description about the appeal of work. There's been way too much ideology shackled to the term labour, and so the word "work" might be more helpful. And yet through the voice of Marlow, Conrad claims a space for labour – or work – that, later on in *Heart of Darkness*, manifests into a space of focused concentration that prepares a way for retrieval and even deliverance of the narrator. And it doesn't carry with it the merest hint of altruism or betterment for all. It's a deeply selfish space – a space for knowing "what no other man [sic] can ever know." A bit like being in love.

All this seems continents away from the descriptions of creativity that abound in our present era. Instead of the inwardly focused gaze of Marlow's search to find his "own reality," we are presented in the contemporary world with a very much more public space – a place where "creativity" is a fertiliser for industry and for commerce and for the outward trappings of success. In today's parlance the term "creativity" is often associated with gloss and money and "sexiness." But the deeply sensual nature of making art and of participating in the reception and interpretation of art is as rare as it has ever been.

Someone suggested to me recently that I write about the personal experiences of creativity. This suggestion was made partly in response to a discussion about how *disenchanted* the word has become; being touted around by sharp-suited executive types as something to be identified, then harnessed to the service of various outputs. It's a word that seems to have dimly lit the imaginative powers of many politicians as well; here it gets attached as an epithet to all undertakings, whether economic, sociological or cultural. There have been a number of sophisticated arguments made about the power of creativity to act as a multiplier effect on the value of end-products, and there is a sense now that creativity brings about better financial outcomes and healthier cities and more sane societies. But there has been little work done on arguing for the ineffable value of art to individuals. About how it is an intrinsic, essential part of human life.

Which might be quite proper. Art, like love, and like the true benefits of labour, is difficult to justify in public. Any attempts to do so often end up sounding like the emptiness of a resounding gong or clanging cymbal, as the writer of *Corinthians* well warned. And any such attempts make one seem like a cack-handed apologist for something that is better experienced than described. There's a sense of talking about something that is so essential that it doesn't warrant the time taken to belabour the point. Better to get on with the job at hand.

As Marlow well knew, there is time enough for self-reflection and reflexiveness, but all too little time when the journey starts. And as everyone who has read the tale (and others in which Marlow appears) also well knows,

Marlow's patched and lurching steamer was the poorest of vessels to transport his crew of manager, pilgrims and cannibals up-river to Kurtz's Station. It was a vessel that required all of the narrator's focus, all his energy, all his attention to detail if it was to last him the journey.

Artists, by and large, are also well aware of the crummy, patched-up ineptitude of the vessel they have chosen to sail upstream, against the current of the time into which they are born. And they are often also well aware of the feebleness of their own particular skills and are constantly amazed at finding themselves in situations in which they least expected to be. This, despite their tendency to set their navigational instruments in line with courses that are *sure* to get them lost. For finding yourself in places where you didn't expect to be is a strong part of the appeal of art-making. It takes you into territories that are unfamiliar, and often into which you may not have wandered voluntarily. All of which may sound a little frightening. It is. But it's also exhilarating. And if you're vigilant watching out for the snags and the overhanging branches, it can be illuminating too. One of the many things that it can teach you is how little you know. Whenever you get out of your own comfort zone you have to let that current just drift you along upstream a bit further. You know that there are times you are well into deep water, and worse still, drifting towards shoals that are way too shallow. But sometimes, if you trust your instinct, work like a navvy with what you know, and focus on the small practicalities like the rivets, as Marlow did so unceasingly, you can find that your little vessel has made it around another reach.

All this can make you realise a great deal about the extent to which you're just plain lucky. Many artists are blessed and plagued by this realisation. Despite the swagger and arrogance that many might assume as attitudes, many artists understand how little their own efforts have contributed to getting them where they are. They are aware that the making of art has a lot to do with serendipity and chance. And with a developed skill to recognise that and to run with it when it happens. Conrad was well aware of this. In his Author's Notes to *Heart of Darkness*, he writes:

> I follow the instincts of vain-glory and humility natural to all mankind. For it can hardly be denied that it is not their own deserts that men are most proud of, but rather of their prodigious luck, of their marvellous fortune: of that in their lives for which thanks and sacrifices must be offered on the altars of the inscrutable gods.[2]

So, like Marlow (and perhaps like Conrad), artists are often surprised at the way those around them treat them as though they already know who they are. As though they are "artists." As though they have already been subscribed a role. So confounding, when so much of the practice of art is an attempt to find out what that role might be. The term "art practice" is a strange one — it's as though we're in a state of perpetually trying out for something. As though it's something you never really reach. Much of which is probably true. When artists start behaving suspiciously like artists there's a good chance they might have fallen into the trap of believing someone else's (or worse yet, their own) publicity.

But Marlow was not a man like this. He was a man who understood his own calling, and who well understood pretence. And yet he also had enough artistry in him to understand when not to correct misinterpretations.

> "… Yes — I let him run on," Marlow began again, "and think what he pleased about the powers that were behind me! I did! And there was nothing behind me! There was nothing but that wretched, old, mangled steamboat I was leaning against, while he talked fluently about 'the necessity for every man to get on'." [3]

And so it is with artists — the little bit of space carved out ostentatiously and with much flourish by the society at large as "the role of the artist" is often a little space that can be best used as a departure point from which to keep the rest guessing. While the real work gets done elsewhere. Because the real inner motivation for the role is often little more than a kind of perverse will to work on until the wretched, old, mangled mess of materials can be fashioned into something onto which ideas and emotions and speculations and propositions might be able to become floated. One bangs away at the materials. One fidgets and adjusts and discards.

For it's dealing with *the stuff* of making art that holds so much of the pull of art practice. Over and above the dreams

of fame, success, influence, opportunity that might seem like such allure to the uninitiated, the day-by-day drudgery of facing the meagre materials has a pull as strong as a current. Marlow describes his turning away from the lure of making an impact on his persuasive audience of one towards what was, for him, a far greater seduction:

> It was a great comfort to turn from that chap to my influential friend, the battered, twisted, ruined tin-pot steamboat. I clambered on board. She rang under my feet like an empty Huntley & Palmer biscuit-tin kicked along a gutter; she was nothing so solid in make, and rather less pretty in shape, but I had expended enough hard work on her to make me love her. [4]

There are, of course, many artists who speak most fulsomely of their brushes with influence; their narratives are taken up with recounting names and places, sale prices and the events they've participated in. It's the sort of stuff that provides the main staple for the art magazines, and currently it's arguably also one of the main aims of the bulk of young visual artists. When the auction houses hold sway, the tempo of the times picks up the beat and the crew dances. A slow, passionless dance it may often be, but it holds so many in its thrall.

Other artists (and sometimes the same artists, at different times) are plagued by the slow persistent feeling that they are counterfeit – that they have no real core of skill or knowledge. Marlow, too, succumbed to this sensation immediately after embarking on his quest: "… I don't know why – a queer feeling came to me that I was an impostor"[5]. Such artists hold deep suspicions that they are little more than snake-oil salesmen and pretenders. That's what happens when you're taught the value of doubt and self-scrutiny as a fundamental first base towards the possibility of creating art. Once you've embarked on a course of critical thinking, it becomes difficult not to turn it into a self-focused self-indulgence. Things are never good enough. Skills aren't up to scratch. The end product is lacking. You look at work and only see those bits that fail. There's a core to art practice that involves the creation of a perpetual malcontent: someone who can always see how things can be taken a little bit farther; someone who can see that the next body of work is going to be better. Tip it one way, and you're snagged into inaction.

But it was not a snag that held Marlow fast for too long. There was the task-at-hand that dragged him forward. In Marlow's first enforced encampment at Central Station, brought about by the sinking of his beloved steamer, he comes across a breed of men he terms "the pilgrims." Unlike himself, they do not seem to suffer from the nightmares of self-scrutiny. By and large they seem like overwhelmingly ordinary men who have been lured to the heart of darkness under the promise of fame and money. Marlow describes these ciphers in the most matter-of-fact terms: they are "civil," they are "sociable," "gentlemanly," "reserved." These descriptions seem to resonate with that same banality of evil Hannah Arendt perceived in Adolph Eichmann as he stood at his defence, describing with calm diffidence the necessity of performing his work in an orderly way.

Marlow's "pilgrims" perambulate aimlessly across a "cleared speck on the earth" surrounded on all sides by the "silent wilderness." They wander within their own feeble attempts at culture and control, within the futile fences that had been erected as tragic markers of territory. Marlow is aware that the Station is a place of pretence, and he is able to turn his back on it only for as long as he is able to concentrate on the welcome demands of his own work. But this, too, offered chinks of repose where his headlong facing of the reality in which he found himself became a necessity:

> Still, one must look about sometimes: and then I saw this station, these men strolling aimlessly about in the sunshine of the yard. I asked myself sometimes what it all meant. They wandered here and there with their absurd long staves in their hands, like a lot of faithless pilgrims bewitched inside a rotten fence. The word 'ivory' rang in the air, was whispered, was sighed. You would think they were praying to it. A taint of imbecile rapacity blew through it all, like a whiff from some corpse.[6]

It's a marvellous description, this place of faithless pilgrims who have taken up their encampment under the thrall of straw promises. They wander around aimlessly and endlessly in their makeshift enclosure like somnambulists caught in the spell of unlikely futures. It's all-too-easy to see contemporary counterpoints in your own world, and that, I

guess, is part of the genius of Conrad's writing. And it would also be all-too-easy to exchange the word "ivory" for "art." Certainly there's a similar imbecile rapacity in that particular contemporary compound, and while it might be fun to draw out the point, describing in detail the travails of "the pilgrims" as they approach "proximity to a great human passion let loose"[7], and recounting their profound ineptitude in matters practical, and draw counterpoints with "the pilgrims" of the contemporary art world, it would surely be a cheap trick. For the jabbering and posturing and absolute ineffectuality of "the pilgrims" when it came to the practicalities of the journey would fit so neatly into a description of a multitude of others who willingly submit to the promises of missionaries from all kinds of other orders.

Not so long ago, during the national pandemic of the equine influenza virus, there was an upsurge of first-rate writing about the importance of the horse industry in Australia. During that time it occurred to me that artist-educators might perform a similar role to those that form the inner circle – an often-invisible one – of the racing industry. Like the racing industry, the art "industry" is one by name only – it refuses to be governed by the normal tenets and regulations of other industries. It warps and swells and retracts according to whim, conviction and fortune, and this is a great part of the appeal of both sectors. The trainers and stable-hands and jockeys are the ones who are up there every morning before sunrise because of one primary urge – to get that pony to perform its best. I read them described as a group with somewhat Dickensian characteristics – often eccentrics and misfits who spurn the outside world and turn to the warmth of horseflesh and each other's company rather than march to the beat of an everyday reality. They operate in a universe that is parallel but separate to the world that surrounds the race-track and the betting and the winnings and the blue-ribbon celebrations of the owners. It struck me as a slightly odd, but above-average way of describing some of the artist-educators I've known – people who are driven not so much by the glamour and glitz of the openings, but who fossick around the "stuff" of art and who are driven by the potential of art to be rekindled in the heart of the next generation. Within that kind of cosmology there is also room for Marlow's "pilgrims" – as lackeys and followers who really understand very little about the central passions of the game, but who are all too willing to pick up on any chance morsels from the spoils.

They are men of inaction. They are men who fail when it comes to grappling with the small details necessary to the journey upstream. Some of them are men who have abandoned their vocation with "stuff" for inexplicable, paltry reasons. In some ways, much like those artists who make choices that pass over the messy inept business of dealing with matter and move on to more measurable enterprises. In the tale, one of them, the assistant to the manager of the Central Station, had been assigned as a brickmaker. But, it becomes evident, he has abandoned his vocation with the stuff of bricks in favour of special privileges accorded to such emissaries of management. Like the others in the compound, he passed most of his time through waiting. Conrad describes the scenario:

> They beguiled the time by backbiting and intriguing against each other in a foolish kind of way. There was an air of plotting about that station, but nothing came of it, of course. It was as unreal as everything else – as the philanthropic pretence of the whole concern, as their talk, as their government, as their show of work.[8]

Chilling stuff. And it might be funny if it didn't mirror so much of the behaviour in those petty bureaucracies that make up the art world so accurately.

But I digress even though these fetid backwaters of Conrad's descriptive territories seem to reflect so many parallels with the contemporary world that is sometimes described as "the creative industries." And that kind of digression is surely also part and parcel of the nature of making art. Even though you may work or write to a particular brief, there are always those points where you steer away from the main course to discover more intriguing corners of the country you are traversing. For artists there is always the question, "How can I know what I think until I see (read) what I make (write)?" This is reflected in that initial quote from Conrad where Marlow describes the work as taking you to a place where you might have a chance to find yourself. You can attempt to satisfy the brief, or the request, but there's every chance you'll end up meandering down to it via a backwater you always wanted to explore anyway.

All of which makes the study of art so difficult within the structures of postgraduate candidature. In traditional disciplines, candidates are expected to postulate a thesis, and then to set course in order to trace the veracity of that thesis. For so many artists, if you knew exactly where you were going, you wouldn't bother setting out in the first place. And if you decide to embark anyway, and to perform your task according to the rules, there's every chance that you will end up with a very good illustration of an idea. But it probably won't be art. It will be tucked in at the edges and trimmed off by the ideas that have governed it for every turn of the journey. It may end up being cohesive and visually articulate and classifiable and understandable, but it may fail to fascinate and engage and perplex and trouble and bewitch in the long term. It's not much different in the commercial art world. Dealers and collectors often may want more of the same, but all ever so slightly different. Or curators might want more of this or that, but more compact, or in pink. Either way, if you hoist your flag to a particular mast, it may be successful in making you and your product more readily identifiable and categorisable and therefore more capable of being accommodated into other galleries/collections/curated shows/articles, etc.

But art won't come to heel. It's messier and more unkempt than assessment criteria forms can accommodate. Marlow describes his journey after two months of travel towards Kurtz's station:

> The broadening waters flowed through a mob of wooded islands; you lost your way on that river as you would in a desert, and butted all day long against shoals, trying to find the channel, till you thought yourself bewitched and cut off for ever from everything you had known once – somewhere – far away – in another existence perhaps. There were moments when one's past came back to one, as it will sometimes when you have not a moment to spare to yourself; but it came in the shape of an unrestful and noisy dream, remembered with wonder amongst all the overwhelming realities of this strange world of plants, and water, and silence.[9]

This enchanting passage seems a lot like being deep in the middle of a project – a project that involves the making of art. Or perhaps it's also a little like that state of being-in-love-ness. It's a description that seems to fit well with that time spent as an artist when you're well into the rhythm of the making, immersed in that time where you have to just keep your nose down, engrossed in the fabrication and solving the little practical problems of the project at hand. Every so often you surface, you look up from your obsession, and see that you're in a strange place. You recall the familiar all right, and can work with it, but it comes to you as an apparition hovering amidst that "unrestful and noisy dream," while the real work remains to be done in the strange bewitched world you've created yourself within. It strikes me as a good enough way of describing to potential postgraduate students of art where they might expect to find (or lose) themselves as they get immersed in the project at hand. It strikes me as a much better way of describing the creative process than I've read in more recent accounts in the creativity manuals.

In many ways, an important part of the job of the artist might be to warn of those shoals and stations where things might look suspiciously like art, but aren't. Conrad was a practical man – like that other marvellous writer Melville, he'd spent many years at sea before devoting his life to writing. He'd also spent enough time in the Congo, overland and upriver, to have developed a phlegmatic practicality that resisted any tendencies to present his experiences as exotic. There is a sense that the kind of practical skills he would have needed on such expeditions was deeply influential on his practice as a writer. Conrad has described his primary task as a writer as using "the power of the written word … before all, to make you *see*."[10] Conrad's respect for the power of words is evident especially in the powers he bestowed in Kurtz. Kurtz was, above all, a man of *words*. Before we meet him we are aware of the seduction of his words; he is a "special being," a "prodigy," "an emissary of pity, and science, and progress;" he displays "higher intelligence, wide sympathies, a singleness of purpose"[11]; but beyond all this, he displays a "magnificent eloquence"[12]. The "problem," as it is revealed, is that he is also "hollow at the core"[13]. He is a man who does not test his gift against his own self-scrutiny, he uses his art for his own ends only and, in the final end, is forced to grapple with his own emptiness. This fight is, to the watching Marlow, more terrible yet than the "pure, uncomplicated savagery" of "the wilderness."

Conrad's own respect for the power and fundamental sacredness of words is evident through Marlow's vitriolic

dismissal of a spectre who would blaspheme through the power of "splendid monologues." He spits out, "Let us hope that the man who can talk so well of love in general will find some particular reason to spare us this time" [14]. And yet he, too, can find more solace in the magnificence of Kurtz's dark possession than he can in the dry measured darkness of the managers and "pilgrims." "It seemed to me I had never breathed an atmosphere so vile, and I turned mentally to Kurtz for relief – positively for relief"[15].

Here it is evident that, although Marlow's horror at witnessing Kurtz's deposition and expulsion seems paramount, his greatest revulsion of all is finally reserved for those emissaries of order who diminish all passion to the deathly dryness of impartial analysis. For them, finally, in the moral and ethical desert of their imaginations, Kurtz can only ultimately be condemned on the basis of what they describe as his "unsound method." It is the best they can do, for they are already the living dead. And between that dry finality and the horrors of Kurtz, Marlow ultimately chooses the latter: "Ah! but it was something to have at least a choice of nightmares"[16].

Young artists – and sometimes not-so-young artists, who begin their art practice later in life, are referred to in the sector as "emerging artists" in Australia. There is something of the imagery of the cocoon in this term, with all the greenness and wet-behind-the-ears-ness and naïvety that comes associated with it. If they've been through a tertiary institution, they will have already been warned of the statistics about how few will be exhibiting in a few year's time, how little they will be able to make from their work in terms of cash, and how they'll have to find other forms of income to support their habit.

By the time they've been at it a few years, they're dubbed as "mid-career artists." In a country with as small a population as Australia, it's fair to say that most of these mid-career artists have floated to that point on pontoons filled with conviction and hope and commitment. There will have been the odd highlights in sales and critical attention, but by that time most of them will have had to grapple with the "why am I doing this?" question a number of times, and have come up with a range of answers depending on the particular time and conditions in which they asked it of themselves. They will no doubt also be armed with a more fully developed sense of how their sector "works," and most will have collected a ballast of wryness through which to deal with disappointments, setbacks and general apathy. If they're unlucky some of that ballast might have rotted in the hull and turned into cynicism. And if that happens, there's no telling what might develop during their next "phase." There's no clear description in the sector really for what that is anyway … "mature artists?" (an oxymoron?) or maybe "really old artists?" or perhaps "really hardened artists?"

It's apparent that, if the character Marlow had been an artist, he'd be well into his mid-career phase by the end of the book. In a sense the journey upstream is a coming-of-age for his realisations about what's important, what's permissible, and what's taboo. It's interesting that through him, Conrad can address several evils, and especially, as I've argued, the evil of using the talent of wordsmithery to the wrong ends. Kurtz is, finally, a pretender. Yet it is the dry dead nothingness of the administrators that Conrad chooses to represent the ultimate nightmare of the tale. (Again, the hark-back to Hannah Arendt.) And although it might seem a hugely romantic stretch to argue that, like Marlow, many artists would choose magnificent, misdirected failure over commonplace work-a-day pretence, there's a sense that it still may be so.

There's no statistical analysis that will ascertain why that drive runs so deep in artists and there are no criteria that I know of that can measure the sticking-power of an artist either. Or the passion, or the extent to which that passion can survive as a long, slow-burner. And even in this age of accountability, measurement, apportionment, indicators that evaluate responsibility and audience development and social and cultural engineering (couched in other terms, of course); even in this era that is so committed to holding and preserving and conserving, art still so often finds a way of slinking back off downstream again. In the end, Marlow discovers he has more similarities with the dead Kurtz than he does with the reality of the world in which he has been employed; he shares with Kurtz the role of "a partisan of methods for which the time was not ripe".[17] In so many ways, the "methods" of art or dedicated, slow-burn passion may never readily march to the tempo of the time in which they are played out. It may be that art will never, should never fit seamlessly with that work-a-day world.

This tale set its course speaking about love, as well as of labour, as the other pole defining that space in which it might be possible to foster art. Love is another one of those things, like labour and art, that squirms uncomfortably when addressed directly. The result is, more often than not, reductively corny or claustrophobic or just plain boring. And that's one of the good reasons we still need contemporary art: it's a way of alluding to, rather than describing, those amorphous voids that have to be tended to again and again as they mutate into new forms that are relevant to *this* time and *this* place.

Conrad glances against that big subject of "love" here and there in the novel, but there are very few signs of it in relation to the female characters he seems to drop in simply for effect. Enough has been written about Marlow's (and Conrad's) patriarchy, and from this point in post-feminist history the final irony lies at the point when Marlow makes the decision to lie to Kurtz's "Intended" when she demands to know his last words. (Marlow tells her what he knows she wants to hear: that the last words he uttered were her name, instead of the truth: Kurtz's ultimate "The horror! The horror!")

Rather, one of the more true-to-character currents of love in the novel seems to lie in the quote detailing Marlow's relationship with the broken-down, tin-pot steamer where he describes how "he had expended enough hard work on her to make me love her"[18]. This passage describing Marlow's love for his work is telling. It may seem like a different tempo of passion to the romantic *Sturm und Drang* that govern other aspects of the novel, but it remains undiminished throughout the tale. Even during the times of greatest duress, it's that dedication to and love of the work at hand that drives Marlow on and through a succession of horrors. In the face of such immensity of passion of other kinds, this kind of love seems such a little thing – almost as something incidental or minor.

One of the fundamental aspects of training in visual art practice hinges on an understanding about something that also often seems to be incidental or minor; it emphasises the importance of a very slim, very underrated four-letter word: care. You are taught to care about the space of the page, and care about how you might arrange shapes within that space. You are taught about colour, its tone, its hue, its intensity; about edges and overlays and transparencies and opacities. You are taught about weight and gravity and the lack of it. You are taught that every time you alter your point of view, *everything* in that picture-plane changes – everything. You are taught that colours behave differently according to what other colours they sit beside. You are taught that everything matters – your choice of materials, your choice of ground, your choice of subject matter. And beyond that, the context in which you will be presenting your work, and your audience. You are taught that everything makes a difference to the final product, and that if you alter just one small thing at a certain point, then you may have to change every other aspect of that image in accordance with that decision. You are taught that everything hinges on relationships *between* things, and that the best things are those you must leave out, but hint at. You are taught, ultimately, that you have to *care* about every single aspect of what you do.

And once you make the mistake of caring, you're gone. You're up-to-your-neck in it. More: you realise you are part of it. And worse yet, it matters.

I guess this might be a little bit like love. Some aspects of love, anyway. There's a point at which the incremental shifts in caring might swell into that bigger tide that carries one along and in which, at times, one may realise one has become immersed. There's that sense of dissolution, of not being able to determine the specific boundaries between the you and the it. Or the "ich" and the "du," as Martin Buber pointed out. Or maybe between the dancer and the dance. Or maybe between the land and the custodianship of it, as indigenous Australians have tried to show us. There's a custodianship to being involved in art, too, I think. Maybe that's part of what Conrad was on about.

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1   Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness with the Congo Diary*, (London: Penguin Classics, 200/1995), 52.
2   Ibid., 10.
3   Ibid., 51.
4   Ibid., 52.
5   Ibid., 29.
6   Ibid., 44.
7   Ibid., 73.
8   Ibid., 46.
9   Ibid., 59.
10   Preface to *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, quoted in Ibid., Introduction, s.p.
11   Ibid., 47.
12   Ibid., 95.
13   Ibid.
14   Ibid., 97.
15   Ibid., 101.
16   Ibid.
17   Ibid.
18   Ibid., 52.

PURR

Janeen Greig

Janeen Greig, *Alice*, 2009, clay sculpture, 38 (h) × 42 (w) × 22 (d) cm.

1.

perfect baby!
the girl of his dreams
she's the one
with the long blonde hair

see how she smiles
a perfect smile
no gaps no holes
nothing but teeth

serving fast food
wearing a tight blue smock
that stops
just below her thighs

she smiles
takes my order
I slip my card
onto the counter
in front of me
she bends
boobs above my hands

perfect baby?
still looking
for the perfect girl!

2.

penny and pearl
don't know who god is
they lost him somewhere
between the heartbreak hotel
and sweet summer dreams
in their white dodge
high above the world
way up
where tarseal meets
the dirt roads
here where they unfastened
their stockings
and rolled over and over
through the prickles
and gorse
past fences
and rams gloating
on their achievements
down through the prickles
and gorse
to a riverbed
where they threw themselves
on the stones
of their ancestors.

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Classroom Practice

IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, SHOULD THE ADULT'S ROLE IN THE VISUAL ARTS BE HANDS-ON OR HANDS-OFF, OR IS THERE A ROLE WHICH IS SOMEWHERE IN-BETWEEN OR SOMEWHERE BEYOND?

Beverley Clark and Nicky de Lautour

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood teaching practice doesn't just happen. Underpinning every action and every plan is a body of personal and professional experience and literature that has informed the teacher's pedagogy. Yet, in the professional role, the essence of the teacher, the deeply personal side of who the teacher is, may be visible in practice or it may not.

In the teaching profession as in other professions there are expectations to "behave professionally," that is, behave in a way that is an individual display of the profession's collective aspirations. This means that the personal self may be reduced in comparison to the professional self, and ultimately, as in the view that is expressed in this paper, dominant views of pedagogy may supersede the personal beliefs and values of a teacher.

It is recognised in early childhood communities that children's experiences through the visual arts provide rich learning opportunities.[1] However, the role of the teacher within this framework has had less scrutiny. Eckhoff further contends that one contributing factor may be early childhood educators' lack of training or experiences with the visual arts. This aspect of tertiary programmes for early childhood teacher education needs to be researched. Essentially, what is the dominant pedagogy that early childhood student teachers study in their studies of the visual arts? Pre-service teacher education traditionally combines practical experience and theory to inform student teachers' philosophy. Although teacher education is not part of the current research, we moot that the content of teacher education papers, particularly regarding the visual arts, needs to be critiqued against constructivist, sociocultural and postmodern paradigms.

CONSTRUCTIVIST: SOCIOCULTURAL

Although a sociocultural approach is currently dominant in early childhood education, in relation to the visual arts the approach shifts back to a Piagetian, constructivist view. Is the impact of traditional, dominant ideas so powerful, and the rational self, the critical approach to curriculum, and personal values and beliefs so subdued that it continues to underpin aspects of early childhood education practice in the visual arts? Richards contends that, in the spirit of sociocultural theory, a critiquing of "taken-for-granted" teaching practices about the visual arts may be timely.[2]

The mantra of "hands off" in the visual arts is in contradiction to sociocultural theory. The Piagetian view that children drive their own learning, construct their own learning, has been displaced to a large extent through the writings of Vygotsky and subsequent researchers and authors. Vygotsky's theory makes sense: children learn both through their own exploration and through their interactions with others, including more skilled others. Further, from a postmodern view, the notion that teachers are not agents in the child's art experience is inauthentic.

Sorin talks about the agentic child, the child as an agent in her learning.[3] Applying this notion to the teacher, we position the teacher as agentic. A modernist view of the teacher as hands-off/onlooker does not honour the relationship between teacher and child nor fully allow for rich, meaningful collaborative experiences with each other through the visual arts. Conversely, we contend that the agentic teacher, fully present in his beliefs and values about the arts, does. A depersonalising of the teacher's role has led to teachers being seen as resourcers of environments, providers of rich teaching and learning environments, but in relation to where teachers are positioned in the milieu of children's artistic experiences, the teacher remains rooted in the hands-off/onlooker discourse.

Gibbons contends that both children and adults are "expected" to passively absorb the dominant assumptions, values and beliefs attached to the so-called "expert knowledge about play," and puts a case forward for a problematising or drawing out of these assumptions that until recently have largely been unchallenged.[4] Parallels to Gibbons can be made in regard to the visual arts setting in early childhood, where, through a renegotiation and re-opening of the discourse regarding adults' involvement in children's artistic experiences, new paradigms based on teacher knowledge and critical discourse may be constructed and realised.

We contend that the dominant pedagogy about the arts impacts on the voices of teachers. Yet, there is some evidence of subtle shifts. Some of the shifts in thinking are evident in the teacher's voices that are expressed in our research into the teacher's role in children's art experiences. However, what we found through the conversations was that most of the teachers do not want to shift away from the idea that children "own" their art experiences. Teachers use language that encourages and extends and they give guidance on technical skills and tools, but for the teachers in our research, "drawing with children" was not evident. Essentially then, they were hands-on in terms of providing resources and through technical advice, through modelling, but the art was the children's own. This is a prevailing strong principle in the visual arts in early childhood education.

In this paper we explore some of the literature which underpins the hands-off model as well as that which demonstrates a shift to a sociocultural theory approach to the visual arts. There continues to be a dominant discourse that calls for "hands-off," yet there is a growing body of literature that calls for a shift in thinking, that expresses discomfort with the hands-off approach to the adult's role in the visual arts.

DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE

A book that has had a particularly powerful impact on the teacher's role in the visual arts in Aotearoa New Zealand is *Magic Places* by Pennie Brownlee.[5] This aesthetically beautiful book gives the clear message that "we never draw, make or model for the young child."[6] This message gives no room for any interpretation other than that adults' practice in the visual arts must be hands-off, a notion which is strongly embedded in the idea of the creative process and product belonging to the child.

Ashton challenges the romanticised notions of creativity and originality in children's art and advocates instead for "multiple art genres" which the teacher models in "safe supporting environments."[7] While it is our contention that there are teachers who would like to collaborate more with children in their art experiences, Ji Hi Bae suggests that in their pre-service education, teachers do not have sufficiently rich art experiences themselves and so do not know how to be effective art teachers in early childhood contexts.[8] She describes three approaches to the arts – the "little-intervention" orientation, the product orientation and the guided exploration orientation. In relation to our discussion, these could be set along the continuum of hands-off to hands-on. She says further that the little-intervention approach is being criticised for discounting the value of teacher input. While the product orientation, which is effectively direct teaching, has been frowned upon for some time, there continue to be teachers who over-plan and expect children to fit in with these plans in order to create a product. The third orientation, guided exploration, is based on the intervention of the teacher through language, guiding observation and teaching techniques. This orientation is closer to the respectful hands-on approach which we are exploring. But it is still

distant from the notion that the teacher is also an artist and that the teacher may participate in the child's art experience, may draw alongside or paint alongside the child, when the skilled teacher intuitively knows that the moment is "right." Getting this "right" in practice is a challenge, but it is through opening up the discourse, exploring new ideas and ideals that we can find a new way and reclaim the authentic teaching self in the arts.

In 2007, in an attempt to open up the dialogue, we began a research project that involved working with early childhood teachers and exploring their role in the visual arts.

RESEARCH

We were fortunate that four teams from early childhood centres in Auckland agreed to participate in this research. One centre is a community centre, another a full-day care centre and two centres are sessional kindergartens. In a structured focus-group style, we presented central questions regarding the visual arts in early childhood education, including, *How do you see your role?*

A few of the responses to those questions are presented here.

Question: *How do you see your role?*

   Three teachers' responses:

a. *Children know what they want to do – [they] have ideas and they want to express them – and just like us … we come in the morning and set up activities, but I believe in taking cues from the children.*

b. *Sometimes just putting out a simple activity of paint and paintbrushes and letting them go for it –but sometimes you want to challenge them with new ideas.*

c. *I think about it as being similar to when you build a house and you have a whole pile of bricks and mortar in the front yard and you wouldn't have a clue what to do with it. You would go and seek some advice, you would look at other people's ideas and plans. I feel the same way about art, and that's what we scaffold the children through – to have the basic techniques. The actual creativity is theirs, but to be able to show them the techniques to use watercolours painting, to show them how they can use resources for collage, and then they can go and use their techniques for their art. I feel that to have the basic techniques is quite important. Techniques to be able to show children – to have the basic techniques is very important.*

If we view these answers to the questions on the adult's role in isolation, out of context, without taking a bigger picture of later conversations, they fit loosely into Ji Hi Bae's orientation spectrum. It seems that in responses a) and b) the message from the teachers is that their role is to set up resources, and then it is up to the child to work with them largely unaided – which fits into a hands-off/little-intervention approach; whereas in c) the teacher is more "hands-in," more like the guided exploration orientation, purposefully preparing the child for the arts experience.

Within any of these approaches, it must be noted that the teacher's role along the continuum may work differently at different times during the day or the week. Teachers may move into the guided exploration orientation and out of it as they feel that this response is needed by the child. The hands- on or hands-off standpoint is not necessarily a constant way of approaching the child and the visual arts, although it may consistently be the way that a teacher is likely to respond.

EXPLORING THE NOTION OF HANDS-ON, HANDS-IN TO HANDS-OFF AND BEYOND

In pursuing this movement along the continuum, we looked for ways of describing the responses from the teacher. To this end we have defined the teacher roles as *onlooker*, *technician, artist* and an *open-ended* possibility yet to be defined. The onlooker fits into the hands-off category and is adapted from the onlooker role in Parten's powerful, although currently less popular, model of hierarchical social categories of play.[9] In applying this notion to a teacher's role, onlooker teachers adopt the "set up and stand back" stance. The teacher becomes an outside observer of the action, a provider of resources.

In the role of technician the teacher becomes hands-in. In this context the teacher can be seen as a technician or technical adviser, providing resources, verbal cues and assistance with techniques. This is the more skill-based orientation.

The third level on the continuum is the teacher as artist. The mantra which is heard frequently in early childhood education – *every child is an artist* – is a powerful reminder of the essential joy and creativity to be found in children's art. But the adult's role is missing. Are we artists? Perceiving ourselves as artists raises new insights and awareness and possibilities as to where collaborative art experiences and co-learning could go. What are the possibilities if the child could see the teacher as artist? Does this increase the possibilities for collaboration and joint experience?

Finally there is the idea that there are new, unidentified possibilities, other aspects on the continuum, or off the continuum. We hope to return to this aspect as we work with teachers on this research.

In the overview of the teacher's role we have attempted in the diagram below to illustrate the complexity and the "to-ing" and "fro-ing" of the interaction, the movement of the teacher and child in their relationship with each other and with the visual arts. We hope that this illustrates something of the busyness, the complexity and of the movement between one approach and another, and between the teacher and child. The teacher as artist is the role that we are increasingly interested in. If teachers are artists (in whatever form this label means to them) outside of the centre, then to be true to who they are, to be agentic, we contend that they should also be permitted, indeed encouraged, to be artists in the centre.
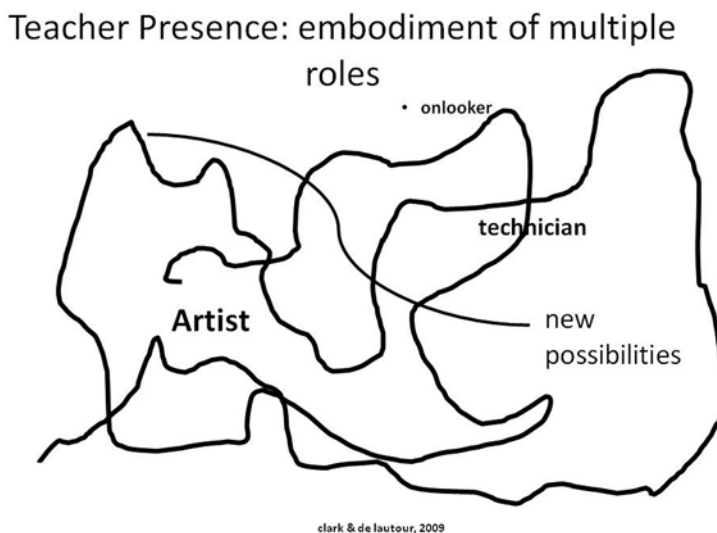

Figure 1: The multiple roles of the early childhood teacher in relation to the visual arts.

SUMMARY

This paper reflects the questions which we are asking and which are being asked by some teachers about the adult's role in children's visual arts experiences. How much of our personal self is evident in our professional self? Further, if teachers believe that they should draw alongside children, or collaborate with them on an artwork when invited, or gift a picture to them, then should this be acceptable? Teachers sing with, play with, climb with, dance with children. What is it about the visual arts that favours hands-off?

We plan to continue to ask the questions: Should the adult's role in the visual arts be hands-on or hands-off, or somewhere in between? What potential is there when the teacher is agentic, that is, when the teacher is the main agent in how the visual arts are supported in early childhood education? How can pre-service teacher education support the early childhood teacher to be a strong facilitator of the visual arts?

Through our research with early childhood teachers, we hope to explore these questions further, to find ways together to see how both children and adults can be supported through rich, meaningful art experiences that are underpinned by respect for the child and for each other, in pursuit of wonder and the potential for joy and meaning that can be part of visual art experiences, either individual or collaborative or somewhere in between and beyond.

Dr Beverley Clark and Nicky de Lautour are both lecturers in the School of Education, Te Kura Mātauranga at AUT University which is on the North Shore of Auckland. They are both keenly interested in the positioning of the arts in the early childhood education curriculum.

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CHILDREN, ART AND MUSEUMS

Barbara Piscitelli

Over the past 25 years, we have seen a big change in the way art museums and galleries view and value children. In 1987, I conducted a small-scale research project to look at how preschoolers and their parents used the gallery as a learning place. Our results were seen as important in putting forward new programmes and new practices for very young audiences at the Queensland Art Gallery.[1]

Ten years later, along with museum educators from state and regional collecting organisations, I formed a collective of researchers to study how young children learned in museums. The QUT Museums Collaborative (1997-2004) conducted several studies of young children's engagements with museums and their collections, including a major three-year project investigating young children's interactive and informal learning.

We used multi-focal research methods to investigate children's learning; that is, we examined learning from many points of view. First and foremost, we sought to take a child's-eye view; investigations included not only observations of children, but also in-depth interviews with children and collections of their drawings and stories about museums and the objects in their collections. In addition, we surveyed young children's perspectives and conceptions of museums at the beginning, and again at the end, of the project. To represent adult perspectives on the matter, we gathered the views of museum staff, parents and teachers through interviews, diaries and questionnaires.

Our investigation of learning was intentionally broad. We examined learning using multiple lenses, including cognition, motivation, sociocultural learning, collaborative learning and aesthetic learning. The focus of the project was the immersion of children in the topic of "museums," involving a school-based component of studying about museums and a series of visits to museums. Our programme model incorporated a combination of classroom lessons (12 in-school class sessions led by a museum teacher and the regular classroom teacher) and nine museum visits, contributing about 40 hours of direct contact with the topic of museums for each child.[2]

SOCIAL LEARNING IN THE MUSEUM: THE IMPORTANCE OF A GUIDED EXPERIENCE

Theories about learning in museums acknowledge the value of learning through "primary sources," through direct experience and through active engagement. Xanthoudaki noted that in the context of school visits to museums, the experience of the "real thing" encouraged acquisition of new knowledge and consolidation of already acquired information, and brought the individual into the forefront of the learning process.[3] Moreover, new knowledge and ideas developed with the help of the real thing are "absorbed more easily and with greater enthusiasm, remembered longer and generate enthusiasm to know more."[4] Furthermore, in collaboration with an adult, the child constructs new cognitive abilities, then internalises these ideas to become part of the child's knowledge or skill base.

This social learning concept is described as "loan of consciousness"[5] or "funding,"[6] whereby a mentor assists a learner to fuse meanings or associations from past experiences with immediate perceptions. These social constructivist views, in the same vein as the work of Vygotsky,[7] have been endorsed as important learning supports in the museum context.

HOT AND SWEATY PLAY

Among many things, we noticed that children were getting "hot and sweaty" at the museum.[8] Their engines were turned on and little beads of sweat would form around their hairlines above their red faces. Some of the most vigorous activity observed was at the Queensland Art Gallery (QAG) when they hosted "Play," an innovative interactive exhibition. Designed and curated by one of the research partners, "Play" featured several important elements:

- art from the Queensland Art Gallery's collection interpreting the theme of "play," including photographs, decorative arts, paintings, sculpture and installation by Picasso, Miro and others;

- interactive elements such as computer-animated puzzles, foam building blocks, and a multi-sensory tunnel;

- children's programme activities and special events;

- a guidebook for children, and

- a children's art exhibition.

For children in our study, "Play" was a very exciting learning site. Coming at the end of a year of visiting museums, our museum-literate young children found "Play" exciting, extraordinary, compelling and memorable. They were able to navigate between the hands-on elements and hand-off aspects with relative ease and comfort, and explored all elements of the exhibit. This demonstrated that they had clearly understood the code of conduct for visitors to museums.

"Play" presented many challenges to traditional conceptions of a visit to an art museum, and attracted many new and first-time visitors. To accommodate the new audience, museum staff planned their programmes and services to make the visit an enjoyable one. As a museum, they coped with blockbuster-sized crowds of hot and sweaty young visitors because they had prepared for their arrival with a purpose-designed exhibition and a prepared workforce. According to museum staff, the capacity to deliver a high-quality result was due to a process of continuous improvement over a five-year period with each successive exhibition. In other words, the museum staff adopted a client-centred (or child-friendly) approach and research findings to transform museum practice and meet audience needs.[9]

Utilising this knowledge, museum staff began to innovate with programmes and exhibitions for children. They moved their activities from the small outer galleries into prime gallery space and ran a series of exhibitions curated especially for children.

"LOST AND FOUND"

In 2003-04, I worked as chief investigator on a project with staff from the university and the gallery. Together, we researched children's learning at two contemporary art exhibitions, curated especially for children. "Lost and Found" was a large-scale exhibition for children, featuring work by artists who worked with found objects.

Children in our study at "Lost and Found" displayed a high level of curiosity about how particular artworks had been created, as indicated by the following examples of their in-gallery questions to adult guides and to one another in small groups:

Did an artist make this?
How do they do all this?
How'd they build this?
How long's this been here?
Did they just come in and do it?
Did the artist have to come in here and set it all up?
How do they do that?
How do people make this stuff?
How did this happen?

As first-time or relatively inexperienced visitors, the children's questions were basic, highlighting the importance of adult prompting and scaffolding to extend their observation and inquiry, and to alert them to the processes used by artists. With support from an accompanying adult, children were able to deconstruct works, making thoughtful judgments about how they were made. Recorded conversations revealed children's thinking about the preparation and planning involved in art-making; about sequencing, formation and patterning; and about construction methods used.[10]

Adult: *Why do you think this artwork* [Simryn Gill's *Forking Tongues*] *is on the floor?*

Sarah: *It would be hard to hang the forks and chillies on the wall without them falling.*

Another child, Lauren, observed that there was an ascending size in the chillies towards the middle of the spiral. She spoke about the patterns created, noting how there was an alternation between the objects:

Lauren: *It goes utensils and chillies, utensils and chillies.*
It would be better to plan this artwork than make it as you go.

"COLOUR"

In 2003, the gallery hosted a three-month exhibition, "Colour," and we studied school children's responses to this large-scale exhibition. The exhibition featured a large number of important contemporary art works from the Queensland Art Gallery's permanent collection. Alongside the works, children had the opportunity to engage in interactive and reflective experiences.

We were particularly intrigued by children's reactions to the journey of the "Yellow Man". Lee Wen is a performance artist who has made numerous walks throughout cities all over the world. Stripped down to his underwear and painted in bright yellow paint, Lee Wen transits urban environments. On walk #13 in Brisbane, Lee Wen traversed the city and was followed by a documentary team during the Third Asia Pacific Triennial of Art in 1999.

A video of this event was the subject of great interest to the children in our first study. While we were on a tour of the Queensland Art Gallery, children noted a video monitor and stopped to see what was on the box. Immediately, they began chatting and giggling as they speculated about what was happening before their eyes.

They knew the cityscape well enough to see that the "Yellow Man" was walking through Brisbane, and wondered when it happened. Was it happening now?

Why was he painted yellow? When did he do this walk? Was he cold in his underwear? Was he embarrassed to be walking through the city in his undies?

When the cameras zoomed in to a close-up focus, the children began to notice that the "Yellow Man" was carrying something in his hands – but what was it? At first, no one could tell.

Soon it became apparent that he was carrying a large heart. The children wanted to know whose heart it was. They asked:

> Where did he get the heart?

> Why was he carrying it?

The children watched with interest as the "Yellow Man" with the broken heart arrived at the front steps to the Queensland Art Galley – the very building where they sat transfixed watching the video. Their mouths dropped as they watched the "Yellow Man" break open the heart.

And then they speculated about his words to the camera: "Broken heart." Or, did he say: "Open your heart"?

For the children, this encounter with a video projection of a contemporary art performance was compelling. Though the exhibit was not part of our planned tour, it was highly engaging. The children were all very intrigued with what was happening and many new theories were generated about the "Yellow Man" with the broken heart.

Of interest to all of us on the observation end of this event was the fascinating interest the children showed for contemporary performance art. Many shy away from presenting contemporary art to young children but, in this case, the children themselves led us to a new understanding about their capacity to appreciate and interpret challenging works made in their lifetimes.

This performance piece was exhibited again in the blockbuster-sized show "Colour," held at the gallery in 2003, and attracted a wider audience and prompted more discussion about performance art, about the meaning of the "Yellow Man", and about race and identity.[11]

Children interpreted the work in various ways:

> He says, "Open your heart," so even if people look strange, be nice to them and don't make them feel bad and don't hurt their feelings.

> In the movie, he's trying to tell people to be good to each other, so everyone's being nice, and he's just walking around places to tell people that.

Children also judged the worth of the work variously:

> You have to have confidence to walk around like that.
> Nobody would go around with him 'cause he's yellow and he just wears his undies.
> Got no friends.
> He just wants attention.
> I think he's poor… 'cause he has no money, or anything, and he looks sad. He looks sad.
> He's lonely.

NEW PROSPECTS FOR CHILDREN AND MUSEUMS

Childhood is a time of great growth, exploration, discovery and creativity. It is a time of intense productivity as children learn to speak, navigate, play, create, relate and act. Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity." This fundamental human right for children's full participation in cultural and artistic life provides a challenge about how best to provide for and promote children's artistic and cultural lives.

The range of cultural policy initiatives for young children is widening every year, as more nations become concerned about securing a place for cultural participation amongst the youngest members of their population. With about one-quarter of the world population under the age of 25, there is a big potential market for cultural flagship organisations such as museums to recruit and retain, so there is growing emphasis on connections with young visitors in many places. The challenges for the future will be to grow an innovative approach to cultural citizenship – one that engages children and young people in full arts and cultural participation – as consumers, as creators and as connoisseurs.

While some may argue that the best cultural policy is no cultural policy,[12] it remains to be seen if generating cultural citizenship can happen without a structural framework to facilitate, guide and respond to the artistic, creative and cultural lives of children. Following on from the work of McCarthy and Jinnett,[13] it seems best to remain engaged in the process of "broadening, deepening and diversifying" cultural citizenship. Thus, it is better to be in the policy arena as advocates for children – doing research, promoting sound practice based on full engagement, and developing fully participatory programmes to develop cultural citizenship – than to remain on the outside complaining that there is nothing of value for children.

Much remains to be done for young children in providing greater access to museums. Participation rates could certainly show improvement, particularly in non-traditional audience groups (e.g., Indigenous, migrant, rural, disadvantaged and NESB or non-English Speaking Background). The greatest challenge facing museums is in expansion of access to arts and culture for children from diverse and remote backgrounds, thus ensuring their rights to education, recreation, play, culture and the arts.

It is possible to make change, to scale up initiatives that work, to involve more people in guiding, shaping, presenting and researching sound connections between children and art. We have a long way to go, but we have made some good ground in the past few years. There is plenty of work ahead to generate excellence and equal access for all in visual arts education.

Over the last 20 years, I have seen how change can happen – one step at a time, based on real evidence and sound research. It is possible to make sure every child gets a sound and positive arts education. It is possible to renew efforts to strengthen children's knowledge about the practice, the discipline and the history of art. It is possible to cause a shift in thinking about children and art with new practices in schools, galleries and communities. It is possible to develop new partnerships and participants to create a critical mass for change for children and art.

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PROVOKING CRITICAL THOUGHT IN THE GALLERY CONTEXT

Helen Lloyd

Figure 1: City Gallery Wellington. Gallery Educator Helen Lloyd and students from Lyall Bay School discussing *Fault* (1994) by Ralph Hotere and Bill Cuthbert as part of an LEOTC education programme in 2008, (image courtesy of Sherwin Mottram, Lyall Bay School).

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

Ralph Hotere and Bill Cuthbert's site-specific art work *Fault* (see Figure 1), which straddles the front façade of City Gallery Wellington, is an ideal visual metaphor for critical thinking. Comprising two diagonal lines of strip lights which cross the building in the blackened windows, *Fault* was commissioned by the Gallery to mark the change in use of the building from the City Library to the City Gallery in 1994. When discussing this artwork with students I play "spot the artwork," as people very rarely seem to notice it, and I worked at the gallery for some months before I saw it for the first time! It strikes me as ironic that a large public artwork can be so invisible. But it is also poignant that it is, because the work references earthquake fault lines that none of us can actually see (although we feel them all too often).

Partial views or a feeling of invisibility can be experienced when encountering artworks for the first time. Artworks often reveal themselves to us in stages, and what might be apparent on first glance can with hindsight become only a partial view of the artwork's full potential significance, following closer examination, critical analysis, thought and reflection.

I believe the skills involved in critical thinking can enable students to notice things that are not always immediately apparent and give them the ability to literally "read between the lines" when scrutinising artworks. Using evidence gathered during "enquire,"[1] a gallery education project currently being undertaken in the UK, alongside anecdotal evidence from teaching at City Gallery Wellington, this article suggests ways gallery education programmes in New Zealand (such as the government's "Learning Outside the Classroom" (LEOTC) programmes) can work to facilitate the development of critical thinking skills for visual art students.

WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

Critical thinking is a particular, structured type of thinking. It can be defined as a practice that enables students to challenge existing paradigms. The practice has variously been called criticism (Barnett, 1990), critical reflection (Mezirow, 1990), reflexivity (Beck et. Al.,1994) or critical thinking (Brookfield, 1987).[2]

According to the educational author Steven D Schafersman, writing about critical thinking in 1991 on the website *Free Inquiry*, critical thinkers "ask questions, pose new answers that challenge the status quo, investigate problems, discover new information, question beliefs, [and] challenge dogmas."[3] Other authors draw up even longer lists of the combined skills that make a critical thinker. In his book about teaching thinking skills, Stephen Bowkett suggests that critical analytical skills include:"Analyzing for assumption, analyzing for bias, attributing, classifying, comparing and contrasting, decision making, determining cause and effect, drawing conclusions, hypothesizing, predicting, prioritizing, problem-solving, [and] solving analogies."[4]

The term "critical thinking" is often referred to in educational literature in association with teaching students how to critically read and analyse texts within the curriculum areas of English or social studies. In the visual arts field, educators are more familiar with the term "visual literacy," used to describe the skills involved in making meaning from visual materials, and the various skills involved in communicating through images – both their construction and their interpretation.

Dr Anne Bamford, director of visual arts at the Art and Design University of Technology in Sydney, believes that in order to become visually literate a student needs to acquire the critical skills of "exploration, critique and reflection"[5]. Writing in a *Visual Literacy White Paper* (2003), she describes visual literacy as:

developing the set of skills needed to be able to interpret the content of visual images, examine social impact of those images, and to discuss purpose, audience and ownership. In addition students need to be aware of the manipulative uses and ideological implications of images. [And] visual literacy also involves making judgments of the accuracy, validity and worth of images.[6]

From this description it is evident that there is a great deal of overlap between the skills needed for visual literacy and critical thinking skills. It could be argued that critical thinking is one aspect of visual literacy. However, critical thinking is also a skill that cuts across different curriculum areas. A simple definition used by Annals, Cunnane and Cunnane in their recent book, *Saying What you See,* cuts to the essence of the skill – "doing something critically, in a critical way, means that you consider it actively, you engage with it"[7].

Ultimately, beyond visual art subject specifics, the benefit of developing critical thinking skills is that students can become independent thinkers: critical of any messages around them in society, able to analyse information and to make considered judgments. A definition of critical thinking utilised in the "enquire" project's *Inspiring Learning in*

Galleries (2006) report reinforces this point: "Critical thinking enables a person (self) to deploy critical skills in order to interact with others and their environment and thus contribute to critical thought. …This thought thus enables individuals to work together to inform and potentially transform experiences; in other words it provides them with a degree of agency."[8]

I would argue that within visual arts education, the skill of critical thinking relates closely to an aptitude for analytical questioning and reflective thought.

SIGNIFICANT SHIFT

Rosmary Hipkins, who works for the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, outlined what she understood to be the current spirit of change in the New Zealand curriculum at a seminar in Wellington in 2008. She said the shift involves students "Learning how to learn – developing an identity as a 'lifelong learner' and a greater emphasis on developing student autonomy."[9] She believes: "When students engage *critically* within each learning area in the curriculum, they have opportunities to develop the key competencies. By refocusing the way we currently teach, each learning area becomes a vehicle for developing key competencies."[10]

With the introduction of key competencies into the *New Zealand Curriculum*, thinking skills have taken on a new importance across all subjects. According to the *Curriculum* the key competency of "thinking" is "about using creative, critical and meta cognitive processes."[11] Students who are competent thinkers "reflect on their own learning, draw on personal knowledge and intuitions, ask questions, and challenge the basis of assumptions."[12] This description is in line with above definitions of critical thinking.

An enquiring learning approach to teaching is compatible with the facilitation of students' critical thinking skills. In the *New Zealand Curriculum* pedagogy section, we are reminded that

> Students learn most effectively when they develop the ability to stand back from the information or ideas that they have engaged with and think about these objectively. Over time, they develop … their ability to think critically about information and ideas. … Teachers [can] encourage such thinking when they design tasks and opportunities that require students to critically evaluate the material they use and consider the purposes for which it was originally created.[13]

Within the visual arts curriculum this relates most clearly to the achievement objectives of "Understanding the Visual Arts in Context" and "Communicating and Interpreting;" areas where students need to develop critical thinking, as they "critically reflect on, respond to and evaluate artworks."[14]

ACTIVE AUDIENCES

Contemporary art galleries and museums are ideal places for students to develop their critical thinking skills. Since their initial conception during the age of empire and colonisation, when museums arguably functioned as elitist storehouses of treasures and purveyors of authoritative "truths" about the world, museums and galleries are evolving to become more open, democratic places that are now more inviting of audience interaction and participation. Audiences are no longer always expected to stand and view artworks in revered silence, as if within what Brian O'Doherty terms "the sanctity of the church."[15]

Claire Doherty, curator and research fellow in fine art at the University of West England, Bristol, who is also a co-curator of the recent "One Day Sculpture" series in New Zealand, terms this shift "new institutionalism."[16] Many contemporary art galleries and museums now embrace a new focus on dialogue and participation and are more likely to "produce event[s] or process-based works rather than objects for passive consumption."[17] As a result, audiences are more often likely to be stimulated by the questions exhibitions provoke, and take a more critical view of what they see, making these institutions ideal places within which critical thinking skills can be developed.

KEEPING IT REAL

In his editorial for the latest *ANZAAE* journal (volume 18:2, 2008), Ian Bowell states that "gallery and museum educators are becoming increasingly important in the way we teach visual art in New Zealand."[18] He believes that if visual art educators are to address the key competencies of the revised curriculum, they need to do it "with the community outside the school gates [and] galleries and museums are part of that community."[19]

Through the provision of the government's Learning Experiences Outside the Classroom (LEOTC) programmes, many galleries and museums in New Zealand are committed to providing authentic hands-on learning experiences for students outside the classroom. What is special and unique about these programmes is the *real* encounter with the artwork, the physical sensory experience of it (as opposed to looking at reproductions in books, websites and slide shows). In galleries and museums students are able to actively engage with and critically respond to art in a direct way.

SELFDOUBT

In our era of mass media, the experience of *real* encounter is vital. Often the scale of an artwork gives it meaning, impact and power. Figure 2 shows me discussing a large text-based wall piece, *Big Word – SELFDOUBT* by Rose Nolan (2006), with a group of students at the City Gallery Wellington in 2008. Confronted with the immense scale of this artwork, students typically enjoyed its overpowering physical presence. The formation of the letters makes them difficult to read. Students needed to step back as far as they could from the artwork in order to read the word. Once they had worked out that the letters spelt the word "selfdoubt," they immediately questioned the word choice and scale of the work. Students discussed the contrast between the size of the letters and the emotion evoked by the word.

Figure 2: City Gallery Wellington. Gallery Educator Helen Lloyd and students participating in a school holiday programme in 2008, discussing *Big Word – SELFDOUBT* (2006) by Rose Nolan, (image courtesy of City Gallery Wellington).

Some students suggested that sometimes when people feel insecure they overcompensate for it by being loud or showing off; others said that feeling insecure can be an overwhelming emotion. It seems likely that the physical presence of this artwork and its impact on the students, and their responses to it and interpretations of it, would be severely altered or diminished if they were looking at a reproduction of it in a book or on a website rather than engaging with the real thing.

POSTMODERN ART PRACTICE

Just as galleries and museums are ideal places to develop critical thinking skills, much postmodern contemporary art provides the perfect provocation for developing critical responses. It could be argued that some contemporary artworks are partially incomplete without an audience's critical responses to them. This is a reflection of the way in which the conception of the formation of meaning of cultural texts, images and objects has changed during the development of postmodern theory. Since Roland Barthes wrote his book *Image Music Text* (1977),[20] it has become accepted that the author of any work cannot fully determine the meaning of it. Meaning is partially determined by the reader or viewer and therefore exists somewhere between the production and reception of an image or text.

Similarly, since Foucault wrote *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* in 1970,[21] it is commonly

understood that although dominant discourses exist within society that influence commonly held beliefs, there are no ultimate "truths;" all truths are relative to the personal knowledge of those who believe in that truth. Consequently there are no right answers, only viewpoints, and any object (such as an artwork) can be understood to have multiple meanings, influenced by the various subjective viewpoints of those interpreting it. It follows that anyone may challenge the dominant discourses surrounding the interpretation of any artwork and form a subjective, critical view of it, offering an alternative interpretation of its meaning. When students develop critical thinking skills they become able to critically analyse and challenge discourses around artworks. By using critical thinking skills students can effectively enter into a "dialogue" of critical thought, questioning any artwork they study.

THIEF

"Thief" (one part of a three-figure sculpture by Michael Parekowhai, *Poorman, Beggarman, Thief* 1994) is an artwork which provokes critical responses. Exhibited at City Gallery Wellington in *Reboot: The Jim and Mary Barr Collection* in 2007, this sculpture is a life-sized mannequin with Māori features and a name label saying, "Hello my name is Hori" (see Figure 3).

At City Gallery this sculpture was positioned with its back to the entrance to the West Gallery, so that as visitors approached the figure looked remarkably lifelike. It regularly surprised students who mistakenly thought it was the security guard. Often initially perplexed by the sculpture, students had contrasting emotional responses to it. Most students asked the question, "Who is he?" sparking debate about the various meanings of the word "Hori" and stereotypical notions of what or who this thief might be.

Parekowhai's work often confronts audiences with stereotypes of Māori identity. "Hori" is the Māori translation of "George," the name of Parekowhai's father, but also an offensive, derogatory term for any Māori male. It also has a third meaning, "falsehood" or "lie." Justin Paton comments in the catalogue for the exhibition: "everything about this sculpture puts you on the spot. Is Thief specific or generic? A life-sized stereotype or a proud assertion of identity? A family portrait or a pack of lies? Rather than tell us where he stands, Parekowhai makes objects that invite us to consider where we stand."[22]

This provocative, ironic and ambiguous artwork proved an ideal vehicle for promoting analytical questioning and enabled students participating in the City Gallery LEOTC programme to demonstrate their critical thinking skills. The sculpture invites an engaged response, it poses questions, and it challenges

Figure 3: Michael Parekowhai, *Poorman, Beggarman, Thief* (1994). Fiberglass mannequin, dinner suit, name badge, 1780 × 490 × 390mm, (image courtesy of the artist and Michael Lett, Auckland).

us to deal with difficult social issues. Following some initial analytical questioning about the sculpture and the artist's intentions, students entered into discussions which led them to challenge assumptions and beliefs about race, class, history, identity, culture and society.

"ENQUIRE"

Evidence of the development of student's critical thinking skills in a gallery context can be found in reports published recently as a result of "enquire,"[23] a gallery education programme organised by "engage"[24] in the UK. Jointly funded by the government departments for Culture Media and Sport, and Education and Skills, "enquire" pairs "clusters" of galleries with local schools and universities to pursue action research education projects which investigate the special learning benefits of gallery education.

I was involved in setting up the "enquire" project at Whitechapel Gallery within the London cluster in 2004, a project which focused on the facilitation of students' critical thinking skills by employing discursive and questioning strategies with students. "The emphasis in the interaction between artists and students was on asking questions and listening, so as to develop the student's critical and reflective skills."[25]

By examining the optimum conditions for learning in galleries, "enquire" action research projects are sharing good practice amongst gallery educators. The London cluster research identifies a number of positive outcomes: "students have used critical thinking skills throughout the project. … these were developed and extended due to changes in (teaching) practice: interventions by artists, relocating sites for learning, collaborative activities, reflective practice."[26] The report recommends that students need opportunities to:

- be alert, attentive and listen to others
- consider different points of view
- analyse and debate opinions
- participate in collective meaning-making
- acknowledge consensus and diversity
- pose problems as well as solve them
- interpret artworks in relation to contexts[27]

Within the UK's education system, critical thinking holds a particularly high status. Creativity and critical thinking are not discrete UK curriculum subjects, but they are viewed as crucial aspects of learning which should permeate the whole curriculum. Despite the differences in social and educational contexts, the recommendations from this report can be utilised by educators in museums and galleries in New Zealand.

ANALYTICAL QUESTIONING

As a result of the findings from the "enquire" report and from my own teaching experience, I believe the key to stimulating critical thinking is to encourage students to ask analytical questions about artworks. When looking at artworks with students, from a teacher's point of view it can be tempting to pose questions for students and, although this can be a good place to start discussions, ultimately the aim should be for students to be formulating questions themselves. By posing questions and seeking to answer them, through discussions with each other, students can discover new information about an artwork and critically analyse their own and other's thoughts and feelings in response.

Stephen Bowkett suggests that, when making a critical enquiry into any topic, one should ask students to develop questions using what he calls the "5 star questions" – "What? When? Why? How? Who?"[28]. He also suggests that a useful way of extending ideas about any topic is by asking "What if … ?" questions .[29] From my experiences

of teaching students at City Gallery Wellington, I have found that it is useful to encourage students to formulate analytical questions about the artwork they are studying using the following categories:

- *Symbolism*:   What things and ideas are symbolised by elements of the artwork?

- *Ideas*:   What ideas and associations are stimulated by looking at the artwork?

- *Context*:   What is the personal, political, cultural, social, and economic context of the artist who made the work, of the society within which the artwork was made, of the society within which the work is exhibited and "read," including the specific context of the gallery or museum it is shown within?

- *Value*:   What is the actual monetary value of the artwork? What is the perceived social or cultural value, and artistic merit of the work, and what do people think of it?

- *Opinion*:   What do I think of the artwork? What do other people think of it? What has the artist said about it? What have critics said about it? Does anyone disagree with opinions about it? If so, why?

- *Belief*:   What beliefs underpin the perceived reasons for making the work? How does it fit with my own beliefs? Can I determine the beliefs of the artist? How does it relate to commonly held beliefs within society?

- *Intentions*:   What do I think the artist intended us to think in response to the artwork? What meanings does the artist intend us to build in relation to the artwork?

- *Feelings*:   What feelings do I have about the work?

- *Narrative*:   Does the artwork tell a story? What could the story be? Who is the story about? What has just happened? What will happen next?

MOURNING CHORUS

Identifying and discussing the symbolism, ideas, beliefs and values which underpin an artwork can enable students to develop and extend their critical thinking skills.

The sculptural installation *Mourning Chorus* by Fiona Hall (2007-8, see Figure 4), which showed at City Gallery Wellington in 2008, provoked much discussion amongst students participating in the LEOTC programme, and it enabled students to develop and demonstrate their critical thinking skills.

Figure 4: Fiona Hall, *Mourning Chorus* (2007/8) (detail). Resin, plastic bottles, lights, vinyl in vitrina, 157 × 217 × 88cm, (photo: Greg Weight, courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney).

Mourning Chorus is a glass coffin-shaped vitrine which contains 11 extinct or endangered New Zealand native bird species, represented by models of their beaks attached to empty plastic chemical bottles which previously contained poisons or pollutants. At the City Gallery it stood alone within an empty, darkened room with black walls. The plastic containers lit up the space, sporadically flickering on and off. Native New Zealand plants are etched on the glass sides of the coffin, and brass name plates fixed around the wooden frame pronounce their Māori names.

On entering the darkened room, students often gasped at the initial dramatic sight of this sculpture and typically stood around the vitrine and talked in hushed tones. Through facilitated group discussion and by helping students to form questions about the artwork, based on the categories listed above, students began interpreting this

sculpture. Initially identifying what they could see within it, students went on to suggest symbolic meanings for various parts of it. For example, the flickering lights were symbolic to some students of the struggle to survive which some endangered species have fought and lost, and the plastic chemical containers symbolised humankind's negative impact on the environment to the majority of students. The coffin-shaped vitrine and quiet darkened room suggested a funeral to some students. Other students recognised the native flora etched onto the glass of the coffin as being crucial in providing the native habitat for the birds inside it. After discussing many aspects of the sculpture's symbolism, students extended their critical enquiry by questioning why the artist had chosen to make the work, what beliefs and values underpin the work and what issues the artist might intend the audience to think about in response to it.

The issues students commented on included environmental pollution, protection of endangered species and threats to natural habitats. Students discussed the concept of *kaitiakitanga* (the Māori concept of guarding, protecting and preserving) and *kaitiaki* (caretaker/guardian) and projects such as the Kapiti Island Nature Reserve (which Fiona Hall had recently visited). They also discussed the impact of colonisation on the natural environment in New Zealand. Most students believed that the artist intended the audience to view humankind as being responsible for the degradation of the environment and the resulting impact on native bird species. Students were typically very excited to feel that they had contributed to the group's interpretations of the sculpture, and pleased to recognise links between it and other facts they had learnt previously at school about the environment. For some students, the sculpture appeared to take on a personal significance because it related to and reinforced some of their previously held knowledge and beliefs about the natural environment and current issues facing it, such as sustainability and protection.

CONCLUSION

I have suggested that the skills involved in critical thinking, which equate closely to an aptitude for analytical questioning and reflection, can enable students to "read between the lines" when scrutinising artworks, and assist them in becoming independent thinkers. Critical thinking is an essential skill for visual art students to develop, especially in light of the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* which promotes "thinking" as a key competency, and the current shift taking place in education towards teaching students the skills involved in learning how to learn.

Education programmes within art galleries and museums provide fertile grounds for the development of students' critical thinking skills, and much contemporary art practice is effective in actively provoking a critical response. Museum and gallery educators can facilitate the development of students' critical thinking skills by encouraging them to pose and discuss analytical questions about artworks. The "enquire" gallery education project in the UK has demonstrated that, by providing opportunities for students to participate in collective meaning-making, listen to others, consider different points of view and debate opinions, students can demonstrate critical thought while interpreting artworks in relation to their contexts.

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1   *Inspiring Learning in Galleries: Enquire about Learning in Galleries*, ed. B Taylor (London: engage, 2006); '*02 Inspiring Learning in Galleries: Enquire about Learning in Galleries*, ed. B Taylor (London: engage, 2008).

2   R Kill, "Coming in From the Cold: Imperialist Legacies and Tactical Criticalities," *The International Journal of Art and Design Education*, 25.3 (2006), 308-17.

3   D Steven Schafersman, "An Introduction to Critical Thinking" (1991), http://www.freeinquiry.com/critical-thinking.html, last accessed on 23 June 2009.

4   S Bowkett, *100+ Ideas for Teaching Thinking Skills* (New York & London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007).

5   Anne Bamford, *Visual Literacy White Paper* (2003), www.adobe.com/uk/education/pdf/adobe_visual_literacy_paper.pdf, last accessed on 23 June 2009.

6   Ibid.

7   A Annals, A Cunnane and S Cunnane, *Saying What You See – How to Talk and Write About Art* (Auckland: Pearson Education, 2009).

8   Taylor, *Inspiring Learning in Galleries*.

9   R Hipkins, "Inquiry Learning and Key Competencies. Perfect Match or Problematic Partners?," presentation given at a CORE breakfast seminar held at the Royal Society, Wellington, 20 June 2008, http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/digital_stories/keynotes_ and_presentations/inquiry_learning_and_key_competencies_perfect_match_or_problematic_partners/(quality)/small,   last accessed on 7 January 2009.

10   Ibid.

11   *The New Zealand Curriculum* (2007), 12, http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/, last accessed on 23 June 2009.

12   Ibid.

13   Ibid.

14   Ibid.

15   B O'Doherty and M Mc Evilley, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

16   C Doherty, "The Institution is Dead! Long Live the Institution! Contemporary Art and New Institutionalism," *engage 15: Art of Encounter* (2004).

17   Ibid.

18   I Bowell, "Talk of Change," *ANZAAE – Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators Journal*, 18:2 (2008), 1.

19   Ibid.

20   R Barthes, "Death of the Author," in *Image–Music–Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977).

21   M Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970).

22   J Paton, *Reboot: The Jim and Mary Barr Collection* (Dunedin: Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2007).

23   "Enquire" takes place in a number of regions across the UK and has been running for three years. Two reports have been published about the research projects, with evaluative findings from them. An extensive website has also been developed: www.en-quire.org.

24   Engage is the National Association for Gallery Education in the UK.

25   Ibid.

26   Ibid.

27   Ibid.

28   Bowkett, *100+ Ideas for Teaching Thinking Skills*.

29   Ibid.

WHY MODERN ARTISTS COPIED OR QUOTED EL GRECO

Estelle Alma Maré

"It is natural for all to delight in works of imitation" (Aristotle, *The Poetics*, fourth century BCE).

As a matter of routine late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century artists, like their predecessors during previous centuries, made copies of acclaimed masterworks. Copying is understood as the intentional reproduction of a work of art, but the intent behind copying varies from artist to artist. In early youth emulation of models could be part of art students' education and training, that is for the purpose of guiding their initial efforts until they have mastered their craft. Later in an artist's career reference to a model would amount to recreating an existing work on his or her own terms. While El Greco learnt his craft by copying works by Italian Renaissance artists, no artist would be able to learn to draw naturalistically by copying his later paintings. On the other hand, it is not strange that artists in a quest for a new approach to art would find of El Greco's unprecedented manner of figural expression, extreme degree of anti-naturalism and compositional abstraction a source of inspiration.

The reason why artists emulate, imitate, quote or copy works by their peers is not merely for the sake of delight as Aristotle maintained, but also to learn about their craft and explore aspects of the history of art. However, not all artists of the past were or are copied in modern times. Therefore, the fact that El Greco (1541-1614), a Byzantine icon painter in his Cretan youth, who emigrated to Venice, from there to Rome, Madrid, and ultimately to Toledo, has received renewed attention, not only by various art historians but also by individual painters during the late nineteenth, throughout the twentieth and also now in the twenty-first century, is worthy of art historical research.[1]

In a rather remarkable assessment of El Greco, Robert Byron writes, without further motivation: "In painting, the culminating Byzantine, El Greco, communicated his colour to Vélazquez and [was] a fount of inspiration to the twentieth century."[2] Byron certainly overstates El Greco's influence. His categorization of El Greco as the culminating Byzantine painter is not viable and, furthermore, it is difficult to believe that Byzantine painting could have been a source of inspiration for twentieth-century painters. A more accurate assessment of El Greco's influence is attempted in this paper, especially regarding the way in which individual modernist painters explored his manner of painting for their own varied purposes, or, conceivably, were commonly in search of a paradigmatic change of style, most probably as a means of escape from the long valid paradigm of naturalistic art.

El Greco produced his most characteristic paintings in Spain from 1578 until his death. He cannot be characterised solely as a religious painter with his roots in Greek Orthodoxy. His oeuvre is varied and includes many secular themes such as landscape and portraiture. During his later years he expressed neither the ideals of Western painting, which he laboriously learned in Italy from 1568 to 1567, nor those of the Byzantine school in which he was educated during his youth, but he achieved an art anchored not in nature but in a wordview initiated by contemporary philosophers such as Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-94), Giordano Bruno (1548-1600) and Tomasso Campanella (1568-1639). While proof cannot be offered that El Greco had read works by these philosophers, he was nevertheless an educated man, an intellectual in possession of an extensive library,[3] who would not have been ignorant of contemporary ideas, even in the relative isolation of Spain. He could not have been informed about the "heretical" ideas of Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), but be was certainly not ignorant of the Copernican revolution and the demise of Aristotelean physics. The most acceptable thesis concerning his manner of

visual expression was proposed by David Davies, that in Italy and Spain he followed in the tradition of Renaissance Neoplatonism.[4] In Rome El Greco became a member of the Academia di San Luca founded by Federico Zuccaro (1542-1609), who was the president of this painters' guild at the time.[5] Hence, El Greco was exposed to Zuccaro's theories on art, especially his reinterpretation of the meaning of *disegno*. Zuccaro believed that the term originated from the phrase *segno di dio in noi*, or "the sign of God in us", indicating that those skilled in drawing were divinely inspired.[6] The understanding of reality changed from what can be perceived in the physical world to what could be conceived in the mind. This late Italian Renaissance development of art theory influenced El Greco profoundly. In Spain he achieved a manner of painting in which physical reality was rendered only schematically or omitted completely, while his depiction of figures deviated greatly from anatomical correctness. In his mature works, such as the two versions of the *Baptism of Christ* (1596-1600 and 1608)[7] the representation of earthly reality becomes schematised. Thus, near the end of the sixteenth century El Greco turned painting into a mental construct, a way of stylistic representation lost on the art world for a long time, but recovered as a valid manner of expression centuries later. Therefore, as Aldous Huxley remarks, "Not long ago the mysterious Greek was considered a simple lunatic. Now he appears a giant in art, the forerunner of modern painters."[8] Why this incredible re-assessment? It is as if El Greco achieved a preview of Immanuel Kant's so-called "Copernican revolution", explained by Tsion Avital : "It is not reality that stamps itself upon the mind but on the contrary, schematism, and organizational categories that are innate or inherent to reason, are what construct our knowledge and reality."[9] And one may add: are what influence all enduring forms of art.

Pacheco, the sixteenth-century Spanish art critic, was right in saying that El Greco had no imitators, and art historians would agree that no artist ever imitated his characteristic manner of painting[10] which evolved during his later years. Most probably he had no imitators during the centuries following his death, with the possible exception of Vélazquez who was aware of his predecessor's art, because naturalism remained the norm in Western painting until the early decades of the twentieth century. Then the mostly forgotten painter, often maligned as a madman with an eye problem[11] emerged from obscurity.[12] His fame grew to the extent that his *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*, is now ranked, together with the *Dos de Mayo* (Madrid, Prado) by Goya and *Las meniñas* (Madrid, Prado) by Vélazques, as one of the three greatest Spanish paintings. Several retrospective exhibitions and conferences in El Greco's honour have been held in the late twentieth century and the early years of this century, while art historians have devoted thousands of publications to explain his "enigmatic" paintings.

The question at issue here is why various modern artists copied paintings by El Greco, or quoted various details from them. Copies by Paul Cézanne and Jackson Pollock are known, while the fact that Pablo Picasso based his most experimental Cubist work on the structure of an El Greco painting is also now generally acknowledged. Other artists discussed here may come as a surprise to readers.

As a matter of routine late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century artists, like their predecessors, made copies of masterworks.[13] Copying is "understood as the intentional reproduction of a work of art either immediately or at some remove in time"[14], but the intent behind copying varies from artist to artist. In early youth it could be part of their education and training, that is emulation – using models to guide a student's initial efforts until they have mastered their craft. Later in artists' career imitation of a model would amount to recreating an existing work on their own terms. While El Greco learnt his craft by copying works by Italian Renaissance artists,[15] no artist would be able to learn to draw in a traditional naturalistic way by copying his later paintings. On the other hand, it is not strange that young twentieth-century artists, in a quest for a new approach to art, would find of El Greco's unprecedented manner of figural expression, extreme degree of anti-naturalism and compositional abstraction a source of inspiration, since modern artists began to seek a divergence from, as John Richardson so succinctly puts it, "the principled march of reason, from baroque classicism through the neoclassical manner of Jacques Louis David and his disciples in the Academy".[16] It is also notable that:

A relationship always exists between the critical appreciation of the older masters and contemporary creative work. The period which saw the sudden and impressive rise to popularity of El Greco was the period 1908-1920 (1908 was the year when Cossio's biography, the foundation of all modern criticism of him was published and the year of Meier-Graefe's *Spanish Journey*).[17]

The early twentieth-century art scene was dominated by formalistic critics, most notably Roger Fry who appreciated El Greco mainly for the formal qualities of his paintings. On the occasion of the National Gallery's acquisition of El Greco's *Agony in the Garden* in 1920 Roger Fry wrote an essay on the artist in *The Athenaeum*, subsequently reprinted in his volume *Vision and Design*, in which his assessment of El Greco's impact on modernist artists is purely in terms of formal qualities. He avers that "very few artists of today have ever realised for a moment how unsympathetic to them is the literary content of an El Greco. They simply fail to notice what the pictures are about in the illustrative sense".[18] Ironically, this could well be true because in the investigation of works by artists who found El Greco worthy of emulation it appears that his "literary content", which Fry refers to, is changed. What was religious in the master's works is secularised or even profaned, as will be noted later in the discussion.

DIEGO VÉLAZQUEZ (1600-1660) AND FRANCIS BACON (1909-92)

El Greco's *Cardinal Niño de Guevara* clearly influenced Diego Vélazquez when he painted the *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*.[19] In his turn, Francis Bacon was fascinated by Vélazquez's *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*. As proof of this fascination Bacon collected reproductions of the *Portrait*. In this regard Martin Harrison quoted Bacon as saying in the early 1970s: "I became obsessed by this painting and I bought photograph after photograph of it. I think really that it was my first subject."[20] (See Bacon's *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*.)[21]

Bacon may not have known about Vélazquez's admiration for El Greco, but Harrison nevertheless makes an insightful remark about Bacon's interest in El Greco:

Although Bacon's radical transformation stood outside the tradition of artists learning by imitating masters, he was not the first to paraphrase Old Master paintings. In February 1939 several artists of his acquaintance participated in 'An Exhibition of Paraphrases (Free Copies)' at the Storran Gallery, 5 Albany Court Yard, London. [...] [B]ut probably of more significance for Bacon was Graham Sutherland's painting based on El Greco's *Agony in the Garden*: if Bacon missed the exhibition, he had many opportunities to see the Sutherland.[22]

Harrison unfortunately does not motivate why Sutherland's version of the El Greco painting would have been important to Bacon.

GUSTAVE COURBET (1819-77)

It has been noted that Gustave Courbet, when he decided to study painting instead of law, learned by copying the pictures of master artists.[23] All the mourners' portrait heads in Courbet's painting of *A Burial at Ornans* (image online: artchive.com/artchive/C/courbet/ornans.jpg.html)[24] are on one line, like in El Greco's *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*. The mood of the painting is, unlike, El Greco's masterwork, completely secular; but nevertheless dignified, sombre and appropriate to the occasion.

ÉDUARD MANET (1832-83)

Alain de Leiris quotes the critic Thoré who noted the resemblance of Éduard Manet's *Dead Christ with Angels*[25] which clearly quotes El Greco's *Pietà*:[26]

The most precise reference to El Greco was made by the critic Thoré in 1964 in his comments upon Manet's *Dead Christ with Angels* exhibited that year: 'In his second painting, the *Dead Christ*, he has imitated another Spanish master, El Greco, with equal intensity, no doubt as a sort of gibe at the bashful admirers of discreet and tidy painting.' ... Thoré associated the untidy technique and supernatural colors with El Greco, suggesting their revolutionary and unsettling impact on Manet's public.[27]

De Leiris formulates Manet's dialogue with Spanish art as more positive than Thoré:

> The composition and the form of Éduard Manet's painting *le Bal à l'Opera* show evidence of having been based in part on El Greco's solemn painting *The Burial of the Count Orgaz*. This evidence affirms Manet's continuing interest in Spanish art in the 1870s, at the height of his personal 'impressionist' mode, and invites a new evaluation of Manet's response to the art of El Greco. The artist's debt to Velazquez and Goya is firmly established, but the possible ties with El Greco, when acknowledged, have been discussed only in general terms. In *Opera Ball* these ties are specific. The painting portrays an event of Manet's time but it is also an homage to El Greco.

> [...] Both the *Opera* and the *Burial* present a contemporary crowd in a frieze arrangement, incorporating a great number of male figures, many of whom, if not all, are portraits. Both artists exploit the colour accent of the black dress of the standing men.[28]

Besides other remarkable correspondences in Manet's *The Ball at the Opera* [29], all the male portrait heads in Manet's painting are on one line, like in the *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*. That is actually where the correspondence ends. Fry's note about content is entirely appropriate in this regard, that "very few artists of today have ever realised for a moment how unsympathetic to them is the literary content of an El Greco". In a straightforward assessment Julius Meier-Graefe called it a *Fleishbörse* (a flesh market).[30] And the same comment is valid in regard to Manet's *Music in the Tuileries Garden* [31], in which the portrait heads are also in one line on the same height.

HILAIRE-GERMAIN-EDGAR DEGAS (1834-1917)

In the *Beaux-Arts Magazine* of Sept 1997 Judd Tully briefly summarises Edgar Dega's collection that was exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum, New York, from 1 October 1997 to 11 January 1998, under the title "The Private Collection of Edgar Degas":

> Collectionneur instatiable. Degas était prêt à tous les scrifices pour acquérir une oeuvre qui lui tenait à coeur. Le Metropolitan Museum de New York expose les trésors amassés par le peintre: nombre de ses xontemporains, tels Cézanne; Gauguin, Van Gogh, Manet, mais aussi le Greco, Ingres et Delacroix.[32]

Notably, Degas's collection included two El Greco paintings, a small replica of *Saint Idelfonso*.[33] According to José Alvarez Lopera he also possessed a portrait of *Santo Domingo de Guzman*, "que había pertenecido a Millet".[34] It is therefore reasonable to infer that Degas had studied works by El Greco and found a detail of a figure stoning St Stephan in the *Burial of the Count of Orgaz* that more or less conformed to his early style and inserted it into a work entitled *Young Spartans Exercising*.[35]

Degas graciously acknowledged his debt to the "great masters" in a statement quoted by Irving Lavin: "There is no art less spontaneous than mine. What I do is the result of reflection and study of the great masters: of inspiration, of spontaneity, of temperament, I know nothing."[36]

PAUL CÉZANNE (1839-1906)

According to Alvarez Lopera Cézanne's rather unremarkable copy[37] of El Greco's *Portrait of a Woman with an Ermine Shawl* was based on an engraving he saw in the *Magazin Pittoresque* (date unknown).[38] Other references to El Greco

need to be inferred. However, it could well be that Cézanne was acquainted with El Greco's *View of Toledo*. He famously said that he wants to do the master works over from nature, but at the same time, "Cézanne apprende del Greco su abstracción cromática".[39] Also in his *Bathers*[40] there is a feint echo of El Greco's *Opening of the Fifth Seal* that would influence the youthful Picasso profoundly.

JENS FERDINAND WILLUMSEN (1863-1958)

The influence of El Greco on Willumsen, a Danish artist whose oeuvre evolved from Symbolism to Expressionism is described briefly on the Willumsen Museum website: "I det følgende årti fik Willumsens rejser i Middelhavslandene stor betydning sammen med hans studier af malerierne af den græsk-spanske kunstner El Greco (1541-1614)."[41]

At the Musée d'Orsay a retrospective exhibition (27 June to 17 September 2006) was held of Willumsen's artistic output, entitled "Willumsen: Du Symbolisme à Expressionnisme", in the catalogue of which it is stated under the heading "L'influence du Greco":

> Au début des années 1920 l'art de Willumsen connoit un tournant décisif avec la découverte du Greco, auquel d'ailleurs le peintre consacrera un ouvrage en 1927. Les couleurs s'intensifient, les contrastes se renforcent; a lumiere se dramatise, les figures se distordent, aboutissant aux effects théâtraux extrémes de la *Soupe du soir*, mettant en scène in seconde épouse et les deux filles de l'artiste, ou encore des vues nocturnes de Venise réalisées dans les années 1930.

OSCAR KOKOSCHKA (1886-1980)

Edith Hoffman remarks that landscapes by Kokoschka recall El Greco's *View of Toledo* and that his figural art also shows an acquaintance with his paintings. A landscape by Kokoschka recalls El Greco's *View of Toledo*:

> Kokoschka may be said to have something of the spirit of the Old Master, who was incidentally greatly admired by the Expressionists: the temperament and emotionalism that distinguished El Greco are also characteristic of Kokoschka, and Kokoschka has the same power of animating a natural scene as well as a human figure with the passions that fill his own mind.[42]

Hoffman's insight, stressing El Greco's emotionalism is the exact opposite of Fry's belief that only the form of his paintings was relevant to modernists.

PABLO PICASSO (1881-1973)

Picasso's passion for El Greco is explained by Richardson. This passion dated back to 1897,

> his sixteenth year, when he had gone to study at the Royal Academy of San Fernando in Madrid. [...] Picasso produced very little work during his nine months in Madrid, but he painted at least one copy of El Greco: a portrait. [...] The fact that El Greco was still perceived by most of the art establishment in Spain as a freak or madman only increased Picasso's enthusiasm for the artist. In this spirit he went to Toledo to copy the *Burial of the Count Orgaz*, but contempt for his teachers prevailed over admiration for the master. After first identifying the old master with his father, Picasso evidently came to identify El Greco with himself. No wonder his work of 1899 [...] includes so many pastiches of El Greco's portraits.[43]

Proof of Richardson's explanation is a burial scene of a childhood friend by the youthful Picasso in which he emulated El Greco's *Burial of the Count of Orgaz*. Then, at the midpoint of his career, Picasso once again turned to El Greco for inspiration. John Golding explains El Greco's influence on Picasso's most innovative work, *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*[44] announces a change of style:

The relevance of a particular El Greco, *The Vision of Saint John* (now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York), known until recently as *The Seventh* (sic!) *Seal* (and to Picasso himself probably and most importantly as *Profane Love*) was first pointed out by Ron Johnson in 1980 and then elaborated on, at the same time and entirely independent by Rolf Laessoe and, in even greater depth, by John Richardson. The affinities between this El Greco and the *Demoiselles* are so striking, not only at a multiplicity of visual levels, but also spiritually and psychologically, that it is hard not to believe that Picasso began the actual execution of the *Demoiselles* under its direct stimulus. Picasso had known and consulted El Greco's work for some time past, and he had almost certainly often seen this particular work, which belonged to the Spanish painter Zuloago, then resident in Paris. But as so often with Picasso, revelation seems to have struck at precisely the appropriate moment, and maybe this faculty is one of the attributes of true genius. It is hard to see much of El Greco in the surrounding studies. The presence of this singularly apocalyptic El Greco behind the *Demoiselles* helps to explain why Breton, for one, viewed the painting of the interior of a whorehouse as a mystical experience.[45]

What was noted about Manet's quotation of a stylistic device from El Greco is also true about the way in which Picasso turned his reference to an apocalyptic scene into what Meier-Graefe would also have called a *Fleishbörse*. The echo of El Greco's religious work in which naked bodies are resurrected and clothed in pure white garments in Picasso's most banal presentation of a whorehouse in which naked bodies seem to change into demonised masked figures is rather remarkable. If there is some mystical element present in *Les demoiselles* it is the potential of El Greco's model as "a vehicle for [...] mystic nihilism", according to Richardson.[46]

JACKSON POLLOCK (1912-56)

In the anteroom to the El Greco exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, 7 October 2003 to 11 January 2004, Jackson Pollock's copies of the master's works were featured in the adjacent Robert Wood Johnson, Jr Gallery. Philippo de Montebello, Director of the Museum stated: "The work of El Greco was decried for its extravagance until 19th-century Romantics and such artists as Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin renewed an emphasis on individual expression. More recently, El Greco exerted a profound influence on major proponents of 20th-century modernism, including Jackson Pollock, who, three centuries after the Spanish Mannerist's death, was so moved as to have made drawings after the great master."[47] The reason for Pollock's fascination with works by El Greco that the young artist viewed in American collections since 1937 is explained by Albert Boime as an understanding of freedom of expression: "Lo que había empezado como expresión de triunfo del espíritu sobre la fuerza bruta terminó siendo un ejemplo de la liberación del espiritu de la esclavitud de todas las limitaciones quo uno se impone a sí mismo, ya dean físicas o de cualquier otro tipo."[48]

CONCLUSION

Having reviewed the art historians' survey of a selection of modern artists' fascination with El Greco, the information gathered still raises the question: why was El Greco a source of inspiration to them? If Byron's assessment of El Greco (quoted at the beginning of this paper) is unacceptable, the question remains, how one may assess El Greco's "influence" on modernism more convincingly. No doubt, El Greco's oeuvre has become "canonical", a term that Anita Silvers explains:

No artwork [oeuvre] attains canonical status totally independently of its ability to inspire enduring aesthetic admiration. No one can know at a work's [oeuvre's] point of origin, before it has had time to demonstrate its influence, whether it possesses this power.[49]

Independent assessments of El Greco's influence attest to the "power" of his oeuvre. The aesthetic admiration that Silvers refers to lapsed after El Greco's death; he only found a new audience during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. "Modern" traits such as the expressive distortion of forms were recognised in El

Greco's work which redeemed the traditional view of him as "a madman". Thus HLC Jaffé argues: "Inderdaad zijn vele van de kenmerken, die Greco's werk [...] kenmerken, in de moderne kunst weer te vinden, en wel juist in die jaren omstreeks 1908 [...]".[50] It seems that twentieth-century artists who realised that the naturalistic paradigm in painting had run its course and were seeking for a renewal sensed or intuitively understood that El Greco's late paintings offered a point of departure for renewal. Whether they were successful is a moot point. Most notably, Arnold Whittick asks: "Are the abstract patterns of modern artists more symbols of inner reality or of the artist's personality than the chiaroscuro of Leonardo da Vinci or Rembrandt or the rhythms of Rubens or El Greco?" And replies: "The best works of these masters have generally a higher abstract value than the works of modern masters."[51]

Karsten Harries claims that modern art tends towards "silence" and "hermetism", towards "privacy and incomprehensibility".[52] Insights into the dilemma of modern artists abound, but what is least explained is why abstract art took centre stage for a long time in the West during the twentieth century. According to Avital this trend in modern art lead to the dead end of, not incomprehensible, but meaningless "non-art".[53] Therefore, one may argue that to redeem the confusion of all the -isms generated by modern painters and the lack of content of abstract art, some artists turned their gaze at the masters of previous centuries. With the exception of Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944)[54] who strived to achieve the "spiritual" in abstract compositions – not in explicit religious themes – abstract artists never clearly articulated what they were searching for.

Without clear articulation of their insights except in painted copies and quotations from his works, various modern artists seem to have recognised that formally El Greco's late paintings are mental constructs, representing a schematic version of reality. So doing El Greco changed the communicative function from commenting on reality to constituting a reality. For various artists that may have been a starting point in finding a new paradigm for art that was at a loose end after the influence of disciples of the Academy terminated.

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1   In Spain the influence of El Greco on twentieth-century Spanish artists is being documented extensively. See Lubar, Robert S, "La presencia de El Greco en el arte español del siglo XX", in José Álvarez Lopera et al., *El Greco* (Madrid: Fundación Amigos del Museo del Prado, 2003), 445-62.

2   Byron, Robert, *The Byzantine Achievement: An Historical Perspective, A.D. 330-1453* (New York: Russel & Russel, 1964), 38.

3   Proof of the fact that El Greco was widely read is the list of books in his extant library. See: San Román, F de B, *El Greco en Toledo, o nuevas investigaciones acerca de la vida y obras de Dominico Theotocópuli* (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1910), 195-7. San Román, F de B., De la vida del Greco (Nueva serie de documentos inéditos). *Archivo Español de Arte y Arqueología*, 3 (May, 1927), 13995. San Román, F de B., De la vida del Greco (Nueva serie de documentos inéditos). *Archivo Español de Arte y Arqueología*, 3 (December, 1927), 275339.

4   David Davies, "The Influence of Christian Neoplatonism on the Art of El Greco". In Nicos Hadjinicolaou ed., *El Greco of Crete: Exhibition on the Occasion of the 450th Anniversary of his Birth,* (Iraklion: Municipality of Iraklion, 1990), 21-55.

5   Regarding El Greco's membership of the Academia de San Luca, see D Martínez de la Peña, "El Greco, en la Academia de San Lucas (el primer documento cierto sobre la estancia del Greco en Italia)", *Archivo Español de Arte,* 45 (158, April-June, 1967), 97105.

6   Federico Zuccaro, *L'idea de' pittori, scultori et architetti* (Turin: Disserolio, 1607).

7   See Estelle A. Maré, "Angels in the Baptism of Christ: A Survey With Reference to El Greco's Innovative Approach to the Scene", *South African Journal of Art History* (15, 2001), 85-95.

8   Aldous Huxley, "El Greco", *Life* 28 (24 April, 1950), 86.

9   Tsion Avital, *Art versus Nonart: Art Out of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 33.

10   Since "style" is an ambiguous modern term and the fact that the term "*maniera*", as used by Giorgio Vasari in his *Vite*, has been translated as "style" has given rise to various misconceptions about Mannerism, the author prefers to use the Italian term or to translate it as "manner of painting" or "working method". See Estelle A Maré, *El Greco's "Achievement of His Personal Maniera"*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. Bloemfontein: University of the Free State, 2002.

11   Stuart Anstis settled the matter by proving scientifically that "even if El Greco were astigmatic, he would have adapted to it, and his figures [...] would have normal proportions. His elongations were an artistic expression, not a visual symptom." "Was El Greco Astigmatic?", *Leonardo,* 35(2, 2002), 208.

12   Reassessment of El Greco's artistic achievement was done by M Cossio, *El Greco,* 2 volumes (Madrid: Victoriano Suarez, 1908), Julius Meier-Grafe, *Spanische Reise* (Berlin: S Fischer, 1910) and Maurice Barrès, *Greco ou le secret de Tolde* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1912).

13   During the period he spent in Venice, El Greco assuredly became acquainted with Tintoretto's paintings and working method. Indeed, he sketched one such cast of Michelangelo's *Giorno* (Medici Chapel, Florence). Although the date of the drawing is unknown, it is one of the earliest authenticated works by the hand of the Cretan artist.

14   Brunhilde S Ridgeway, "Defining the Issue: The Greek Period", *Studies in the History of Art,* 20 (1989), 15.

15   "Michelangelo's biographers wrote that his first painting copied a well-known engraving by the German artist Martin Schongauer (1448-1491). Made in about 1487-88, *The Torment of Saint Anthony* has been known for many years, although it has not always received proper attention due to accumulations of discolored varnish and disfiguring overpaints, which obscured the qualities of the picture's masterful execution and remarkable color palette." (Quoted from "Michelangelo's first painting", the Special Exhibitions website of The Metropolitan Museum, New York.)

16   John Richardson, "On the 'Multiple Viewpoint' Theory of Early Modern Art", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* 53 (2, Spring, 1995), 130-31.

17   AC Sewter, "Roger Fry and El Greco", *Apollo* (52, 1950), 33.

18   Roger Fry, "El Greco", in *Vision and Design* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1920), 169.

19   1650, oil on canvas, 114 × 119 cm, Rome, Galleria Doria Pamphili.

20   Martin Harrison, *In Camera Francis Bacon: Photography, Film and the Practice of Painting* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), 14.

21   Francis Bacon, *Portrait of Pope Innocent X,* 1953, oil on canvas, 153 × 118.1 cm, Des Moines Art Center, Iowa, http:www.artquotes.net/master/bacon_paintings.htm.

22   Harrison*, op. cit.,* 61.

23   Pioch, Nicholas, 2009, Courbet, Gustave, http:www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/courbet, accessed 2009/06/25.

24   1849-50, oil on canvas, 314 × 663 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

25   1864, oil on canvas, 2170 × 1830 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

26   1575, oil on canvas, 66 × 48 cm, New York, Hispanic Society of America.

27   Alain de Leiris, "Manet and El Greco: 'The Opera Ball'", *Arts Magazine* 55, 1, September 1981, 97.

28   Ibid., p. 95.

29   1873, oil on canvas, 71 × 90 cm, New York, private collection, http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/fisher/search.html?fq=title_facet %3A%22Masked+Ball+at+the+Opera%22.

30   Julius Meier-Grafe, *Eduard Manet* (München, 1912), quoted by Linda Nochlin, "A Thoroughly Modern Masked Ball", *Art in America,* November 1983, 188.

31   1862, oil on canvas, 62 × 143 cm, London, National Gallery, http:www.nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/*/chooseGroup/Ma-Mh/.

32   Judd Tully, "Le musée secret de Degas", *Beaux-Arts Magazine* 160, September 1997, 88.

33   1603-14, oil on canvas, 112 × 65.8 cm, Andrew W Mellon Collection, Washington, National Gallery of Art. It could not be established which version of this painting Degas had in his possession.

34   Alvarez Lopera, op. cit., 55.

35   1860, oil on canvas, 109.5 × 155 cm, London, National Gallery, www.nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/hilairegermainedgardegas.

36   Irving Lavin, "The Art of Art History", *Art News* 82:8, October 1985, 100.

37   Paul Cézanne, Copy of *Portrait of a Woman* (*La femme au sao*) 1883, Collection Pellerin.

38   Alvarez Lopera, op. cit., 55.

39   Alvarez Lopera, op. cit., 55.

40   1890-91, oil on canvas, St Petersburg, Hermitage Museum, www.hermitagemuseum.org/fcgibin/db2www/quickSearchDL.mac/DLgallery?selLang=English&tmCond=Cezanne+Paul&START_ROW_NUM_DL=5&x=13&y=14.

41   http://www.jfwillumsensmuseum.dk/jfwill.htm.

42   Edith Hoffman, *Oskar Kokoschka*: *His Life and Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), 20.

43   John Richardson, "Picasso's Apocalyptic Whorehouse", *The New York Review of Books,* 23 April 1987, 42.

44   1907, oil on canvas, 234.9 × 233.7 cm, New York, Museum of Modern Art. www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?object_id=79766.

45   John Golding, "*Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* and the Exhibition of 1988", in Christopher Green, ed., *Picasso's Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (Cambridge: University Press, 2001), 19-20.

46   Richardson, "Picasso's Apocalyptic Whorehouse", *op. cit.*, 41.

47   http://www.metmuseum.org/press_room/full_release.asp?prid={9CE78C41-5241-4F9, accessed 1009/05/31.

48   Albert Boime, "El Greco en Nuova York: su influencia en Jackson Pollock", in José Álvarez Lopera et al., *El Greco* (Madrid: Fundación Amigos del Museo del Prado, 2003), 443.

49   Anita Silvers, "The Story of Art is the Test of Time", *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 49, 3, Summer, 1991, 211.

50   HLC Jaffé, "El Greco en de moderne kunst", *Kroniek van Kunst en Kultuur* 13, 1953, 122.

51   Arnold Whittick, *Symbols*: *Signs and Their Meaning and Uses in Design* (London: Leonard Hill, 1971), 147.

52   Karsten Harries, *The Meaning of Modern Art*: *A Philosophical Interpretation* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 66-7.

53   Avital, op. cit.

54   Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, translated by MT Sadler (New York: MFA Publications & London: Tate Publishing, 2001).

ART EDUCATION AND CURATING[1]

Peter Stupples

In Dunedin, New Zealand, as well as in every city and town pretending to cultural significance in the Western world, local citizens and visitors have the opportunity to see a range of art exhibitions in galleries and sites of great diversity – in public and dealer galleries, in community galleries and museums, and in exhibitions on the precincts of universities and art schools. In New Zealand the very fabric of every *whare whakairo* (meeting house), amongst other things, is also both a public and very private exhibition of art. In Dunedin, as elsewhere, there are also many rich and diverse collections of art in peoples' homes, in a city that possesses, collectively, a great range of visual treasures.

The experience of looking, of giving attention to artworks, will be different for all of us. As art educators we need to keep in mind that this is equally true for each of our students and pupils. We bring to that experience of looking, each one of us, the particular baggage of our specific cultural knowledge, our particular upbringing, our unique experience of life – including that of the visual culture of our own community, the educational institutions of our childhood and adulthood, the tastes and prejudices of our family and peers. Cumulatively these experiences will leave a residue in our minds and bodies, that misleading traditional binary description of our single functioning corporeal selves. Most of us, to a greater or lesser degree, have been educated in the appreciation, evaluation and history of the visual culture of our heritage, of the usefulness and effectiveness of that heritage in our experience of the world, which will include, of course, being entertained by the visual, horrified by the visual, mystified by the visual, charmed and seduced by the visual, disconcerted and traumatised by the visual, uplifted and healed by the emollient of the visual. All this because visual experience is there for most of us from waking to sleeping, and even then present in the fantasies of our dreaming and the violating visions of our nightmares.

What we more narrowly mean by art education is some channelling of this experience into the creation of visual marks or models along the lines of the educational theory sanctioned by the culture of our local institutions. This may not always be spelled out, but nevertheless tacitly understood, established by the practice of teachers' college, the school room, the lecture theatre, the culture of the studio. In every case there will be encasing conventions, sanctioning institutions, collective coercion, an agreed wisdom, framing histories, embalming language, the inertia of cultural habit. These habits are not only inescapable, but necessary adjuncts to our sense of identity, of our experience of being-in-the-world, of social survival and nurture.

As art educators we can make ourselves aware of the nature of those supports and conventions. We can both make use of them and, at times, find them not only irksome but even, on occasion, positively harmful, particularly to the free experience of the visual world of Others. As educators we both help to maintain their comforting structures and find that comfort cloying. We, and those we teach (if that is the right word) both want to nurse our/their fragile ego/s and to give way to our/their aggressive desires. We, and they, feel the contending desires of the need to adhere to rules that help us belong to a community and the violent rage of the iconoclast.

In our postmodern world we try to acknowledge our tendencies to waywardness as well as the support and blinkered vision the conventions of our cultural history give us. These days, art galleries are as likely to present the abject, the anti-convention, as well as the visual balms of both belonging and the quest for transcendence.

I want to emphasise the greater visual culture we all inhabit to give a context for the role of art galleries in that mix, a role that is both sometimes overvalued by those who regularly visit art shows and are caught up in local artworlds, and underestimated by those who couldn't give a damn and whose visual culture is confined to the images that flicker across the screen of their television, computer or i-phone.

Visiting the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, one of the four great galleries in New Zealand, it is tempting to be seduced into giving it star billing in the visual heritage of Aotearoa New Zealand. Yet we must recognise that the majority of New Zealanders do not visit art galleries, and if they have ever been to one, it is likely to have been in the context of their school education, a bus trip, a day out of the classroom, a chance to talk to friends, to feel the hush of a space sanctified in the minds of some, but so unfamiliar to the experience of others that they feel the swelling violence of confronting the unfamiliar, the alien, the territory of the dominators, shamed, perhaps, by their ignorance of the Other. We need to be aware of the nature of this institution in our land – to see how it might delight some and alienate others. As educators we need to give space in our own minds to the extended field of feelings of those we educate.

Education is of course coercion, showing the way sanctified by society, building the frame, preserving the flame, gathering into the collective, substantiating cultural identity. This has always been the way of all societies, and all have used the visual to those ends. Through elaborate systems of filtration we appoint our guardians of the flame – the art gallery directors and administrators, the acquisitions committees and collection registrars, the artwriters – critics, historians, journal editors. These keepers display the stories within the frame, the stories of our artworlds, their beginnings, their relationship to our histories, the way they have been selected and gathered, preserved and exhibited, the way we have been consistently culturally coerced, the way the propaganda machine of our cultural identity has been constructed and nurtured.

Before the late eighteenth century the gallery was a privileged space, containing the objects of a private collection – even if they were the King's Pictures and, in a sense, a national asset. The shift of some galleries and museums, *kunstkamera*, houses of curiosities, from private to public, was accelerated during Napoleon's conquests in Europe, when the artworks of royal houses and dispossessed monasteries were handed over to new state authorities. At the same time, as a result of the Enlightenment, there was a growing sense of the ethnic nation-state, of pride in national language and literature, in national traditions of art and architecture, in their unique spiritual heritage, in the treasures gathered in the past by powerful political leaders and perspicacious collectors. The great unwashed were now re-seen as "the folk," the people of one language and set of traditions. Museums and galleries displaying "national" treasures helped to bind rich and poor, the powerful and the as yet disenfranchised, into a new political cohesion. In addition the masses were being educated in literacy and numeracy, the better to enable them to engage in the complex tasks of rapidly developing industry concentrated in large conurbations and to serve in the ever-expanding bureaucracy. Becoming "educated" broadens the range of possible curiosities, leading to an ever-increasing appetite for information and knowledge. Museums and galleries helped both to satisfy that hunger and to feed a desire for more.

These broad sentiments encouraged the development of institutions in Dunedin. European settlers wanted to preserve the cultural heritage they carried with them, including its artistic traditions. Most of the earliest artists of European origin were itinerants, spending time in the South Seas, Australia and New Zealand, leaving behind them as they passed through examples of their work based upon their training in Britain, France, Holland, Italy. It was natural for the early settlers to cherish these links with their cultural past, to collect and preserve them, not only as reminders of what they had left behind but also as examples of good practice, for emulation by home-grown New Zealand European artists.

Thus the development of art galleries always had a multiple agenda – to preserve heritage, but also to display exemplars of best practice, to show the first fruits of our own artistic endeavours. In the Dunedin Public Art Gallery scenes of Scotland by James Crowe Richmond were shown alongside landscapes in South Canterbury by William

Mathew Hodgkins, both being upheld as examples to which younger artists should aspire, thus maintaining the heritage transplanted from Europe.

The public gallery in Dunedin too became an institution, a building at the cultural heart of both province and nation, reinforcing pride in achievement, pride in a unique history, pride of possessions, a sense of cultural belonging. Whilst, we may add, the art of Māori was confined to the ethnographic cabinets of the Otago Museum, considered by the European founding fathers not as art but samples of the material culture of an Other.

In the late twentieth century that cultural belonging has been reassessed, sifted, found wanting, unbalanced, more difficult unequivocally to quantify and justify, as the notion of the ethnic nation-state has to contend with an increasing comprehension of social diversity and the contesting claims of a bicultural constitution in a multicultural society.

Public collections in New Zealand were made by the delegates of city fathers (mothers were never consulted). Until the mid-twentieth century the public galleries were small enough for most of any collection to be on display on a more or less permanent basis. The title of "curator" was often a synonym for "director," "keeper" – the "keeper of the flame." Only gradually was the permanent collection occasionally displaced by visiting shows or by selections from among the permanent to highlight the work of an individual or group, to emphasise a theme.

When there was an unalloyed sense of right by a culture's dominant group that their idea of art was indeed the uncontested *fact* of art to be shared and celebrated by all, to ensure the health of heritage – like some cultural cough linctus – to stiffen the sinews and summon the blood of cultural righteousness, then the permanent collection was not simply the only art that was needed, but the emphasis on permanence was itself a virtue, demonstrating that what was right and proper for all to see was settled, done and dusted, and that it would be so for ever and ever amen. There are still some in our society who rue the day when these clear virtues were undermined by the rise of the culture industry, by market forces and doubts in the sanctity of heritage.

Exhibitions are also shows. We employ that word from time to time as a more informal way of talking about such events, but there is a subtle difference in our use of these words. When you exhibit, you demonstrate a set of propositions, a string of facts, a well-documented history, the foundations of which are agreed by the keepers of the flame. A show, on the other hand, is a spectacle, a showing off, a declaration of artistic inventiveness, creativity. To put on a show you need a ringmaster, a master of ceremonies, someone to put it together, even, in a sense, to take responsibility for it. The director, the keeper of the flame, preoccupied with managing the permanent, needs someone to come and run a show that is distinctly temporary, in some way topical, particularly purposive, to emphasise some aspect of visual culture that it is determined should, for one reason or another, be displayed, dislodging some of the permanent to make room for the passing. Enter the guest curator.

I have curated three shows for the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. I would like to share some of my thoughts as I played ringmaster.

The first show, entitled "Sites for the Eyes: European Landscapes in the Permanent Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery" (November 2004–July 2005), had a distinct reason to be. By the early years of this twenty-first century the space given over to the permanent collection had shrunk to a single "gallery," or more lately, two such spaces, enabling only what has become known as "The Cream" to be displayed from a vast stock of images that otherwise may be rarely seen.

As a former member of the acquisitions committee of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery I was obliged to be familiar with what was on the racks or in the drawers, in storage. It was also true that the permanent collection had, for many visitors, become overfamiliar, until, like wallpaper, it was scarcely any longer seen. Here was an opportunity to do a number of things – to refresh the familiar by putting some of the cream alongside the hoi polloi, get rid of the chronological hang and encourage visitors to make new junctions between images – colour, form, size,

treatment, texture, stories – to make the visitor work to find meaning for themselves, to gently dislodge some of the conventions. Of course the curator was still the ringmaster, hoping to make the audience gasp at his audacity, his wit and cleverness, his eye for quirky neighbourliness, for a good story.

As I was preparing "Sites for the Eyes" my excursions through the rich material in storage revealed to my eye a number of other exhibitions waiting to be hung.

I was able to convince the Gallery that we could put together a second show around the themes of "War and Peace" (April–July 2007),[2] a nice contrast of opposites – the title of a famous novel and of a perennial topic that has been with human beings since before we sheltered in caves to find some peace from the war of the world of nature. It was interesting that Tolstoy should put "war" before "peace" as I found more images of violence than the calm enjoyment of unalloyed pleasure, but in one corridor it became possible to play off one wall of peaceful idylls against another of brazen bloodlust.

In mining the collection I came across a whole series of incredible watercolours by William Reed, who served in the Pacific in the New Zealand Field Ambulance Corps (1942-45), images that covered the whole spectrum, from death in battle to young men enjoying their bodies bathing in tropic lagoons – bathing in water being one of the key images in fantasies of peace and civilised contentment.

In both these exhibitions, as guest curator, I was given full freedom of the gallery collection to make any show I chose with the full co-operation of a dedicated team of gallery staff. The curator may select to tell a story, to coerce, to educate, but without the support of a gallery team to render advice, point out what might and what might not work, frame the unframed, shift the heavy sculpture, paint the walls, create the signage, keep track of the movement of works, care for security, organise the publicity, no show would get on the road.

Figure 1: William Reed, *Washing Clothes, New Caledonia*, c. 1942-3, watercolour on paper, 29.7 × 39.5 cm. Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery (206-1969). Gifted 1969 by Mr J Keith Skinner.

And of course there were unspoken contracts. I had to make a case, come up with lists of works, show where they could be hung, write drafts of signage. At any stage the keepers of the flame could bring down the curtain, tell the ringmaster to find another avenue for the demonstration of his talents. Both shows were conservative, making positive noises, showing off the collection to advantage, demonstrating the riches of the local, the accidents of acquisition, making a virtue of necessity, costing next to nothing by comparison with a show from Auckland or overseas. Both shows were used by the education officer at the gallery and visited by school children – when they were, consciously or not, persuaded of the picturesque quality of European landscapes, learned geography of the places from which their forebears had come, landscapes that were part of the DNA of every child. Or they were enabled to see images of Gallipoli, of the war in the Pacific, learning history to add to the geography, and also enabled to make their own comparisons between the desultory images of those cast down by violence and the rosy glow of bathing children or young men and women.

Both were also thematic shows, going against the grain of traditional curatorship, despite their conservatism. They did not explain the chronological history of Western art, they did not deal with the work of a single artist from early sketches to canvases of semi-divine maturity, they did not tell the story of New Zealand Western art: the logic of their structure was seemingly anarchic, at the whim of the curator, disturbing the firm grids of heritage, despite their seeming innocuousness.

But the images we show have many stories to tell. The logic of any story is itself a story to be told.

The third show (June–September 2009) was born of mixed parentage. On visits to Moscow and St Petersburg a colleague teaching design at Unitec, Auckland, made close contact with a group of contemporary Russian artists, two of whom visited Auckland for the festival in March 2009. Others sent work to New Zealand to be shown later in the year. The creators of some of these works featured in *Landfall 213* in 2007.

I have had a long association with the history of Russian art, which I taught for some years at the University of Otago. I suggested that this show, "I Was Russia," might be an opportunity to look at the Russian art that has been collected in New Zealand – to see the quirks of collecting, the stories behind them – and the gaps in our experience of Russian art's rich heritage. I began to construct a parallel show to be seen alongside "I Was Russia," to be called "Russian Art in New Zealand."

Art galleries are the repositories of accidents of fate, chance encounters, the manias and whims of collectors. Te Papa in Wellington has a group of paintings by Natalia Goncharova, who was a leading member of the Russian historical avant-garde in the years before the 1917 revolution. When that revolution took place Goncharova was with Diaghilev in Western Europe designing sets for the Ballets Russes. She decided not to return home but made a life for herself in Paris. Without her base within a functioning avant-garde and outside the country of her birth, she was gradually cast from the loop of any artworld. Mary Chamot, an assistant keeper at the Tate in London for ten years from 1965, became the London adviser and buyer for what was then called the National Art Gallery in Wellington. She had got to know Goncharova in Paris, about whom she wrote a book. By this time Goncharova was elderly, impoverished and ill. To help her financially Chamot arranged for a number of galleries to buy some of her work from her Paris collection. Some of these works formed part of my show in Dunedin, part of a group of early-twentieth-century Russian works enhanced by prints and sculpture from Auckland and Christchurch.

In 1969 the Russian artist and printmaker Yuri Podlyaski visited New Zealand as part of a Soviet goodwill mission. At the time his official visit would have been seen as part of Soviet soft sell, an aspect of Cold Water propaganda politics. Podlyaski brought with him a set of lithographs, linocuts and etchings by a raft of contemporary Russian artists, some of whom had considerable reputations in the Soviet Union. Possibly because no one else wanted them, the set of 19 prints ended up at the DPAG. Only one of them had been shown subsequently on the gallery walls. Now, 20 years after the fall of the Soviet Union, this group of prints has become representative of an era, of a style of Russian domestic art. It is unique in Australasia.

Dunedin has two unique private collections of Russian art that were brought together for the show.

The DPAG has five Russian icons – one of which is of superb quality. A private collector has more than 20 icons, ranging from the seventeenth century to the late nineteenth, covering a range of styles and religious affiliations within Orthodoxy. There is no other collection like it in Australasia, and it relates to aspects of the religious images of Goncharova. A second collector has inherited Russian ceramics and metalware from the immediate pre-Revolutionary decade, collected from an impoverished Russia in the 1920s.

A recent New Zealand ambassador in Moscow was also a collector of Russian contemporary art, but from the beginning of the twenty-first century. The pride of this collection is a group of paintings by Elena Cherkasova illustrating aspects of the Christian Nativity, modern icons, almost like frescoes from some hermitage in the wilderness of the Holy Land.

These four accidents – and others – I was able to mould into a single exhibition representing key aspects of Russia's visual heritage, using one section to point up aspects of another, telling a story to bring the culture of another space and other times into sharp focus for the edification and delight of a wide audience.

Art education – including curating – is work. The products of that work are enlightenment, seeing the world in a new way through the visual creativity of others, but also, at least to some extent, a keeping of the frame and the flame. The commodity produced is education, both that same enlightenment and, inescapably, coercion. In the best of all possible experiences it is also a dialogue, the use of the visual to engage in discussion, to question the frame and the flame, to see the visual less as evidence but rather as material for exploration and explanation, of

Figure 2: Russian Icon. *Presentation of the Holy Child in the Temple*, triptych, wings and top late 18th C., central panel later 19th C., tempera on gesso on limewood, left wing 49.9 × 16.1 cm, centre 50 × 32 cm, right wing 49.6 × 15.9 cm. Collection of Dunedin Public Art Gallery (4.1932).

discovering through such a novel confrontation a little more about who or what we are, and maybe want to be. The curator, as well as educator, can be the catalyst for such positive experiences, not stating what is and should be, but suggesting possibilities, starting conversations about the future. The result of such verbal exchange about the visual can lead to an extension of mind, a respect and tolerance for the experience of others, to the enrichment of lives. Curating is unashamedly educational. Educating is allowing dialogues to flow around information, attitudes, cultural and social positions, giving elbow room to our place in the world and, in particular, to the place, and visual culture, of others.

Peter Stupples is senior lecturer in Art History and Theory at the Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic. From 1990 to 1998 he was associate professor and head of the Department of Art History and Theory at the University of Otago.

He has written widely about Russian visual culture and the social history of art. Among the six books he has published is *Pavel Kuznetsov: His Life and Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Recent journal articles include "Visual Culture, Synthetic Memory and the Construction of National Identity," *Third Text*, 17:2 (2003), 127-39; "On Hanging 'War and Peace'," *Scope: Art 1* (November 2006), 43-9; six entries in the *Beloved: Dunedin Public Art Gallery Guide*, December 2009; "Visual Voices: Heeding the Specificity of the Cultural Context of Art," *Junctures*, 9 (2007), 1-10; "Suprematism in the Antipodes: Malevich in New Zealand," *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*, 41 (2007), 19-35; "Malevich and Vorticism," *Canadian American Slavic Studies*, 4 (Winter 2008); "Ground," *Scope, Art 3* (November 2008), 149-57; and "The Vestimentary and Identity: British Pop Art," *Context*, 18 (May 2009), 5-10.

Stupples has also curated three art exhibitions at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery: "Sites for the Eyes: European Landscape in the Collection of the Dunedin Public Art Gallery" (November 2004–July 2005), "War and Peace" (April 2006–July 2007), and "RAINZ: Russian Art in New Zealand" (June–September 2009).

1   A version of this paper was presented at the conclusion of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Art Educators Conference in Dunedin, New Zealand, on 23 April 2009.

2   Peter Stupples, "On Hanging 'War and Peace'," *Scope: Art 1* (November 2006), 43-9.

GARDEN WARE: A PROJECT INSTIGATED BY JULIE DAVIES WITH VICTORIA BELL AND LEE HOULIHAN FOR THE EXHIBITION "INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS," 21 APRIL–16 MAY 2009

Victoria Bell and Lee Houlihan

Figure 1: *Garden ware* (Gwyn Street, Broad Bay, Ötepoti Dunedin, Aotearoa New Zealand (1)), 2009, detail (one of a series of 18 parts), digital print, 210 × 297 mm.

Figure 2: *Garden ware* (Gwyn Street, Broad Bay, Ötepoti Dunedin, Aotearoa New Zealand (2)), 2009, detail (one of a series of 18 parts), digital print, 210 × 297 mm.

Garden ware originated from Julie Davies' interest in botanical illustration re-imaged, using contemporary media and expanded into an investigation of site, through a project response by Victoria Bell and Lee Houlihan. Following instructions devised by Davies, Houlihan and Bell deliberately collected botanical data in an unscientific manner from a single site. This was the garden at the former cottage of Charles Brasch, located at Gwyn Street at Broad Bay on the Otago Peninsula. An instruction stipulated "Please record name, date, time and address of the flowers", which alludes to the Eurocentric process of collecting specimens. Aptly, the Aotearoa New Zealand contribution was collected on Waitangi Day. It was intended that the site of gathering be contextualised by collecting and scanning single flowers and weeds, *both indigenous and introduced*, thereby revealing the processes of settlement and colonisation. This became veiled in the final showing of the work.

Davies digitally printed the Gywn Street selection along with a corresponding collection gathered from her Melbourne garden. The completed artwork was installed as a line of 18 A4 plant images, nine each from Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand for the show. Presented here are two blooms from each site.

Figure 3: *Garden ware* (Albert Street, Brunswick West,
Melbourne, Australia (1)), 2009,
detail (one of a series of 18 parts),
digital print, 210 × 297 mm.

Figure 4: *Garden ware* (Albert Street, Brunswick West,
Melbourne, Australia (2)), 2009,
detail (one of a series of 18 parts),
digital print, 210 × 297 mm.

"Instructional Models" was a propositional exhibition instigated by Terri Bird and Julie Davies, in association with the artist-run initiatives Ocular Lab and Clubsproject Inc. in Melbourne. It was presented at Blue Oyster Art Project Space as part of the ANZAAE 2009 Conference hosted by Otago Polytechnic Art and Design with Kai Tahu ki Arai-Te-Uru in Ōtepoti Dunedin. For the project, a group of Ōtepoti Dunedin-based artists were invited to create works based on their interpretation of instructions sent to them by artists in Melbourne.

Melbourne artists: Terri Bird, Julie Davies, Raafat Ishak, Sean Loughrey, Jonathan Luker, Sally Mannall, Tom Nicholson, Nikos Pantazis, Spiros Panigirakis, Alex Rizkalla, Fleur Summers and the Open Spatial Workshop.

Ōtepoti Dunedin artists: Clare Fleming, Rohana Weaver, Ali Bramwell, Lars Preisser, Sophie Black, Peter Gorman, Max Bellamy, Christine Keller, Bibiana Guevara-Hunter, Karen Taiaroa-Smithies, Alex Lovell-Smith, Anna Muirhead, Victoria Bell, Lee Houlihan, Max Oettli and Inge Flint.

Victoria Bell is a practicing artist known for her soft sculpture derived from forays into drawing. In her other life she is the programme coordinator of the new Diploma of Art (Specialty) at the Dunedin School of Art, Otago Polytechnic/Te Kura Matatini ki Otago where she also lectures in printmaking and textiles. Bell relocated to Ōtepoti Dunedin from Ōtautahi Christchurch in 2006 after receiving the Olivia Spencer Bower Award in 2005.

Lee Houlihan works predominantly with clay and textiles. Presently she is undertaking a Master of Fine Arts at Te Kura Matatini ki Otago/Otago Polytechnic in Ōtepoti Dunedin.

Classroom Online Practice

STUDENTS WHO BLOG

Rachel Gillies

Teaching students the use of digital blogs as workbooks has been invaluable to both their art practice and my teaching; here's why and how.

As part of my job lecturing in the Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand, I have been developing digital methodologies for teaching and learning as part of the curricula that I teach – different papers in the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree (BFA) and the Bachelor of Visual Arts degree (BVA). Across these papers, the most ubiquitously used digital tool that connects them is the blog (or Weblog[1]), an online diary (or log) where authors can catalogue their thoughts on the World Wide Web. Blogs deliver a variety of content – by text, photo or audio – but they all have the same format in common: authors "post" their media by date, reverse-chronologically, and each post has a space for comment. This short paper aims to show, by using examples taken from my teaching over the last three years, how the use of blogging has positively affected both the students and my teaching. It will focus primarily on a discussion of current examples of work by students and staff in the School of Art at Otago Polytechnic and contextualises this within the contemporary use of blogging in education nationally and internationally, locating the use of digital media in art education.

In 2007, students in the third year of the BFA who had chosen photography as their speciality were asked to create an exhibition of work for public display, called "Comment On… ." As part of the documentation, assessment and evaluation of the exhibition, and feedback on it, I asked that a blog be used to document images and descriptions of each student's exhibited work, and that each student access the communal *Comment On…* blog[2] as part of their feedback to their peers. I set specific instructions for everyone to comment on each of their fellow classmates (which they would also do verbally at the group critique), but instead of them all e-mailing me their comments to compile, the blog would act as a central repository, and they would do the work themselves. My intention in including the blog in this project was to show students that free online blog software (in this case wordpress.com) could be used to document, showcase and advertise their work to an online public. It also aimed to show students that the blog could be used as a place for comment and feedback, hopefully extending their understanding of online social networks, firstly within the school, and then encouraging an understanding of wider networks. The result was that the students all got exposure to blogging and they all got an online presence. However, as soon as I began this exercise I realised there were other, wider, implications for this kind of online practice within an art school context. For example, it raised questions of privacy and public exposure and raised issues of copyright and licensing of work. Although this specific project was never intended to *thoroughly* examine these contexts, it was clear that these were issues that should be specifically raised in future blogging projects.
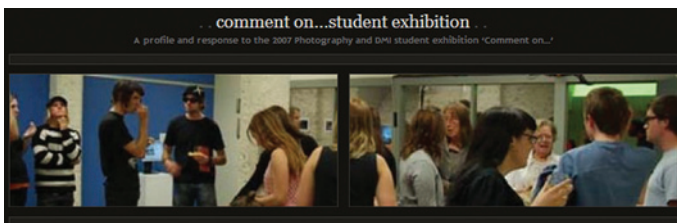

Figure 1: Screen grab from http://commenton.wordpress.com/

Later in the same academic year, in discussion with the class lecturers,[3] blogging was introduced to the photography students in the second-year BFA. The students were asked to present a project as a blog, available for assessment on the internet. In this example, blogging becomes an individual responsibility rather than a shared one as in the previous project.[4] Issues of networks were again addressed, this time with issues of privacy and public access introduced earlier in the paper. Furthermore, this exercise shifted some of the assessable components of the course online, and students were asked to consider how the blog could be used for assessment, in the same way that physical hand-ins had been used in the past. The surprising result in this case was that, as digitality was introduced to the students, the wider context of the internet, digital technologies and social networks became themes in their work, with the blog acting as the agent in their concept development. This distinguishes their blog's use from the previous example; rather than a focus on the blog as a website, or a presentation method (for the exhibition), the blog became a space for reflection and development, similar to the way in which the students had been using their physical workbooks.

Concurrently, with the senior BFA students, I started an optional lunchtime group, "Lunchtime Reflections," which was intended to further artistic discussion that occurred outside the classroom and allow ideas to develop beyond the confines of course material and class projects. In order to include students who couldn't make it to these lunchtime sessions, I started my own blog that captured these weekly conversations, extended them and linked them to online resources and relevant examples. With this project, I aimed to create a space for my own thinking as well as documenting the lunchtime group. I also aimed to lead by example in terms of the use of free digital software and demonstrating what it could do for the promotion, discussion and even the making of art.[5] I was learning about opening up the possibilities for blogging within my own research and scholarship practices as well as at the same time developing methodologies for teaching blogging as a tool.

Figure 2: Screen grab from my first post for the "Lunchtime Reflections" group. Available at: http://discussphotography. wordpress.com/2007/07/24/welcome-to-the-discussion/

Part of this development was to extend my own learning in the education arena, and I kept a separate blog dedicated to flexible learning and how I could integrate it into my teaching.[6] For me, "Flexible Learning" was initially the study of flexible delivery modes in teaching, but it quickly developed into a more integrated approach to the use of digital technologies in study, art practice and teaching and learning. In this online space I developed a theoretical understanding of flexible learning and teaching principles, upskilled myself in the use of available technologies, and used the blog as part of a network with other academics. It developed from a place of learning, testing of ideas and discussion to one that I now regularly update within my own scholarship and research related to digital literacy. Through this experiential learning process, and in response to demand within the school, I have developed a core digital literacy paper that runs in the first year of the BVA.[7] This has now run for two years, and students are introduced to a wide range of digital devices (hardware) and programmes (software) as well as problem-solving techniques related to their uses. Through the digital literacy paper students gain an understanding of relevant digital skills in relation to their study and art practice, and also discover blogging. The overall aim is to ensure that all students gain a

fundamental confidence in the use of a variety of digital tools, as well as an overarching understanding of their wider application within both artistic and digital contexts.

The paper pulls together my research and experiences with students from the past three years. It integrates a variety of digital media in its delivery, and students experience these by accessing the course (also online), and following the tasks set. They are introduced to the wider implications of these media, including blogging, through learning the theoretical underpinnings, as well as receiving instruction in the use of the relevant technologies. Furthermore, they get a chance to develop their own use of the media, specifically in relation to their art practice and study.

To reflect a little on how blogging has changed not only the ways in which students document their work but how they think about their art, and ultimately, how well-equipped they are to face the online world after they graduate, I will discuss some examples of their work.

Those same students from the second-year BFA class in 2007 who were originally *made* to use blogs as part of their course work are now choosing to blog on their own. They develop their blogs as research and practice workbooks, use them to keep in touch with each other's practice, submit them as workbooks for their assessment and in anticipation of graduation, are integrating them into professional websites to market themselves online. The results, for both process and outcomes, have been excellent.

To give an example of the range of students working in this way, in 2009, at the end of the first semester, 40% of the students chose to submit digital workbooks (in the form of blogs) as part of their assessment; 50% did not submit an additional hard-copy workbook. There is no requirement for students to work in one way over another, with the students who choose to work online doing so because they have the freedom to choose, having been taught the benefits of the digital approach earlier in their education.

My first individual example is senior BFA student Viet Tieu, who uses his professional-looking blog to market his photographic skills and develop his social networks. Viet's blog is a great example of a professional online presence (i.e. website) available for free. It's not his first blog, and having gone through the process once already, his current blog is slicker and more professional than the first. It serves as his photography workbook, but he is acutely aware that he is representing himself in a public forum and he will continue to use it as a professional space once he graduates at the end of 2009. The image in the screen grab below from his blog shows "Rufus and his Beach Buggy," a shot recently taken. Viet discussed the use of the image with Rufus' mother at the time, explaining that he was a photographer and that he would like to put the image on his blog, accessible to a wider public. The mother was more than happy about this, and Viet adhered to good practice by using model release forms. His final step (or so he thought) was to e-mail the link to Rufus' family so that they could access the image. To his surprise, Rufus' mum was so pleased with the result that she made a comment on his blog and then moved on to view his past posts and photographic works. She continued to make critical comments on images that moved her to do so, and left a link to her own blog for Viet to visit in return.

The main success here is that Viet is creating his own networks, outside his educational circles and immediate peer group. He is also showing a high level of maturity and responsibility, including all interested parties in decisions prior to the display of work online.

My second example is senior BFA student Emily Hlavac-Green, who is now at the level where she has developed a wider context for her online presence, and has recently been working to integrate the various strands of her online self. Having developed a working blog for her practical photography studies and a separate blog for her research, she realised that there needed to be some way that these elements could connect and overlap. In addition, she saw that there were other parts of her professional self that could be displayed in the same space to create a more complete online presence. Through her own development efforts she has designed a layout, through the manipulation of a free template, which links her separate blogs. Visitors to her integrated site are unaware that they are visiting four separate blogs. The result is a professional approach to presenting oneself online, one that is clear and easy to navigate.

There is an important recognition here that the internet provides a public space in which an individual's personal interests may overlap with their school work – a phenomenon I have personally experienced as more and more of my "friends" on the social media site Facebook become a mix of students, graduates, family and colleagues. Students working online as part of their coursework are made explicitly aware of this through blogging, and take on the responsibility of representing themselves appropriately on their sites. For example, student Jesse Simons' work has developed this year to include artwork created *about* social networks of images, and the internet-as-repository or image bank.[8]

My final example is a student who only started blogging seven days ago! Struggling with the physical workbook format, and as an exclusively digital photographer, senior BVA student Bella Harrex has taken to blogging as a natural. Bella is a new student in the School of Art, and has never been introduced to reflective practice through the development of a hard-copy workbook. This is something that art students are usually introduced to in the first years of their art
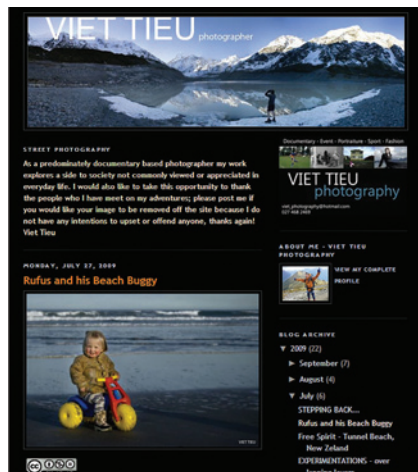

Figure 3: Screen grab from Viet Tieu's current blog, taken on 16 August 2009.

Figure 4: Screen grabs of Emily Hlavac-Green's four different blog headers. She has carefully designed and linked them to appear as the same blog, with the four numbered designs letting the visitor know which blog they are visiting.

school education, and it can take a lot of experience to develop a personal style. For Bella, working in a physical format was not helping her develop her own reflective practice. As a digital photographer, reformatting her work for a physical output at the development stage was a time-consuming and non-intuitive way to work.

Seeing the success that some of her peers were having with blogs, Bella realised that this could be a more appropriate way for her to present her work for assessment. I encouraged her to set up her own blog, to look at the blogs of other students who were using theirs particularly well, and just to have a go. As previously stated, the results were incredible. Bella quickly realised that using the technology was not a barrier for her; it suits her to think through

her computer and, within an hour of setting up her blog, she had discovered a suitable template, created her own unique header image, and posted her first images. She is now using the technology every day.

What has surprised both Bella and I is how quickly the blog format has helped develop her photographic practice. In just a week, there was a considerable leap in her ability to articulate her thinking and process the changes in her work. The blog is not just a tool, or merely a different way of doing the same thing; it can enable further learning and engagement where other tools cannot go.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

For me, blogging is also a space for reflective practice, whether for teaching, scholarship, or research. At the core of everything I do, reflection is an important process that enables development. Having learnt this process through my own blogging, and from the students' blogs, the benefits are clear and have underlined my determination to both continue teaching the use of blogs and to continue to situate myself in a network of other bloggers.

This network not only encourages further learning, but also enables critical discussion around the culture of art practice in a networked world. This is an interest that flows through my own work, from photography to digital literacy and social media research, and connects some of the strands along which I think (both on and offline).

I am also able to utilise the blogging network in my teaching across the polytechnic. For example, I teach photography at different levels and in different contexts, and I find that with the ease of access I have to other students' work via their blogs, I can now use their work as examples in the classroom. Both in lectures and in consultations with individual students, I can easily go online to show visual examples of students' work, or share the research they are doing in a particular area. Furthermore, I am increasingly seeing the students referencing each other's research by linking to each other's blog posts. This collaborative learning environment is benefiting everyone involved.

Figure 5: Screen grab from photographer Bella Harrex's new blog, showing her fifth post, taken on 20 August 2009.

I also find that my own blogging practice, as well as that of my students, has become more critical as we are increasingly aware of our representation online. In comparison to physical workbooks (which until a few years ago was the expected format for assessment), which remain a private space until assessment (and some arguably remain so thereafter), I find that the students are more careful and critical about what they post from the outset. They format their arguments *before* posting them, and they exemplify them with *edited* images to make their point. Similarly, their research is submitted in a more developed form than before.

I find myself doing the same. In my own blog, I am aware that my students are my primary audience, and I feel it is important for them to see what I do inside, outside and across the classrooms I teach in. For example, until recently, I kept the blog I used for students separate from my Digital Literacy Research Blog, and I struggled with the thought of posting links to subjects less closely related to class topics. As I have developed my blogs, I have developed a better understanding of who I am as a teacher, and I have integrated my blogs to reflect this and to create a more

rounded web presence for myself, supporting my professional work in a greater variety of ways.

Finally, as I continue to learn through my own blogging, I continue to share these experiences with my students. In this context we are all learning, and have already learnt a great deal. This has been an invaluable experience.

Some Students who Blog

Emily Hlavac –Green	http://emilyhlavac.blogspot.com/
Viet Tieu	http://viettieu.blogspot.com/
Bella Harrex	http://isabellaharrex.wordpress.com/
Alex Lovell-Smith	http://electart.blogspot.com/ (research),http://alorxphotography.blogspot.com/ (practical)
Jesse Simons	http://jessesimons.blogspot.com/ (research), http://kiaora-jesse.blogspot.com/ (practical)

Staff Blogs: The School of Art

Rachel Gillies	http://discussphotography.wordpress.com/
Dr. Susan Ballard	http://suballard.wordpress.com/

Staff Blogs: Otago Polytechnic

Definitive list (regularly updated)	http://wikieducator.org/Otago_Polytechnic#Staff_blogs
Other Links	
Digital Literacy Paper:	Wiki: http://wikieducator.org/School_of_Art_Digital_Literacy

Rachel Gillies is a Senior lecturer in both the School of Art and Department of Design at Otago Polytechnic and has backgrounds in photography, multimedia technology, contemporary art gallery management, graphic design and electronic arts. Her research practice includes electronic arts, photography and contemporary exhibition practices, and she is directly involved in the development of digital literacy resourcing at Otago Polytechnic.

1   For further information see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog.

2   The *Comment On…* Exhibition Blog is available to view here. It hasn't been updated since the end of the project in 2007. All work is classified as Creative Commons, By Attribution, Non Commercial, No Derivatives: http://commenton.wordpress.com/.

3   At this time I was working as acting head of the Photography Department, and this paper was taught by Michael Morley and Angela Lyon.

4   The *Comment On…* blog ended up being the responsibility – and submission – of one student who set up the account and updated all the images and descriptions from the students. The group members then had individual responsibility for posting comments to each other for feedback.

5   My current blog can be viewed at http://discussphotography.wordpress.com/. Although this blog was started when I initiated the "Lunchtime Reflections" meetings, I was already trialling my blogging "voice" at http://photography-and-new-media-art.blogspot.com.

6   See http://flexiblelearningrach.wordpress.com/, which was started in response to a paper which formed part of the Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Learning and Teaching offered at Otago Polytechnic.

7   The paper is available online at http://wikieducator.org/School_of_Art_Digital_Literacy.

8   For some examples of Jesse's work, see http://kiaora-jesse.blogspot.com/.

Classroom Practice

ENGAGING STUDENTS WITH LOW MOTIVATION IN A STUDIO LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Jane Venis

INTRODUCTION

I enjoy working with students of mixed abilities to create a high-energy yet supportive studio environment. The challenge is to stimulate learning in students with diverse needs, many of whom have low motivation and confidence. In this paper, I discuss some strategies to help achieve this.

My past life as an arts-based community worker with young people who were affected by intellectual and/or physical disability, mental illness or long periods of unemployment has had a significant impact on the way I view my present role as a tertiary art and design educator.

Working with people who have social and motivational challenges makes me aware of the disabling effect low self-esteem has on motivation and creativity. I think that low levels of participation and poor-quality student work can, in part, be attributed to the impact of low self-esteem. Several factors appear to contribute to this. These include negative experiences in home and studio environments, past learning experiences, health, cultural differences and the level of social skills and awareness that may affect the student's integration into the class.

Facilitating a culture of acceptance and support within a studio group who have diverse needs and abilities is a challenge. The power of peer support as motivating factor is one of the keys to maintaining a cohesive, energetic class. I will introduce some practical examples to help generate peer support in a group of new students. This is the starting point in creating and maintaining a positive learning environment.

Links between low motivation and low self-esteem are identified, together with strategies to help students achieve early success. The power of early success cannot be underestimated, because it frees learners to access the energy they need to work more creatively. Learning strategies that address this and stimulate creative energy are discussed. One of these methods is the use of physical action ("action learning") to help students of varying abilities to understand and implement theoretical concepts.

WHY DON'T LEARNERS LEARN…?

In 1984, Richard Allwright framed the pivotal question, "Why don't learners learn what teachers teach?"[1] He self-answered this question in part by revealing that learners have their own perceptions of what is being taught in a classroom situation. The experience of learning is specific to individuals – that is, when asked at the end of a lesson what had transpired, many students give different versions. The important question is, "Why are their learning experiences different?" The answers to this question form the basis of the concept of learner-centred learning theory, a concept that acknowledges the difference between "educating people" and "helping them learn."[2]

Decades of learning theory research has helped to find some answers to the question, "Why are students' learning

experiences different?" One reason is because the chosen teaching style doesn't suit the varied learning styles within the group. In 1988, Felder and Silverman conducted research into the learning experiences of engineering students and subsequently delineated learning styles into three main categories: auditory, visual and kinaesthetic.[3]

Auditory learners use sounds and words. They prefer verbal explanation to visual demonstration. Their retention is improved further if they can then explain this information verbally to others. Therefore, auditory learners get a lot out of discussions, seminars and critique sessions. Written text is also incorporated into this category because Felder and Silverman believed learners experience text as a sound, because they "hear" the sound as they read the words.[4]

Visual learners learn best from what they see, for example: images, diagrams, flow charts, time lines, films, demonstrations and gallery visits. Kinaesthetic learners experience their best learning through hands-on activities – they learn by touch, taste and smell. They are suited to studio and workshop learning situations with plenty of room for experimentation. They also need to be able to move around, so long structured lecture situations are not suitable for kinaesthetic learners. (Flemming and Mills added a "read/write" category to Felder and Silverman's three styles and re-christened it VARK in 1992.[5])

An extensive body of research has established that most people learn most effectively through one of these three strands and tend to miss or ignore information presented in either of the other two. Most people learn using one predominant style, though some use a blended approach, i.e., a combination of two or more styles.[6]

As arts and design educators, we need to know that important material is reaching its target. Therefore, when material is presented to a group, care should be taken to make sure all types of learning styles are catered for.[7] However, different types of learning styles aren't the only reason learners don't learn what teachers teach.[8] I think classroom/ studio atmosphere and culture plays a hugely important role.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A POSITIVE START

The atmosphere in the shared studio has a huge amount to do with the energy level of the students. To create a positive studio atmosphere, the group has to have enough fully participating members that an "up energy" is created. Then the work ethic of the majority helps "infect" the minority with some of this enthusiasm. It is essential to work towards this positive and energised atmosphere from day one.

When a new course starts it is vital that the first few days are a very positive experience for the students. Some students, particularly those with low self-esteem, are very easily put off and find meeting new people and learning new things a challenge, emotionally as well as intellectually. I have an aversion to ice-breaking games as do many students, who regard them with disdain, so I prefer to facilitate situations where the students learn about and relate to their peers as a natural part of the course introduction.

For example, on the first week of the Certificate in Creative Studies last year, we organised a class picnic at the boat harbour. Four lecturers and all the students headed off for a day of drawing, walking, jamming and picnicking. Drawing was loosely connected to the first project, "Motif and Pattern," and students were asked to find motifs in the surrounding harbour area which they could develop further into patterns during the coming weeks. We provided a selection of musical instruments and, as the day progressed, more and more students were involved in the jamming sessions using both traditional instruments and percussion items sourced from the surrounding area. We also looked at motifs and patterns in music, and many students responded visually to a group who had started drumming.[9]

The students appeared to have a happy and relaxed day, learned some basic drawing skills and started to get to know each other. If students start to form friendships early in the course, they have another reason to attend regularly. Most importantly, they connected with the idea that the course was going to be high-energy, creative and

fun. Dropout rates in certificate level and first-year degree courses can be high. Sometimes this can be due to a feeling of isolation, especially for international students and students with health issues and/or special needs.

The social integration of the picnic helped to foster a relaxed first studio session, as the students had already spent a fun and fruitful time with their lecturers and peers. From my observations, students who form friendships within a course continue to attend, even through the "hard times." Friendships can provide them with a secondary, and for some, a primary motivation to keep attending. Research with first-year Australian students has shown that supportive peer networks seem to help students become more integrated into and focused on life on campus.[10]

USING IDENTITY PROJECTS TO FOSTER A CULTURE OF ACCEPTANCE

I think it is really important to celebrate the differences within a group of students and to reinforce a culture of acceptance for a diverse group of people. Some of my students are straight from secondary school, where the pressures to conform to group norms and intolerance of difference can be very strong. Of course intolerance is not limited to school leavers, and having students from a diversity of cultures and of differing ages in a shared studio setting can be at times challenging.

Lecturers have an important role here to help oil the social wheels in such a way that diversity becomes the norm. I like to build in time and activities early within the course to allow individuals within the group to introduce themselves to other people in the class as part of the first projects.

Most students will respond well to a project that is built around their own culture, interests, personality and passions. When these projects are presented to the class, there is a natural opportunity for members to find out about each other's lives and begin to appreciate eccentricities, cultural diversity and life experiences within the group. I am often surprised by the depth of some of the material students share with their classmates as part of identity projects, and the support that they receive from the class.[11]

Projects on self-identity can be very supporting of the individual within a new group. They can also provide a very accessible subject for a first project, allowing for an easy first success. The power of early success cannot be underestimated, because it helps raise self-esteem and increases motivation. This in turn frees learners to access the energy they need to work more creatively. Low self-esteem is often seen as a barrier to people taking up learning opportunities.[12] "Low self-esteem is widely recognised as a factor that is associated with poor educational attainment and non-participation in education and training."[13]

It is also one of the barriers to participation in learning once the student is enrolled. The challenge is to have the students open to learning by helping raise their self-esteem. In their study of adult participation in learning, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in the UK recognised the need for confidence to build and learning to be accessed gradually to help build self-esteem. The report, cited in *Self-esteem, Confidence and Adult Learning*, by Kathryn James and Christine Nightingale, discusses how strategies to encourage participation in further education would be enhanced if greater attention was paid to the role of self-esteem and confidence in attracting and supporting students into learning.[14]

Some students need help to access ideas for an identity project, particularly those with low self-esteem who don't regard their interests as having much value. Their low self-esteem appears as low motivation, so they may self-edit their responses to the lecturer. Questions like "What are your interests?" may not elicit much of a response. An approach I used as a youth arts worker in Nelson, when working with groups of young unemployed people, was to ask a question like, "Who are your skateboarding heroes?" or "Who is your favourite DJ?" Such questions show that you are valuing their lives as they are, and are interested in helping extend these interests as fuel for their creative projects.

Sometimes the less able and angry young people aren't very verbal, and are less likely to tell you what they are interested in, so quiet observation can be used to help make suggestions – for example, "I see you arrive on a skateboard every day; would you like to work with skateboard culture as a focus of your project?" If students are involved in the planning of their own learning, and use their own ideas and interests to help negotiate the outcome, they are much more likely to take responsibility for completing the project.

During the 1980s I taught in the Community Studies Department at Nelson Polytechnic, designing and teaching music night classes.[15] These "Making Music" courses were for people who were learning to play an instrument and wanted the experience of playing with other people. I taught simple improvisation skills, starting with twelve-bar blues. The blues provided a secure framework for experimentation to take place.

The purpose of the class was that everybody would learn to play together. Most people had the idea that improvisation was a difficult and special thing for which you need an "ear;" however, it is a skill based on some simple rules. These classes were very exciting, based on demystifying the complexity of musical rules and deciding which ones we needed to use to start playing. The class composed songs as a whole and also within smaller groups and duos. Class members also experienced easy first success, which had a positive impact on motivation. The participants were highly energised by using their own material, based on their own experiences.

All the studio-based projects that my current students are engaged with require some self-directed learning – so it is essential that they engage fully with the project, or their interest falls away when there is an expectation of self-direction. Sandra Adams, a lecturer in design at Otago Polytechnic, undertook a study of first-year design students and their experiences of self-directed learning in the design studio at Unitec (Auckland, 2000). One of the students she interviewed discussed the feeling of excitement in having the freedom to choose their own project:

> [When the tutor said] … "just do what you want" … That was the best environment I did my work in. … that I could actually run with my ideas. I definitely produced the most work in that brief. … I was interested about it; was passionate about it. It wasn't boring or hard work.[16]

I think that students need to feel that they are running with their own ideas in their projects. Clearly, briefs need to have certain parameters, but they also need to be flexible enough so that students can relate to the project and find a link to their own interests, skills and passions.[17] I usually offer several choices in a project brief, but also state: "If you have another idea, please negotiate it with me." For example, the Level 4 drawing identity project can be presented within a range of six media or have a negotiated final outcome.

Some students feel panicked by too much choice and want to be told what to do, and so for them to work within set guidelines makes them feel secure enough to relax and experiment. To "just do what you want" is a nightmare for some and a freedom for others. Offering some flexibility between a list of options and a negotiated project can be a solution.[18] [19]

DELIVERING A HIGH-ENERGY WORKSHOP TO KICK-START A NEW PROJECT

The first day of a new project is a vital time to engage students' interest and understanding. I have been trying approaches that attempt to synthesise the conceptual and practical concerns of the project in an easy-to-understand and energising activity.

I have been experimenting with presenting new material in a way that all learning styles are catered for, and hands-on learning is related to the theoretical and/or conceptual concerns of the project. In a traditional lecture-style presentation using PowerPoint or slide presentation, auditory and visual learners will take in some information, but kinaesthetic learners will largely miss out on accessing the material unless it includes or is followed very rapidly with a physical activity which will help cement learning.

One strategy that appears to work is to build in an early period of non-assessed fun activity, which includes a hands-on learning experience. A useful spin-off in using a non-assessed activity is that it reduces performance anxiety, which in turn has a positive affect on receptivity to new ideas. An example would be an energetically presented lecture with relevant images and a practical demonstration, immediately followed by workshop activity to cement the learning.

I will give an example of this type of learning presentation that I used recently with my creative studies studio class. The group was being introduced to the notion of assemblage. In the lecture, I showed simple pivotal examples, e.g., Picasso's bull's head made from a bicycle seat and handlebars, contemporary examples from Jim Cooper, and an example of my own work which I bought in for the class to see and touch. As part of the lecture, I tore around the room collecting items and maniacally made an assemblage while discussing its essential elements. I then released students to "mine" the surrounding area for materials. They then worked in small groups to create an assemblage of found objects.

I have just taught this paper for the third time and have found that this combination of passionate and active explanation followed *immediately* by a time of non-assessed experimentation can really help in cementing an understanding of a new concept and/or aesthetic style.

When I took on the role, I realised that the students who attended that first session were, without fail, those who made work reflecting a deeper understanding of the concepts of assemblage. They consistently produced work that was strong compositionally. The source objects were used to produce a new whole that reflected an understanding that the histories of the component parts have to be acknowledged as part of the final work.

I have now finished marking this project and have found that a small group of students failed to make works reflecting an understanding of assemblage. These students had not attended the first lecture/workshop. Those who missed the first day of the project for genuine reasons were given "catch-up" sessions. These included some one-to-one time with a lecturer to access the initial lecture material and images. After I had completed the assessment I realised that, despite the catch-up sessions, they still hadn't connected with the project. This made me realise that the hands-on act of making that followed the lecture appeared to be the time when learning was cemented.[20]

Kinaesthetic learners learn primarily from touch, taste and smell.[21] They learn from engaging in activities where they are moving and using their senses. It would appear that many students who are involved in studio-based art and design courses are primarily makers, and are comfortable cementing links between theory and practice by making. I have also used this concept in my work in theory tutorials with first-year art school students.

USING ACTION TO WORK WITH THEORETICAL CONCERNS

I taught art history and theory tutorials for Level 5 students for several years. During this time, I found that working with action really helped students of varying abilities and cultures to understand and implement theoretical concepts. My memory of art history and theory tutorials as a first-year student was of working word-by-word through dense texts to try and understand them. I found this process unrewarding and frustrating because, in my opinion, this working method was delivered too early in the programme, before the class had a basic understanding of the theoretical concepts underpinning the texts.

Using action learning to address theoretical concepts is an alternative approach that works well in helping students alter an often-held negative mindset regarding academic work. Often I hear students ask, "What's the point of all this?" with regard to theory. It is important to be clear about the reasons for learning new concepts by showing how they can be applied. Energy levels rise when the purpose is clear. Using action helps students get a basic grounding in concepts that may later be further explored through more traditional means at higher levels. Action learning can be used in conjunction with written and oral explanations to ensure that this information can be accessible to all

students, whatever their learning style. However, it appears to be a particularly valuable tool to use with students for whom reading is a difficulty.

Here is an example of action learning I facilitated as part of a workshop on poststructuralism for Level 5 students. I wanted the students to understand that poststructuralism is concerned with a plurality of world views containing no single over-arching philosophy. The notion that energising and ongoing debate takes place on the fringes rather than in a centre of power was important as part of this learning. I asked the students to bring with them a variety of images and texts relating to their current projects. We also added news items and images relating to current popular culture to help spark a dialogue. We installed these around all the walls and included signs containing concepts from various social theorists and philosophers.

I then introduced them to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome.[22] They use the term "rhizome" to describe a horizontal model of theory and research that allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points, giving rise to the possibility for connections to take place anywhere and between anything. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, they opposed it to an arborescent (tree-like) conception of knowledge, which works with vertical and linear connections.[23] "The rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers …The rhizome includes the best and the worst: potato and couch grass, or the weed."[24]

Having introduced this concept, I then supplied the class with a huge ball of red string to make connections between the images, texts, signs and ideas. They were not allowed to cut the string, cementing the idea that the connections were to be continuous rather than separate links. The room became a dense myriad of threads that then moved down the hall and into various other spaces.

When the string ran out, we looked at the composition of the rhizome and saw that there were many dense points of intersection where a myriad of threads overlapped. The students could see that all these "intersections" were formed around the edges of the room, and there was no major centre of power. By using physical action, the students could grasp a basic understanding of how the rhizome concept could be applied to further their understanding of poststructuralism. Although this workshop was particularly useful to kinaesthetic learners because of the hands-on approach, the rhizome workshop also catered for visual learners because it functioned as a 3D diagram. There was also plenty of discussion and debate.

Once students have gained some understanding of theoretical concepts in an accessible way, it is so much easier to help them synthesise the theoretical and practical components of their projects.[25]

CONCLUSION

I have presented a series of studio learning vignettes to focus on some strategies that I use to help energise students in the classroom and shared studio. An awareness of different learning styles is an important factor to help all students connect to material presented, but is by no means a complete solution. It is vital to help generate and maintain a feeling of community within the shared studio to promote a relaxed, enjoyable and safe site for all types of learning to take place. Maintaining this positive happy studio atmosphere allows students with low self-esteem to feel supported enough by their peers and lecturers to start opening up to learning by taking risks. A tense work environment will not be conducive to learning, even if all learning styles are taken into consideration. To create a studio culture that is accepting of different abilities and levels of confidence will open up opportunities for all members to be fully immersed in their projects and open to learning from varied sources including presentations, critique and debate.

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1   RL Allwright, "Why Don't Learners Learn What Teachers Teach? The Interaction Hypothesis," in *Language Learning in Formal and Informal Contexts,* eds DM Singleton and D Little (Dublin: Irish Association for Applied Linguistics 1984), 3.

2   MS Knowles, *Informal Adult Education* (New York: Association Press, 1950).

3   Richard Felder and Linda Silverman, "Learning and Teaching Styles in Engineering Education," *Engineering Education*, 78:7 (1988), 674-81.

4   Ibid.

5   See Neil D Fleming and Charles C Bonwell, *VARK: A Guide to Learning Styles*, 2007, http://www.vark-learn.com/english/index.asp, accessed 5 June 2007. In the most recent version of VARK sourced for this paper, copyright was held by Flemming and Bonwell, although the read/write category is first attributed to Flemming and Mills in 1992.

6   Felder and Silverman, "Learning and Teaching Styles."

7   GCTLT graduate profile (No. 1).

8   Allwright, "Why Don't Learners Learn."

9   GCTLT graduate profile (No. 4). An example of a flexible delivery mode that does not conform to the standard classroom learning environment.

10 R James and C McInnis, *First Year on Campus: Diversity in the Initial Experiences of Australian Undergraduates* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1995).

11 GCTLT graduate profile (No. 3). This is an example of a culture-sensitive approach which is reinforced by teaching methods, projects and a picnic day.

12 V McGivney, *Education for Other People*, 1990, www.niace.org.uk, accessed 25 May 2007.

    V McGivney, *Fixing or Changing the Pattern*, 2001, www.niace.org.uk, accessed 25 May 2007.

13 R Lloyd and F O'Sullivan, *Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled. A Methodology for Developing a Guidance Document*, 2003, www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/WP8(2).pdf, accessed 19 May 2007.

14 Kathryn James and Christine Nightingale, *Self-esteem, Confidence and Adult Learning*, 2005, www.niace.org.uk/Research/HDE/Documents/Self-esteem-confidence.pdf, accessed 3 June 2007.

15 Now NMIT.

16 Sandra Adams, "Students' Experience of Self Directed Learning in the First Year Design Studio," Unpub. Masters diss. (Massey University, 2001).

17 GCTLT graduate profile (No. 2). For students to progress from surface to deep learning they have to connect with the meaning of a concept and relate it to their project (their ideas or world view). Ideas have to be understood and applied to transfer to deeper learning.

18 GCTLT graduate profile (No. 4). another example of flexible delivery.

19 GCTLT graduate profile (No. 7).

20 Another example of the progression from surface to deep learning; this time the learning was deepened by using a combination of learning styles which reinforced understanding. GCTLT graduate profile (Nos 1 and 2).

21 Felder and Silvermann, "Learning and Teaching Styles."

22 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 6.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., 6-7.

25 The rhizome workshop was an example of strategic learning. My strategy was for the class to gain a better understanding of poststructuralism by taking part in an energising hands-on workshop. I also wanted this understanding to go beyond surface learning so that it could be deepened further through application to their own projects.

Classroom Practice

DESIGNING MULTI-SENSORY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE CHALLENGED BY SENSORY EXPERIENCES

Tania Allan Ross

The workshop on which this paper is based focused on working towards overcoming learning difficulties caused by Sensory Integration Dysfunction (SID) and developing strategies for interaction between student, home, therapists and educators. If a student demonstrates difficulties, such as the inability to stay alert, or the need to be in constant motion, they are unlikely to settle and engage in learning tasks. These behaviours may lead to them being labelled as difficult, inattentive, oversensitive, or awkward. Sometimes these difficulties are caused by SID.

We receive sensory information about our surroundings through smell, vision, sound, taste, touch, movement and gravity. A person with sensory difficulties is frequently unable to organise these sensory messages to respond in a meaningful and consistent way. The nature of visual arts education leads to frequent accommodation and engagement for students with differences, especially through open-ended exploration and multi-sensory skill development experiences.

During the workshop, an overview and understanding of SID was given from a parent's perspective. An understanding of how SID can impact on a student's learning was addressed, along with appropriate support, and suitable environments and creative approaches were discussed, with a focus on the importance of interaction and collaboration between the student, home, therapists and educators. Workshop participants examined sensory issues, then considered implications these may have when designing appropriate sensory experiences and spaces within the creative learning environment.

There are four senses and three systems of sensory integration that we rely on in order to have a sense of ourselves, and to function in the world.
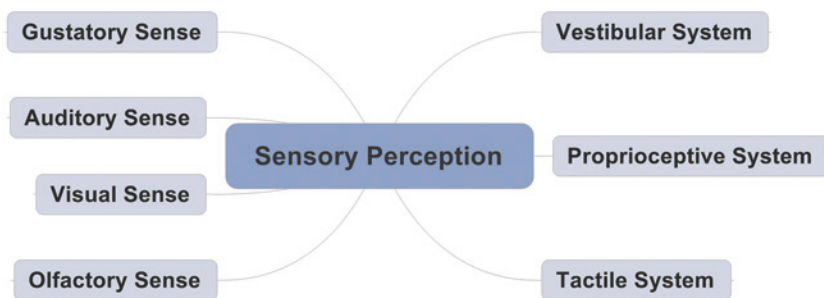
Systems of sensory integration organise and process these sensations for meaningful use in an everyday environment.
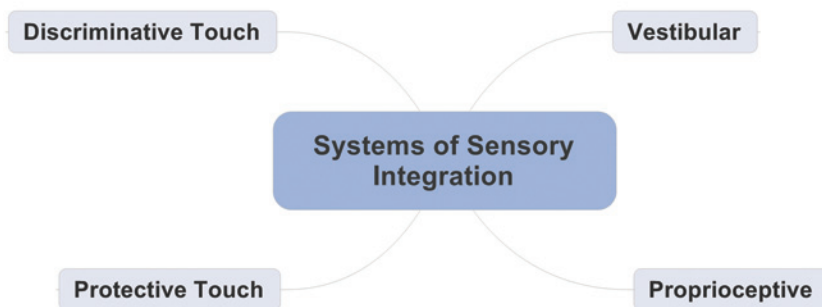

The vestibular system enables us to know where our head is located in space – sensory receptors in our inner ear give information about movement, gravity, and vibration.[1] For example, taking a ride on on a roller coaster may cause one to become dizzy and disorientated.

Our proprioceptive sense provides an internal awareness that informs us where our body is situated in space, and is received mainly from our joints and muscle receptors.[2] For example, if you lift your hands above your head you are most likely to still be aware of where your arms and hands are located without being able to see them.
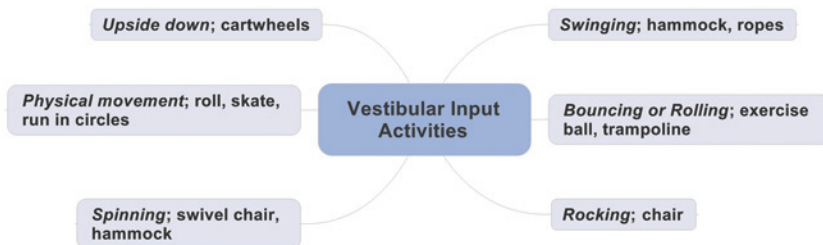
The tactile system involves our sense of touch. The reception and processing of tactile or touch sensation is dealt with by two systems – we have both protective and discriminative mechanisms.[3] Our protective touch system responds to light and unexpected touch, whereas our discriminative touch system tells us when we are being touched, what we are touching and where. In order to locate keys inside a bag discriminatory touch is used.

Sensory processing varies from one individual to another. An individual's sensory "portrait" is usually identified and understood through the assessment process of a checklist evaluation, which identifies sensory triggers, patterns and responses. If significant sensory flow disruption is identified, the consequence can be that the world feels confusing, inconsistent and unsafe. Students may show agitation, distress and compensatory behaviour. Following analysis, therapists often prescribe a schedule of sensory activities, which provide the sensory input that the individual's body needs in order to remain in an organised state; best results are recognised if these sensory activities are included within the student's everyday routine.
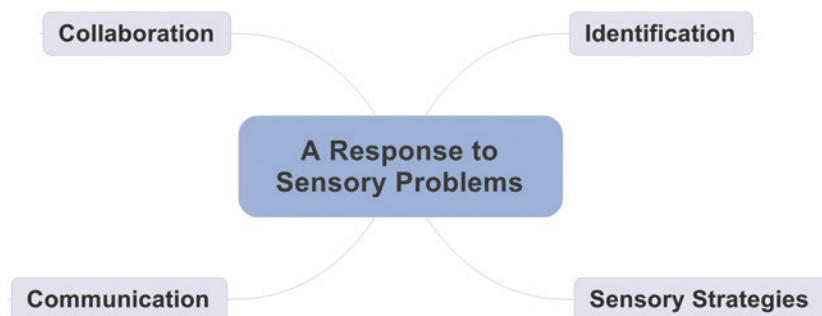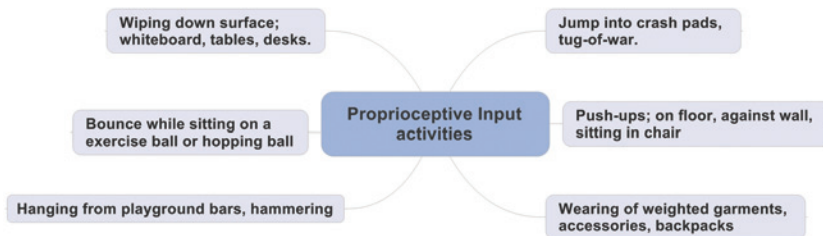
Good communication and collaboration between student, caregivers, and health and education professionals is essential. It is necessary that everyone involved in the education of the student is aware of any unusual sensory needs and the strategies that are in place to help the student feel at ease in a learning environment.
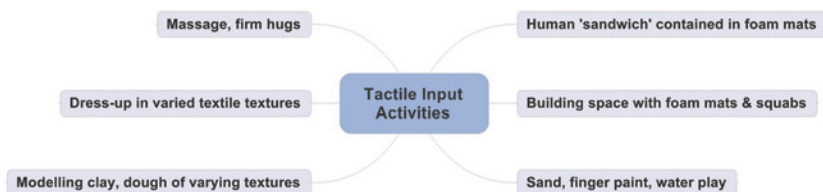
If a disruption to the student's sensory processing system is identified, some of the activities that could assist in stimulating the various sensory systems are identified here. Vestibular input can be gained by any type of movement, in particular swinging, spinning and rocking; often the individual seeks intense and prolonged vestibular input.

Upside down; cartwheels

Swinging; hammock, ropes

Physical movement; roll, skate, run in circles

Vestibular Input Activities

Bouncing or Rolling; exercise ball, trampoline

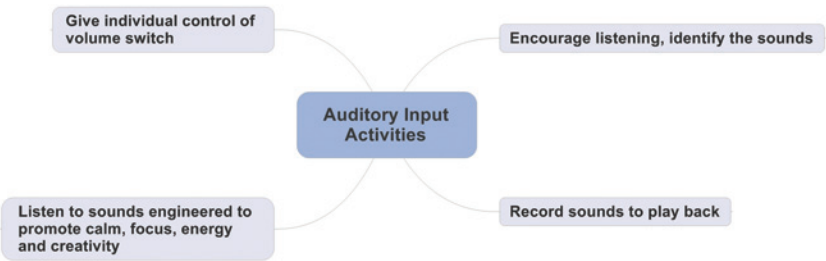Spinning; swivel chair, hammock

Rocking; chair

Proprioceptive input activities that provide joint compression and pressure will enable the student to feel grounded and more aware of the body's position in space.

Wiping down surface; whiteboard, tables, desks.

Jump into crash pads, tug-of-war.

Bounce while sitting on a exercise ball or hopping ball

Proprioceptive Input activities

Push-ups; on floor, against wall, sitting in chair

Hanging from playground bars, hammering

Wearing of weighted garments, accessories, backpacks
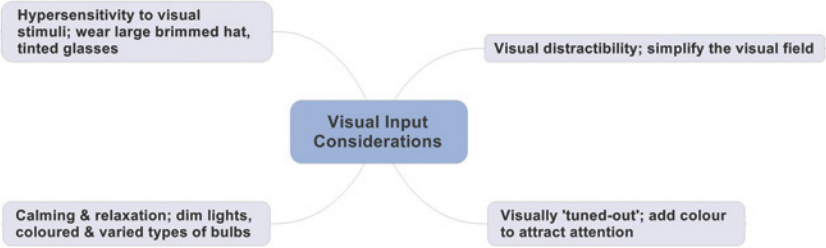
Tactile input can be in the form of texture, temperature and pressure, all of which affect the sense of touch.[4]

Massage, firm hugs

Human 'sandwich' contained in foam mats

Dress-up in varied textile textures

Tactile Input Activities

Building space with foam mats & squabs
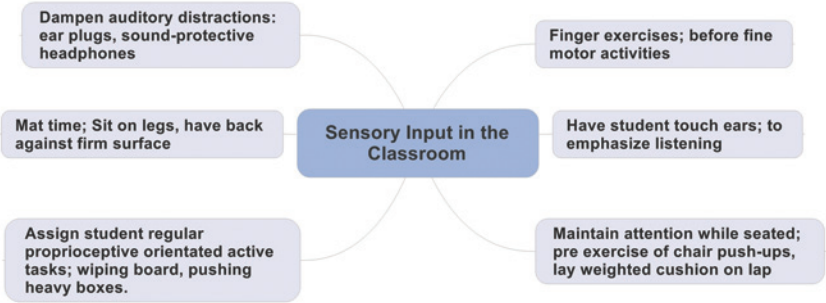
Modelling clay, dough of varying textures

Sand, finger paint, water play

Auditory input, the range of different sounds we hear, relates to the individual's tolerance and preferences for sounds.

Give individual control of volume switch

Encourage listening, identify the sounds

Auditory Input Activities

Listen to sounds engineered to promote calm, focus, energy and creativity

Record sounds to play back

Visual input is gathered through the perception of various sights, colours, contrasts and movement.[5]

Hypersensitivity to visual stimuli; wear large brimmed hat, tinted glasses

Visual distractibility; simplify the visual field

Visual Input Considerations

Calming & relaxation; dim lights, coloured & varied types of bulbs

Visually 'tuned-out'; add colour to attract attention

Incorporating an individual's sensory activities into a particular learning environment involves creativity and forward planning.

Dampen auditory distractions: ear plugs, sound-protective headphones

Finger exercises; before fine motor activities

Mat time; Sit on legs, have back against firm surface

Sensory Input in the Classroom

Have student touch ears; to emphasize listening

Assign student regular proprioceptive orientated active tasks; wiping board, pushing heavy boxes.

Maintain attention while seated; pre exercise of chair push-ups, lay weighted cushion on lap

As well as inclusion of sensory input activities, some minor environmental modifications may assist.
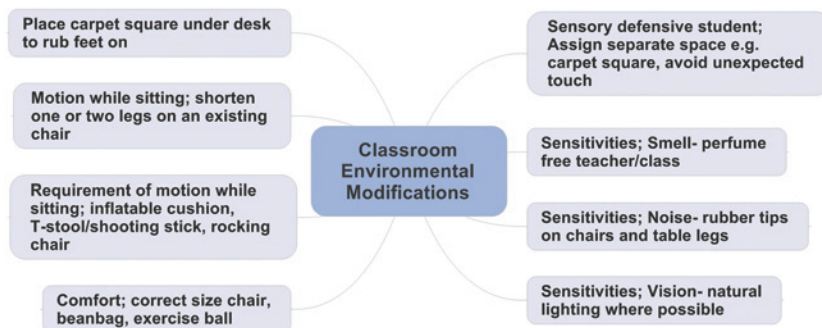
A collaborative approach involving gaining an informed understanding of an individual student's sensory needs, followed by the making of small accommodations within the learning environment – such as enabling the student to engage in an unobtrusive sensory activity (e.g. the freedom to work with a small amount of modelling clay when required) – will result in a more relaxed, enjoyable and rewarding learning experience, benefiting all involved.

Tania Allan Ross is a senior lecturer in the School of Design at Otago Polytechnic in Dunedin. She is also the parent of a child with sensory differences. The combination of this experience and an interest in the design of user-centred garments has lead to her current postgraduate study within the School of Occupational Therapy at Otago Polytechnic.

1   Anita C Bundy, Shelly J Lane and Elizabeth A Murray, eds, *Sensory Integration: Theory and Practice*, eds, 2nd ed., (Philadelphia: FA Davis Company, 2002), 480.

2   Carol Stock Kranowitz, *The Out-of-Sync Child: Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Processing Disorder* (New York: Perigee, 2005), 136.

3   Lindsey Biel and Nancy Peske, *Raising a Sensory Smart Child: The Definitive Handbook for Helping Your Child with Sensory Integration Issues* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 30.

4   Ibid., 114.

5   Ibid., 120.

Project Report

PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING GROUP TEACHING IN DESIGN AND ART – A SPONTANEOUS EXAMPLE

Max Oettli and Margo Barton

ABSTRACT

The project was triggered by the exhibition of fashion photography, "Zeitgeist Becomes Form, German Fashion Photography 1945-95,"[1] held at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery in early 2008. The Goethe Institute sponsored Ute Mahler, a noted Berlin-based photographer who featured in the exhibition, to travel to Dunedin as part of the exhibition events. A cultural and educational experience in the form of a collaborative project was planned to include design and art students, academics and professionals.

The results of this project are reflected on here in a dialogue between two lecturers, one from the field of fashion/design and the other from photography/fine art. Through the conversation, we expose a number of issues and highlight some differences of opinion between design and art in an educational context.

The project was structured within an action research framework, with the aim of engaging a community of practice in common goals. This methodology supported and improved the understanding of professional practice and learning possibilities, which continue to develop and to inform further projects. Cohorting was an important element, and this occurred between senior students of fashion and art, as the designers and photographers, along with the models. This cohorting experience gave all participants and observers the opportunity to uncover and recognise multiple perspectives, cultural differences and the similarities of the processes and outcomes desired within each discipline.

INCEPTION

At the beginning of the 2008 tertiary year Lisa Moenchmeyer of the Goethe Institute, Wellington, contacted Lynda Cullen at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery in the context of the planned arrival in April or May of a major historical exhibition – "Zeitgeist Becomes Form: German Fashion Photography 1945-1995." Lisa announced the visit to Dunedin of one of the artists shown, Ute Mahler. Professor Mahler, a teacher at the Hamburg Technical University, was, it transpired, prepared to do some teaching in Dunedin and was keen to meet interested academics and students.

Image 1: The Zoes on location: assorted photographers (including Ute Mahler), designer Nicole Hamilton and model Zoe C @ AliMcD, (photographer: Max Oettli).

To have an international fashion exhibition in Dunedin was very unusual and to have the possibility of an exhibitor within the exhibition – Ute – share her experiences with us was an extremely exciting proposition. The exhibition itself was of significant importance to all involved in fashion, design and art in Dunedin, both in education and to the wider public; having the opportunity to be part of the workshop with Ute was the icing on the cake.

We immediately saw this as a golden opportunity to have Ute work with our design and art students and, after endless e-mails and other contacts, and with the good offices of many people, notably Lisa Moenchmeyer and Christoph Moechler at the Goethe Institute, and Lynda Cullen at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, we managed to define and organise a collaborative workshop.

UTE MAHLER

It should be mentioned that we were to be in the privileged presence of a truly remarkable person with Ute Mahler. Born in the Socialist German Democratic Republic, Ute had become an important presence as a photographer there, shooting fashion and other photographic work notably for publications. The Eastern bloc has had rather bad press, but there was an innate sense of social concern and decency and self-reliance in many people who grew up under those occasionally quirky regimes. A 2006 film, *The Lives of Others*,[2] gives a picture at once of the drabness of life and of the self-help, and the deeply pragmatic strategies used by those who worked in the somewhat rocky field of culture there. Ute and Werner, her husband, had a quiet and sure sense of where things were going, a level-headed and humanistic approach to their photography and a finely tuned pedagogic instinct.

Image 2: Ute and Werner Mahler, (photographer: Max Oettli).

METHODOLOGY

It was apparent from the start that the project had to be not only about teaching, but also about learning together and coming up with solutions and strategies as a group, sharing our inputs, competencies and outcomes.

Problem-based learning (PBL), a well-known teaching strategy applied notably in medical teaching, was utilised as the teaching methodology. This technique uses the dynamic of a group with an important overlap of professional practice and education, and with the capacity for each individual to function within it as a representative of her or his own culture and background. The goal in a medical context might well be the diagnosis and therapy of an individual patient; in the case of this project it was the creation of meaningful communication – that is, the representation of the work of fashion designers and models through photography.

One of the most important exponents of this technique, Professor Henk Schmidt[3] of the Limbourg Medical University in Maastricht, Netherlands, gave the best initial summary of it in a 1993 publication. As part of his staff training in Switzerland, Max had the privilege to be exposed to these ideas at about the time they were mooted and they became a part of his largely intuitive teaching practice. On reflection, this was also the case for Margo.

According to Schmidt, Problem Based Learning Groups function as follows:

- initial analysis of the problem and activation of prior knowledge through small-group discussion
- elaboration on prior knowledge and active processing of new information
- restructuring of knowledge, construction of a semantic network
- social knowledge construction
- learning in context
- stimulation of curiosity related to presentation of a relevant problem

Students in a group are invited to come up with a solution to a problem. In the exact sciences, the tutor – who acts as an external referee for the group – might have an ideal solution or set of solutions, although obviously in a creative context this will be very far from being the case.

In his 2006 paper, Schmidt succinctly stated: "Whereas many conventional curricula are focused on the acquisition and *direct* application of knowledge, Problem Based Learning is more focused on the *flexible* application of knowledge."[4] Flexible application is key; there were exponents of three different disciplines taking part in this creative process – designers, photographers and models, not to mention the academics. We, all of us, had to be flexible.

Often in a pressurised or formal learning environment there is a necessity to cram in all the tools of the trade, with learning directed towards a very specific and situated end, and hence tunnel vision can develop. Within this project we highlighted the need for all participants to have flexible objectives and to be prepared to work between disciplines – as collaboration is a part of life, an important part of professional and community engagement. Oddly, fashion and photography at Otago Polytechnic had not collaborated in this way previously.

We made it clear that the work undertaken would not be part of the evaluative content of the students' courses, nor could the project be compulsory, as most of it fell in the Easter break. It was also apparent that the students involved would stand to gain a great deal, as would we as academics. The gain was primarily at the level of professional practice for all parties. Collaboration meant that there would be no rugged individualism, rather a carefully arrived-at result based on discussion, on listening and reacting to the needs and tastes of others. The outcome – photographic documents – was to be a source of satisfaction to the fashion designer, the model and the photographer, and also needed to pass muster with a person, Ute, who had a vast experience in the editorial use of the medium. Note that the models are mentioned as part of the group. Drawn from the Ali McD Model Agency, they were also listened to and came in with the imperatives and cultural inputs proper to their profession.

THE PROJECT OUTLINE

Day one: cohorting

The first step, having once established the structure of the project, was to form groups. These were made up of senior students in the third year of the Bachelor of Design (Fashion) in the School of Design and the third and fourth years of the Bachelor of Fine Art programme at the Dunedin School of Art.

Groups consisted of:

- two fashion designers, who had to have a representative piece or several pieces from their collections available
- a model, and
- two photographers.

In total, the participants in this project amounted to six groups totalling 12 photographers, 13 designers and eight models, as well as numerous academics and graduates.

It was a matter of an hour in the Year 3 fashion design studio before the groups were formed. Designers and artists discussed their styles and shared their past photography and fashion design; they came together naturally with shared ideals in their fashion communication. The groups thought of suitably eccentric names – e.g., the Tree Huggers, Geek.com, the Belly Flops. The cohorts were quickly involved in lively conversation and huddled together to refine their concepts. They discussed their model needs and went back and forth between the model agency website and the academics to make their final choice. It was important that we knew the capabilities and looks that a model could achieve – the designers were clear that they needed a dark-haired Alice in Wonderland, an austere tall beauty, or a mermaid.

Image 3: Year 3 fashion students, (photographer: Max Oettli).

Day two, planning

To set the scene, Ute presented her vast collection of photography over the years, and guided the group on a tour around the exhibition. Then it was the students' turn to present, a little daunting after Ute, but all coped well. The cohorts presented their past work to the entire team. They also presented their project plans and defined the style and approach of their fashion work, the location for their shoot, the model chosen and some kind of time frame, which would enable academics and professionals to visit all the groups during the shoot.

Day three, shooting

One week later was shooting day in many and varied locations. Ute, her team and the fashion and art staff moved from location to location in well-planned manoeuvres to allow all to observe, comment and assist with the proceedings. Ute often came panting up behind to see how the shoot was going, coming in with some quality hands-on advice.

Fashion and photography staff, a very welcome Lisa Moenchmeyer from the Goethe Institute and a number of graduate students were all involved, and all helped with everything from logistics to technical pointers and tea and sympathy. Digital photography was the preferred technique as the work had to be edited and presented on the following day.

Image 4: Ute Mahler, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, (photographer: Max Oettli.)

Image 5: Assorted location shots, (photographers (left to right): Lisa Moenchmeyer, Lisa Moenchmeyer and Werner Mahler).

Image 6: Assorted location shots, (photographer: Werner Mahler).

Day four, critique

The day after the shoot a public critique afternoon was held, again at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery where the students showed their projects as PowerPoint presentations, speaking to their outcomes and getting a critical appraisal from Ute and from the entire audience.

Image 7: Critique, Dunedin Public Art Gallery, (photographer: Max Oettli).

At this time when we saw the results of the project, the quality and creativity of the images, we realised that this point could not be the end of the project. At that time we asked ourselves – what else could we do with these extraordinary images?

FASH+OGRAPHY – AN EXHIBITION

Max mooted the possibility of producing an exhibition, "FASH+OGRAPHY," at a significant contemporary Dunedin art gallery, The Blue Oyster, and the team of Max, Simon Swale and Margo put this into action. It is worth noting at this point that, from day one of the project, we made it clear to all participants that all involved in the production of the fashion communication would be credited, and the exhibition gave us the opportunity to put this directive to the test.

FINDINGS

A significant finding of the project was the variation in opinions and cultural understandings regarding the identity of the author in such a project. This variation is exemplified in two contrasting comments by the principals:

Max: "We took care in briefing the students to ensure that the collaborative nature of the project was to be signalled, with the names of the designers, models and photographers all clearly indicated on the works. It was of interest to observe that the photography students were quite happy on some occasions to forego a nominative credit and to credit their work collectively. In art we found this an interesting and refreshing retreat from the obsession with authorial art – maybe Roland Barthes was right in pronouncing the author as dead."

Margo: "Perhaps authorial art may have died from art's point of view, but who was the author? The art students clearly believed they were the authors, emblazing the digital files and prints with the names of the photographers, a copyright symbol and in some cases no mention of the other creatives involved in the process – the designer and the model."

We found that the biggest challenge for all parties involved was the need to negotiate, sometimes compromise and accommodate these different perspectives. Collaboration, while imperative to the education of designers, generated its own rewards and problems.

Image 8: Photographers Emily Hlavac-Green and Julia Johnstone; designer Jenna Dudley; model Ella B @ AliMcD.

Image 9: Photographer Tara Douglas; designer Cheska Pasco; model Pagan C @ AliMcD.

Image 10: Photographers Kate Muir and Viet Tieu; designer Nicole Hamilton; model Zoe C @ AliMcD.

CONCLUSION

Feedback from the students was, in general, very positive and the cohorting of the two cultures, design and art, worked well and led to a better understanding and respect between the different partners in the enterprise. The Problem Based Learning Group's approach, which we had already both applied instinctively to teaching elsewhere, seemed to be the perfect solution to this situation, with collaborative groups falling into place and getting on with the work, tackling the right questions without getting lost in a labyrinth of irrelevant questions.

The downside – which we feel needs to be addressed – was firstly a feeling of exclusion by the handful of students in both art and design who, for personal or employment reasons, were unable to be part of this experience. It is impossible to make participation in a project outside of the school year compulsory, of course, and the cohesive and pedagogical effect on those students who could participate, in terms of their future motivation and knowledge, made this a somewhat difficult situation to manage in day-to-day teaching during the rest of the year. Gaps were there and were rather obvious.

Another issue was the ownership of the images and the overriding necessity of ensuring a common understanding of what ownership (or authorship) means, as well as ensuring clear communication throughout the entire project, from conception through to the undeterminable end.

As academics, we found that too much enthusiasm shown at the start of the project gave us the difficulty of finding the time and commitment necessary for the final productions, exhibition, exhibition booklet and DVD – all of which made nigh-impossible demands on staff and senior students at a time when end-of-year commitments began to loom on our academic horizons.

In sum, the "Fash + Photog" project resulted in:

- vibrant engagement between design and art students, models, academics and professionals;
- a better understanding of and respect for the different perspectives of those involved;
- a flexible and evolutionary development of educational learnings; and
- the physical outputs of several photoshoots, exhibitions and a publication.

Although these particular phases of the collaborative project between design and art at Otago Polytechnic have been completed, the dialogue continues. The next chapter will encompass more participants and perspectives, as is the nature of action research.

Max Oettli has been active as a photographer, writer and teacher for four decades. He studied humanities at Auckland and Geneva universities, and worked for five years at the Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland, and for three decades in Geneva, Switzerland, as an architectural photographer. He has numerous exhibitions, publications and other projects to his name.

Margo Barton teaches in the fields of fashion design, fashion communication and millinery. She is currently undertaking her PhD through fashion at RMIT University, Melbourne. Her research and practice focuses on the use of new media and CAD technologies and their potential within a millinery design context.

1   FC Gundlach, E Kaufhold, et al., *Zeitgeist Becomes Form, German Fashion Photography 1945-95* (Stuttgart, Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations, nd).
2   FH von Donnersmarck, *The Lives of Others* (Sony Pictures Classics, 2006).
3   HG Schmidt, "Foundations of Problem-based Learning: Some Explanatory Notes," in *Medical Education*, 27:5 (1993), 422-32.
4   HG Schmidt, SMM Loyens, et al., "Problem-Based Learning is Compatible with Human Cognitive Architecture: Commentary on Kirschner, Sweller, and Clark (2006)," *Educational Psychologist*, 42:2 (2007), 91-7.

ETHICS OF DESIGN

Mark Jackson

INTRODUCTION: POTENTIALITY AND ACTUALITY

The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben wrote some years ago a collection of short texts under the title *The Coming Community*. [1] The collection presents some difficult thinking on the possibility or potentiality for an understanding of community that does not return the communitarian to the indifference of the self-same, but rather maintains that potentiality as open. One of the short texts is titled "Ethics," and I want to cite its concluding sentences in order to advance a question of ethics that I want to address with respect to design:

> … the only ethical experience (which, as such, cannot be a task or a subjective decision) is the experience of being (one's own) potentiality, of being (one's own) possibility – exposing, that is, in every form one's own amorphousness and in every act one's own inactuality. The only evil consists instead in the decision to remain in a deficit of existence, to appropriate the power to not-be as a substance and a foundation beyond existence; or rather (and this is the destiny of morality), to regard potentiality itself, which is the most proper mode of human existence, as a fault that must always be repressed. [2]

The significance of Agamben is that he poses a diagram and diagnosis of our everyday practices of habitation that radically questions the classifications by which we understand our present. In doing so he dislocates us from our ethos and at the same time offers no concept by which we may renew our ethics. Indeed, his work incites us, perhaps as a first task, to radically invent a new notion of ethics in relation to habitation, an ethics that does not commence with the question of rights, or social contacts, or the very possibility of saying "our." [3] In a subsequent publication, *Potentialities*, yet another collection of short essays, Agamben expounds more fully on what he understands to be that experience of one's own potentiality. He does so through a close reading of Aristotle's distinction between *dynamis* and *energia*, potentiality and actuality. [4] We may already recognise in this distinction made by Aristotle, and the western tradition's orthodox interpretation of it, the very seeds for thinking the essential to design, as design is precisely thought in terms of a movement from *dynamis* to *energia*, from potentiality to actuality. What is significant for Agamben, as I want to initially explore, is the radicality of an ethics that can be understood through this Aristotelian division, a radical ethics that can, potentially, be essentially a design ethics or ethics as design.

The text I am referring to, within *Potentialities*, is itself titled "On Potentiality." Aristotle distinguishes between two kinds of potentiality: a generic potentiality, for example the potentiality for the child to grow, for the child to learn what is yet to be known, for what the child might become. Aristotle is not interested in this. Rather he is interested in the potentiality of the one who knows, as with the architect who has the potential to build or the poet who has the potential to write. Agamben suggests: "Thus the architect is potential insofar as he has the potential to not-build, the poet the potential to not-write poems." [5] What, then, is potentiality? Agamben approaches this through a problem posed by Aristotle in *De Anima* concerning why it is that there is no sensation of the senses themselves: "why is it that, in the absence of external objects, the senses do not give any sensation …? This happens because sensibility is not actual but only potential." [6] In this sense, what we call a human faculty, as with the faculty of speech or faculty of vision, is a power to or potentiality for. Thus Agamben suggests: "What is essential is that potentiality is not simply non-Being, simple privation, but rather *the existence of non-Being*, the presence of an absence; this is what we call

"faculty" or "power." "To have a faculty" means to have a privation. And potentiality is not a logical hypothesis but the mode of existence of this privation."[7] Thus potentiality is not that which construes a movement to actuality, and is to be found achieved in what is actual. Rather potentiality is essentially, or existentiality, the potential to not-do, potential to not pass into what is actual.

We now come to what was most complex in Aristotle's thinking of *dynamis*, what Agamben recognises as the passage to a radical ethics. With respect to this privation that essentially constitutes potentiality, Aristotle suggests: "Impotentiality [*adynamia*] is a privation contrary to potentiality. Thus all potentiality is impotentiality of the same and with respect to the same."[8] Potentiality, the existence of non-Being, maintains a relation with its own privation, its own non-Being. Thus to have a faculty or power, to be capable of actualising, to recognise that one can, means essentially a relation to one's own incapacity: "Beings that exist in the mode of potentiality *are capable of their own impotentiality*; and only in this way do they become potential. They *can be* because they are in a relation to their own non-Being."[9] Aristotle thus suggests that the greatness of human being is fundamentally different to that of other beings in that all other beings are capable only of their specific potentialities. Human beings are capable of their own impotentiality and herein lies the essence of human freedom: not the freedom to do, not the simple power to actualise specific potentialities, but the power to refuse to be this or that or to do this or that. Agamben notes: "To be free is, in the sense we have seen, *to be capable of one's own impotentiality*, to be in relation to one's own privation. This is why freedom is freedom for both good and evil."[10]

But is this radical passivity of a power to refuse simply an avoidance or annulling of actuality? In all that has been said, is *dynamis* and *energia* still thought as opposition? In actualising, is potentiality itself annulled? Agamben suggests that here we see the "genius" of Aristotle, in a passage that has been overly simplified and hence missed: "A thing is said to be potential if, when the act of which it is said to be potential is realised, there will be nothing impotential."[11] This has generally been interpreted in terms of actuality exhausting potentiality, in the latter's disappearance. Agamben thinks through this more carefully. What Aristotle then says is: "if a potentiality to not-be originally belongs to all potentiality, then there is truly potentiality only where the potentiality to not-be does not lag behind actuality but passes into it as such."[12]

This impotentiality preserves itself in what becomes actual, a potentiality that survives actualisation as a gift of itself to itself. This gift is what Agamben refers to as ethics in the sense we saw in that earlier citation concerning ethics as an experience of being one's own potentiality. In what follows in this paper I want to explore further an understanding of what remains within the act, within actuality, of a radical passivity, or that which is essential to potentiality. Again, I want to emphasise how we can orientate this questioning to the fields of design and in particular design ethics. To examine the question of remains or remnants of an impotentiality in what is actualised, I want to introduce an understanding of actuality from the point of view of the trauma of the real. In doing so, I want to emphasise that what Agamben engages with as a potentiality to not-be that passes fully into actualisation is essentially the uncanny of identity lodged in human production. Again, this is something essential to an understanding of design and design ethics that is most generally elided in the orthodox understanding of the opposition of *dynamis* and *energia*.

IN THE MIDST OF BEING

I want to introduce an understanding of the trauma of the real via a small book by the American cultural theorist, Eric Santner, titled *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, clearly a purposeful slippage of Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*.[13] It is a highly thoughtful reading of two Jewish thinkers of the early twentieth century, Franz Rosenzweig and Sigmund Freud, via some of the work in particular of Agamben and Emmanuel Levinas. It is profoundly a book on ethics. Let me get the key notion from Santner out into the open from the beginning. Santner sets out with a crucial distinction between the "global" and the "universal." Global consciousness, at whatever scale, is constituted on the externality of differences, hence on a secured understanding of identity while "universality-in-becoming" is construed on an "agitation and turbulence immanent to any construction of identity,"[14] an uncanniness or not-at-

homeness lodged within any sense of identity that calls up and traumatises that identity as an excess that cannot be assimilated. The import of this distinction is in the resolutions of difference. Hence for global consciousness, every difference can ultimately be returned to the same in the recognition of the predicates that constitute such difference: language, geography, culture and so on. Differences are assimilable to the same. For what Santner calls universality-in-becoming, or life–in-the-midst-of-being, my strangeness, even to myself, is never reducible to the generality of a being-in-common, but rather remains an ethics of singularity:

> For global consciousness, conflicts are generated through *external* differences between cultures and societies whereas universality, as I am using the term here, signifies the possibility of a shared opening to the agitation and turbulence *immanent* to any construction of identity, the *Unheimlichkeit* or uncanniness internal to any and every space we call home. In this view, redemption (or, to use the more Freudian term: the cure) signifies not some final overcoming or full integration of this agitation but rather the work of traversing our fantasmic organisations of it, breaking down our defences against it. To put it another way, for global consciousness, every stranger is ultimately just like me, ultimately familiar; his or her strangeness is a function of a different vocabulary, a different set of names that can always be translated. For the psychoanalytic conception of universality I will be proposing here, it is just the reverse: the possibility of a "We," of communality, is granted on the basis of the fact that every familiar is ultimately strange and that, indeed, I am even in a crucial sense a stranger to myself.[15]

The pivotal question circulates precisely on what remains as the unassimilable and uncanny thing that is one's neighbour, even the neighbour that is also oneself. And how do we understand design as a regard for this impossible possibility of being-in-common or how design is the comportment of an ethics of singular being? We recognise in this question of an ethics of singular being an engagement with something essential to Agamben's concern with an ethics as one's own potentiality to be, and a question of what remains unassimilable to actuality that has everything to do with what is essential to one's being. If Agamben emphasises that a radical ethics opens with the passing of a potentiality to not-be into what is actualised, how do we understand the relation of this impotentiality to itself? Agamben poses it in these terms: "Contrary to the traditional idea of potentiality that is annulled in actuality, here we are confronted with a potentiality that conserves itself and saves itself in actuality. Here potentiality, so to speak, survives actuality and, in this way, *gives itself to itself*."[16] How can we come to understand this surviving of the remnant, this saving of what remains of potentiality in actuality? And how do we understand this as essential to design? I want to approach this relation of a self-to-itself as potentiality of being from some of the work of Michel Foucault on an aesthetics of existence, before returning to Santner's understanding of the remnant as trauma.

CARE OF THE SELF

Michel Foucault developed his work on the care of the self, or aesthetics of existence, particularly in the response he made to Kant's "What is Enlightenment," in his own text by that same title.[17] There is something Foucault emphasises with the Kantian text, its threshold moment in the discourse of philosophy in as much as Kant directly poses the question: what is our present? What is it to think today? Moreover, he poses this question, not as a philosophical tract or publication, but in a German newspaper, in the public space of debate. Crucially, his concern is with what is the public duty of one's singularity as a thinker. The motto that opens his text reads: *Sapere aude*, dare to know … have the courage to use your own reason, in thinking for yourself orientate your own directions. This is to be done not in the private use of one's reason but rather in the freedom to make public use of reason. Hence, Kant distinguishes between civic duty, wherein one passively conducts or obeys for the whole community, and scholarly freedom wherein one may challenge the very justice of the duties prescribed in civil office or religious obligation. To think here, for Kant, is not a private or personal encounter of self with the self, but an encounter of self to the self in relation to its acting in the world, and the possibility of thinking this self-in-the-world otherwise.

Foucault takes Kant's injunction of enlightenment seriously though suggests that perhaps the task today is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are. While committed to Kant's pragmatic anthropology and critique,

Foucault transforms them in two directions, firstly, from anthropology to ontology, hence a question of existence, not from the viewpoint of universal reason, but from the permanent contingency of reasons; and secondly, from the viewpoint of critique as an analysing and reflecting on limits, to a practical critique in the form of transgressions: "Criticism is no longer going to be practiced in the pursuit of formal structures with universal values, but rather as historical investigations into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and recognise ourselves as subjects of what we do, think, say."[18] Hence, Foucault reads the ethical imperative in Kant's "dare to think" in terms of a separating out of one's civic responsibility as obedience to a normative rule and one's public responsibility as a freedom in contesting that rule as an art of existence. With respect to such an art of existence, or techniques of the self, we recognise Foucault's transformation of Kantian anthropology to ontology in the introduction to his *The Uses of Pleasure*, constituting as well the introduction to *The Care of the Self*, written at the same time:

> It was a matter of analysing, not behaviours or ideas, nor societies and their "ideologies," but the problematizations through which being offers itself to be, necessarily, thought – and the practices on the basis of which these problematizations are formed. The archaeological dimension of the analysis made it possible to examine the forms themselves; its genealogical dimension enabled me to analyse their formation out of the practices and the modifications undergone by the latter.[19]

GOVERNMENTALITY OF DESIGN

Within this context Foucault engaged his analyses with which we are by now familiar: those of disciplinary mechanisms associated with the asylum, the hospital and the prison.[20] However, it would be a significant misreading of Foucault if we were to specifically focus on these institutions, their formal arrangements, codified practices and defined functions, as well as the specific objects of their practices. Rather, Foucault's concern is precisely with the externalities to these institutional sites, with what he terms the specific generalities and their conducts and counter-conducts which constitute the milieu in which institutions and the practices internal to them are defined and codified. Hence, Foucault was not so much concerned with the asylum as a place of confinement, but rather with a general and diffuse psychiatric order; not the prison as space of punishment, but disciplinary regimes that gave the modern prison its specific logic and place within a more diffuse regime of disciplinary procedures. In his work on governmentality, it was not the state as institutional site uniting territory and population in an ideal order, but rather apparatuses of security in the conducts and counter-conducts or resistances to governmentality of the state.

Hence, with respect to the discourses and practices of design, rather than begin with the institutional and professional sites of design and ask by what means do these cohere their principles and rationalities, circulate their modes of production, specific discourses and technologies of power, and constitute the responsibility for practices and production of our lived world, we start with the specific generalities of conducts and the governmentality or conduct of these conducts with respect to the spacings and orderings of habitability. Here one may parallel Foucault's comment on "the political."

> The analysis of governmentality as singular generality implies that "everything is political." This expression is traditionally given two meanings: – Politics is defined by the whole sphere of state interventions … the state is everywhere. – Politics is defined by the omnipresence of a struggle between two adversaries … The theory of the comrade. In short, two formulations: everything is political by the nature of things; everything is political by the existence of adversaries. It is a question of saying rather: nothing is political, everything can be politicized, everything may become political. Politics is no more nor less than that which is born with resistance to governmentality, the first uprising, the first confrontation.[21]

We would emphasise a parallel with design. Or rather, not a parallel but the possibility of engaging with design as essentially political in as much as it engages with what Foucault identifies as the crisis of governmentality. Hence, in one sense, there is no outside to design; everything is design precisely in the two possibilities offered for the omnipresence of the political. Design is constitutive of and fundamentally constituted by the egoist interests of

liberalism which continually assail and are assailed by interventions of the state, liberalism defined in the freedom of a self's relation to a self, but equally in the self-interest this implies. Design is equally omnipresent precisely in the *socius* of a being-in-common and the constitution of community in the sovereignty of subjects of right that require the interest of a disinterest, the recognition of a giving up of self-interest for the sake of a being-in-common. However, we would suggest that *nothing is designed, that everything may become designed*, where we emphasise design from the viewpoint of counter-practices, counter-conducts, from resistances rather than from the universal rationality of an anthropology or humanism of design, and in this recognise the fundamental move from anthropology to ontology and from critique to transgression. And here we recognise a relation between the potential and the actual that complicates the exhaustion of potential in actuality, in the *becoming-designed* of things.

In this sense, we understand design as a micro-physics and micro-politics of existence in its transformations, circulations and becomings before it is an institutional site of codified practices or a "discipline." In so understanding the micro-powers of a governmentality of design we come to recognise how certain discursive orders, particular technologies of power and a defined range of practices coalesce to become inscribed within the institutional borders of design disciplines. In this we take particular note not so much of the secured fixity of definitions, principles or exemplary practices that safely define the discipline or are safely housed within its borders, but rather those thresholds of transformation where the designed invents itself or reverts to its other, those margins of counter-conducts, refusals of design that inhabit and secrete design's own becomings.

AN ETHICS OF SINGULARITY

I want to return to Eric Santner's *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life* to further explore how we would think an ethics of design in such a context of thinking design from the specific generality of everyday life. What would an ethics of design be for the posing of design as the construal of life-in-the-midst-of being? Our most common, everyday and perennial question is the question of quiddity, the question what is? As in what is X? What is this, or that? Our everyday response is to pose the being of X as a predicative being, open to an infinite series of predicative determinations. The idea of a thing is this infinite series that, as Santner suggests, is without limit: "an infinitely expanding field of metonymic displacements."[22] This thing, in is singularity of infinite predicates, may be another person. Or, rather, in aligning with Freud, Santner inverts this reading. In the ethical relation, relation to another person, the elaboration of predicative-being functions according to the pleasure principle, with each metonymic displacement, each addition to the series, discharging some of the tension sustaining the effort to know this Other. That is to say, we know what this thing or person is by the categories or modalities by which we describe or define, by the series of predicates that give definition. Santner then goes on to complicate things. Beyond this sustenance of "whatever-being" there is the "sheer tautological" presence – his or her "ipseity" – beyond predicative being, beyond the "whatness" of essences, something other than whatness – that something is in as much as its "thatness" opens the very possibility of the question of its being. That something is, in its disclosure, an excess, a surplus of being concerning which we do not know what to do. It is trauma. Freud's term for this "tautological otherness" is *Thing* (*Ding*): "And so the complex of the neighbour divides into two constituent parts the first of which *impresses* through the constancy of its composition, its persistence as a Thing, while the other is *understood* by means of memory-work …."[23]

We recognise how Agamben approaches this same concern with quiddity from another vantage point. Thus he suggests: "It is often said that philosophers are concerned with *essence*, that, confronted with a thing, they ask "What is it?" But this is not exact. Philosophers are above all concerned with *existence*, with the *mode* [or rather, the *modes*] of existence. If they consider essence, it is to exhaust it in existence, to make it exist."[24] Hence Agamben's emphasis on reading the question of being not from the point of view of hypostatic categories as modes of being (predicates) but from the point of view of *dynamis* and *energia*. What Santner locates as the sheer tautological ipseity of a

"thatness" is the surviving gift of ipseity in what is actualised, the for-itself relation of an essential impotentiality that passes fully into what actualises. This trauma of a real opens an ethics of human making. For Santner, in his reading of Rosenzweig, it is the tautological and excessive impressing of insistence over existence; the surplus of being that cannot be assimilated to a series of predicates that constituted an opening to an ethics of the Other. Santner references Slavoj Zizek at this point:

> When do I effectively encounter the Other "beyond the wall of language," in the real of his or her being? Not when I am able to describe her, not even when I learn her values, dreams, and so on, but only when I encounter the Other in her moment of *jouissance*: when I discern in her a tiny detail – a compulsive gesture, an excessive facial expression, a tic – that signals the intensity of the real of *jouissance*. This encounter of the real is always traumatic, there is something at least minimally obscene about it, I cannot simply integrate it into my universe, there is always a gap separating me from it.[25]

Trauma is understood here as an excess or surplus of being that essentially opens a self to its world. It is not to be thought of as a deficit in being, as a lack or something to be worked on and compensated-for. Again we recognise how Agamben has defined morality precisely as a comportment to being that makes the potentiality for one's inactuality a fault that must be repressed. It seems to me that design in modernity has been primarily thought of as that which compensates for a deficit, for a lack in being, and that design constitutes in its essential thinking being as predicative, as a series of predicates that expresses the world of meaning. Design is essentially understood in terms of the exhausting or annulling, fulfilling or achieving of potentiality as actuality. Instrumentally and rationally, as calculable ends-means causality, design is thought as the specific possibility of what can be thought essentially as task. With "task" we give ourselves over to being as willing, and our essential faculty or power no longer thought as potential for non-Being, but rather thought as will-to-will: a willing that obstinately wills actualisation as the overcoming of impotentiality.

If ethics happens in the essential relation of self to Other as the excess of being that cannot be enumerated by predicative descriptions or definitions of a world, in what Santner calls "the midst of being," does this suggest such an understanding of ethics marks the limits to design, that design ethics at best would be constituted essentially normatively? Or rather, in returning to Foucault, and the necessity to move from anthropology to ontology, from universal reason to the contingency of reasons, design's horizon of emergence is essentially in counter-conducts, threshold moments, trauma, in an excess of being, in the sheer thatness of existence outside of, or prior to the predicative logic of categorical being, in the "first uprising, first confrontation" that makes the ethical and the political together in design practices concerned not so much with knowing who we are but with refusing who we are. Tony Fry has approached such a notion of design via what he understands as a "politics of things,": "Indeed and collectively the intent of these things would be things against things … design redirectively made otherwise offers a process."[26] It would be only such practices that open a self to its existence with others that could conceivable be given the name design. All else constitutes more-or-less the production of repetitions of the same.

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1   Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993). Agamben's book appeared at about the same time as two other profound texts on community that should be read in conjunction: Jean Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, trans. Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland and Simona Sawheny (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Maurice Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community*, trans. Pierre Joris (Barrytown: Station Hill Press, 1988). See also, for an excellent discussion of Agamben and Blanchot in relation to Levinas: Thomas Carl Wall, *Radical Passivity: Levinas, Blanchot, and Agamben* (New York: SUNY Press, 1999).

2   Ibid., 44.

3   In this regard, see especially Agamben's *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). In this book, Agamben develops the work initially undertaken by Michel Foucault on the biopolitical frameworks of modernity, introducing the notion of "bare life" as our contemporary and essential political substance. Hence Agamben suggests in his concluding remarks: "Today it is not the city but rather the camp that is the fundamental biopolitical paradigm of the West. ... [This] throws a sinister light on the models by which social sciences, sociology, urban studies, and architecture today are trying to conceive and organise public space of the world's cities without any clear awareness that at their very centre lie the same bare life (even if it has been transformed and rendered apparently more human) that defined the biopolitics of the great totalitarian states of the twentieth century." (134-5)

4   Agamben, "On Potentiality," in *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999) 177-84.

5   Ibid., 179.

6   Ibid., 178.

7   Ibid., 179.

8   Ibid., 182.

9   Ibid.

10   Ibid., 183.

11   Ibid.

12   Ibid.

13   Eric L. Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life: Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001).

14   Ibid., 5.

15   Ibid., 5-6.

16   Agamben, "On Potentiality," 184.

17   Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" trans. Catherine Porter in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984) 32-50. See also Foucault's *The History of Sexuality, Volume III: The Care of the Self*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1986) and also Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2005). The 1981-82 lecture series was devoted to an extended understanding of the Greco-Roman practices of *epimeleia heautou* (care of the self), as opposed to the supposed Delphic origins of philosophy, *gnothi seauton* (know yourself).

18   Ibid., 45-6.

19   Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume II: The Uses of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1985) 11-12.

20   See especially Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). It was during this lecture series that Foucault introduced the notion of "governmentality" as a new horizon of concern at the end of the eighteenth century with the emergence of population and economics as that which governs a rationality of the state. From this time the state becomes neither the guarantor of sovereign power, not the binding through its territory of a commonwealth, but rather one of the elements in a more diffuse governmentality concerned with five principle arenas. Foucault suggests in *Security, Territory, Population*, "Society, economy, population, security and freedom are the elements of the new governmentality whose forms we can still recognise in its contemporary modifications." (354) Each of these elements emerges during the eighteenth century and together they constitute, at the level of the understanding of the state, something fundamentally irreconcilable. This "something irreconcilable" becomes the precise understanding of what is to be governed. It opens the space for the biopolitical, for what Agamben has analysed as bare life.

21   Ibid., 390.

22   Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 79-80.

23   Ibid., 80.

24   Agamben, "On Potentiality," 179.

25   Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life*, 81. Santner is quoting Zizek's "The Abyss of Freedom," in *The Abyss of Freedom/ Ages of the World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 25. In a footnote to this, Santner emphasises that Zizek himself is referencing Jacques Lacan's reading of Freud's notion of the thing in *The Seminars of Jacques Lacan. Book VII. The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, trans Dennis Porter (New York: W.W.Norton, 1972). See especially, *Das Ding* and *Das Ding* (II), 47-70.

26   Tony Fry, "Sustainability: Inefficiency or Insufficiency? in *Design Philosophy Papers 2*, 2008, http://www.desphilosophy.com/dpp/ dpp_journal/paper2/body.html, accessed 15 April 2009. In terms of the radicality of Agamben's understanding of potentiality ethically as the potentiality to not do, Fry's understanding of "defuturing" with respect to design is possibly one of the most pertinent ways to engage. See Fry, *A New Design Philosophy: An Introduction to Defuturing*, (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999).

Article

"DESIGN FOR DEVELOPMENT:" RETHINKING CULTURALLY

Qassim Saad

INTRODUCTION

The process of development in the developing world needs to be seen in the context of how it originated – its propagation by Western colonial powers in the form of intensive political strategies and projects that served two main objectives:

1   Ensuring the stability and preservation of the colonial project, and continuing the materialisation of society and of the economy in colonised countries.

The main beneficiaries of development and modernisation in this context have been the Western colonial powers. They are the makers and sellers of material objects and the major consumers of natural resources, raw materials and energy. They are also the major purchasers of exports from developing countries.

However, development and modernisation continue in the postcolonial period, largely the product of concentrated efforts from newly independent national governments to create economic growth, fuelled by industrialism and relying heavily on state investment.

This historical context has influenced the social structure of these often conservative societies, which spent centuries in isolation from the practices and norms and of the West. One manifestation of this is the selective rejection of certain practices associated with modernisation on the basis of their "Western" status. Another contrasting manifestation is that people are being forced to question traditional thinking regarding the certainty of a "pre-given or natural order of things."[1]

The traditional belief systems present in these societies can be viewed as "an interpretative scheme, a framework for understanding the world," and a set of "assumptions, forms of belief and patterns of action handed down from the past [that] can serve as a normative guide for actions and beliefs in the present."[2] These beliefs relate both to material objects and to immaterial norms.[3]

National state ideology has tended to reject traditional ways of thinking, reflecting the perception that they are mere obstacles on the road to development. Science and technology have continued to be presented by the power structures in the developing world as the only means for achieving modernisation, from the colonial period through to the present day.

Science and technology have profoundly influenced every facet of design in the twentieth century, from communications to housing and transportation, and the way in which people interact with the rapidly changing world of objects in the developing world continues to shape and reshape social relationships, attitudes and norms.

The relation between design – which in this context means the methods and processes of shaping material objects

– and development is a subject that has been taken up by a number of designers and design theorists. It has often been based on the concept of utilising the scope of Western design models and using them as a means of achieving the goal of development in the developing world. The ideological approach of this movement has favoured economic growth as a key measurement of development.

The few studies that have looked into the historical context of "design for development" have begun to address the lack of existing analysis of the movement,[4] and an important conflict has been identified. The discourse of development has centred on the promise of reform and progress towards a goal defined largely in terms of economic growth. However, the failure of development strategies in many countries in the globalisation era has had a hugely negative effect on economic growth in these countries. This, is turn, has impacted on wider society in the form of increased poverty and inefficiency, with massive deficiencies in important social systems.

By redirecting and creating new roles for design within these social systems, it is possible to extend the discipline beyond its classical role as a means for stimulating economic growth and towards broader social, cultural and environmental applications. Utilising design in these wider contexts has been an important factor in attempts by NGOs and a few national government agencies around the world to create better ways of delivering humanitarian aid, promote environmentally sustainable business practises and support more effective communication between communities and states.[5]

MAPPING HISTORICAL APPROACHES

The short history of the "design for development" movement is reflective of the wide divisions between the discourses of "design" and "development" in terms of theory, professional practice, objectives and values. These discourses have very different backgrounds and often play seemingly opposing roles in daily life. However, it is possible to bridge these divisions and build new partnerships between those involved in design projects and those involved in development projects. It is largely a matter of investing in learning, professional relationships and institutional ties between the two groups.[6]

It was top-down political efforts that led the first initiatives aimed at fulfilling basic human needs across the newly-drawn, post-Second World War geopolitical map, specifically in the "underdeveloping nations."

THE USA POINT FOUR PLAN SINCE 1945

At the end of the Second World War, the USA assumed a world leadership position that was reflected in its new foreign policy. President Truman's inaugural address on 20 January 1949 argued that "we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas."[7]

According to some development studies, this signalled the era of "development" as we know it today – the process of transferring new resources and "science and technology" to "underdeveloping countries" and providing them with expertise in business, industry and agriculture. It aimed to increase industrial activity in these newly independent nations and to enhance their development by establishing democratic political systems. It was hoped that these changes would lead to greater production, prosperity and peace.

Debates over technical assistance and economic development for underdeveloping countries continued, particularly with regard to resolutions issued by the UN in 1948 that aimed to enhance development. This particular model of development favoured free-market capitalism, and transferred aid and assistance in what some have called a propagandistic context. However, positive results of this assistance included the establishment of design and industrial design programmes at the university level in Middle Eastern countries such as Turkey and Lebanon, and

the provision of technical training programmes to support handicraft industries in Jordan.[8]

ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGY (AT)

In an article in *The Observer* in 1965, the British economist EF Schumacher discussed how technology could be best used to reduce poverty in developing nations. "Schumacher adapted Gandhi's ideas of industry and technology to modern needs in the post-war period through the concept of intermediate technology."[9] In his view, "alternative technology" (later replaced by the term "appropriate technology" [AT]) would be much more effective in increasing productivity than traditional technology, and was cheaper, simpler, and more environmentally friendly than the high technology of the West. AT was identified as the best solution for poor communities seeking to enhance their material prosperity.

However, the overwhelming emphasis on technology and technical skills as the main requirements for development and an enhanced quality of life by AT was a clear weakness of the theory. AT offered only one solution to the complex situations – "unstructured problems"– faced by developing societies, while paying little attention to improving the social, educational and health needs of these communities. In fact, this was a solution to an imagined problem, rather than an effort to identify and address the actual needs of real communities. The uniform solution to development issues offered by AT proponents has parallels with the way that the International Style dominated design discourse after the Second World War, seeking (and failing) to create the "utopian city."

VICTOR PAPANEK

Victor Papanek is the most well-known of the early authors who initiated the discourse of design in a development context. His first book, *Design for the Real World*, was published in 1972 and republished in 1984. His vision for the role of industrial design in developing countries can be summarised as follows:

- He did not take a strong interest in industrialisation and economic development at the national level in developing countries.

- His practical approach to design and design education had a strong focus on the shaping of material objects.

- He insisted that industrial designers have a social responsibility to design low-technology products which meet the basic needs of poor communities in developing countries.

- He targeted Western corporations, encouraging them to incorporate his approach to manufacturing products for developing countries.

Through the 4-Working Group formed by the International Council of Societies of Industrial Designers-ICSID, of which he was a member, Papanek sought to enhance the profile of the "design for development" discourse. He later said that the discussions held by this group appeared to be genuinely sensitive to the conditions and cultural needs of developing countries, an emphasis reflected in the group's suggestion that an "international design school for the South" be established to address their realistic needs. However, in the end the group's discussions proved fruitless: no realistic answers were ever given to the questions that had been raised.[10]

DESIGN FOR NEED: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

"Design for need" was another important concept that inspired a growing recognition of design's social context. It was the title of a conference that focused on the "systematic study and development of design applied to projects of social value." Endorsed by ICSID and held in 1976 at the Royal College of Art in the United Kingdom,

the papers presented at the conference addressed a wide range of topics covering the social context of design, from the developmental needs of developing countries to the special needs of the aged and the disabled, poor communities in all parts of the world, and issues relating to the environment, natural resources, aid and poverty. The debate and discussion generated by the conference was an attempt to clarify the needs that have to be met for successful development to occur. Two important concepts emerged from the conference – the need for a new ethical approach to technology and design in development contexts, and the importance of shaping technology to fit with real, existing social forces and needs.[11]

GUI BONSIEPE

German industrial designer Gui Bonsiepe took these ideas in new directions when he highlighted the relationship between design and economic development. He stressed the power of design as a strategic factor in development, not only in fulfilling the basic needs of human life, but in the alignment of industrial design practices with the industrial activities occurring in developing countries.

Throughout the 1970s he used the model of "periphery" (developing countries) and "centre" (developed countries) to describe a relationship dominated by the influence of the centre on the periphery. Bonsiepe argues strongly that there is a close relation between design and politics that determines where, and how, design can benefit developing countries: "Design should be done in the periphery and not for the periphery … Design problems will only be resolved in the local context."[12] Bonsiepe's argument for design education in developing countries stressed the extreme importance of both design educators and students "practising design" by sharing with industry, avoiding the current situation where teaching programmes are grounded in academic requirements. "I wonder how you can teach design if you don't practice design," he once queried.[13]

THE AHMADABAD DECLARATION – TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The Ahmadabad Declaration resulted from a meeting of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) with experts from the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID) at the National Institute of Design (NID) in India in January 1979. It stressed the "urgent need" for "industrial design activities" in devising national development plans for developing countries. The document was signed by 20 nations. This was the first time that the movement of "design for development" had received this level of international recognition. The declaration argued:

- Design is an important force for improving people's quality of life.

- Designers should understand and apply design principles within their own social contexts.

- Design needs to acknowledge local needs, while utilising the power of science and technology.

- Design needs to be sustainable.[14]

The participation of UNIDO signalled the fact that the UN understood and supported "design for development" and its vital role in national development strategies for developing countries. The Ahmadabad Declaration represented the first time that design's role in development had been discussed and recognised at an international level, and shifted the discourse from the localised contexts of aid, alternative technology and "design for need" to activity at the state and international level.

According to some proponents of "design for development," some progress has now been made, especially in Asian

countries. The Ahmadabad Declaration remains the only document of its kind and, given the length of time that has passed since its conception, there is a need to acknowledge the evidence (if any) of its role in contemporary design and development practice (see Figure 1).
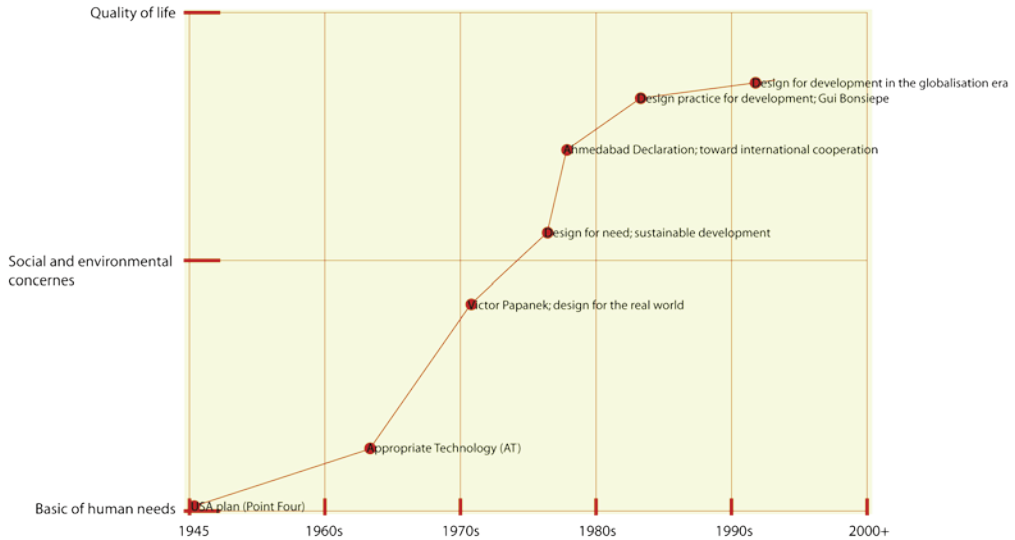

Figure 1: Mapping the history of design for development.

CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

Culture in any society is a superstructure of practices and beliefs, organised by the process of social activity and transferred between individuals and collectives. These interactions are increasingly being impacted on by technology, in particular by the massive speed of communications technology. This is dramatically changing the development of culture across the world.

Edward Said has defined culture as signifying two separate aspects of community life: "first of all it means all those practices, like the arts of description, communication, and representation, that have relative autonomy from the economic, social, and political realms and that often exist in aesthetic forms, one of whose principle aims is pleasure. … Second, and most imperceptibly, culture is a concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society's reservoir of the best that has been known and thought."[15] The wider context of culture, according to Said's definition, reflects its intensive role in shaping many aspects of any given society, which in turn require further attention as strategic factors in development and strategic planning. As Amartya Sen has put it, "culture can be a very positive and constructive part in our understanding of human behaviour and of social and economic development."[16] To understand why this is so, it is important to stress the mercurial role of culture in society:

- Culture is influential. It influences and inspires what we do and how we do it, helping to form our cultural identities.

- Culture is heterogenous. It reflects a wide range of diverse beliefs and practices, ranging from our style of living to the way we eat, how we interact with material culture, and so on.

- Culture is dynamic, changeable, interactive and requires continual development.

- Different cultures readily interact with one another. Many radical changes can occur in this context.

Many design and ethnographic studies have examined the ways in which we interact with material culture and the social meanings that we attach to it. It has been said that "Goods… are the visible part of culture,"[17] and that "object-people relationships go beyond the physical and are locally and culturally constructed"[18]in society. The material objects which proliferate in a given society can be seen as a manifestation of that culture's beliefs and practices, and the ways in which we interact with material culture can be seen as an important extension of how we interact with each other. "Whatever we design expresses our culture and our designs are imbedded in our culture."[19]

Design serves the goals of cultural and economic growth by shaping the principles and methods we use to utilise technology, in its multiplicity of forms. Technology, in turn, continues to enhance the quality of human habitats. At the same time, it becomes increasingly integrated into our everyday lives, changing our methods of conceptualising, making, refining and doing. Design culture has extended our expectations of what is possible, and is helping us create manageable systems to meet the changing expectations of a changing world.

DESIGN FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE IRAQI CONTEXT

Economic activity in Iraq has traditionally been based on agriculture and trading, both of which developed throughout the long history of the land. During the time of the Mesopotamian kingdoms, governments subsidised the development of irrigation systems which increased the productivity of the land, as well as increasing the potential for profitable trade. The region's situation between the two great sea basins of the civilised world, the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, made it an important juncture on the main trade routes from China and India to the Middle East and Europe, and afforded it major trading opportunities and strategic geopolitical importance.

After the Mongol invasion of Baghdad in 1258, the decline of the irrigation system and the movement of trade routes to the Red Sea initiated a massive economic decline from which the region would never fully recover. When the Ottoman Empire took control of Baghdad in 1514, what little efforts were made towards improving the quality of life for the people of the country focused largely on the large cities, and did not reach the smaller cities or rural areas, which were ruled through a semi-feudal agricultural system controlled by local *shaiks* (tribal leaders).

The formation of the Iraqi state in 1921 represent a novel context for British colonialism, marked by the indirect control of the colonised territory according to the mandate system. At the same time, for Iraq it was the dawn of the era of modernisation and development in a colonial context, with the ubiquitous introduction of the capitalist mode of production, drawn boundaries, a constitution, a monarchy, a bicameral legislature, an administration staffed with British advisers, a security apparatus and some improvements in social services such as education and healthcare. "What it was not given, however, was a strong social base."[20]

Later, after the military coup of 1958 and the establishment of the republican state, the main factor in progress towards modernisation was the nationalisation of the Iraqi oil industry. With booming oil prices, industrial manufacturing firms were considered to be key elements in national development strategies, and new state corporations and industrial activities were established in order to ensure self-sufficiency in many areas.

Over the following decades, wider social programmes targeting the goals of universal education and healthcare, along with large-scale infrastructure projects, shifted Iraq many places higher in the statistical charts used by the UN

and other development agencies to measure relative levels of development and prosperity.

This review (see Figure 2) leads us to identify some key strategies that have been applied in the past to the project of modernisation and development in Iraq. These strategies form the basis for further discussion toward creating a conceptual model that would enable us to visualise the role of design in improving the structure of social systems.

	Islamic Caliphates 750-1258	Mongol invasion 1285-1514	Ottoman Empire 1514-1917	British Colonialism & The Iraqi Kingdome 1917-1958	The National State 1958-2003	Re-Colonialism` 2003-present
Political	Arabic Islamic order created an Islamic Empire	Mongol tribal leader initiated era of unstable and war oriented zone	Ottoman order divided the land into three main governorates, addressed as frontal line against Iran.	Forming of national state under British mandate 1921-1932. Create of democratic political order leaded by Arabic King; religiously and nationalism oriented, supervised by British	National political leader reflected dictatorship and state-lead system.	Foreign power created kind of democratic order, leads to national government reflecting sectarianism
Socio-cultural	•Conservative and religiously oriented society •High culture reflected through, Islamic Architecture style, Arabic literature, science and technology, extensive material culture objects, and effective social systems	•Retardation and instability •Deterioration of social systems •Basic utilitarian material culture objects	•Retardation and instability •Deterioration of social systems •Basic utilitarian material culture objects •Some basic efforts to present few services regarding land registration and taxing system.	•Initiated the era of modernisation and building of state structure •Capitalism economy supported by oil revenues •Agricultural-led economy •Materialisation of society •Efforts toward building modern social systems	•Post-colonial era of modernisation •Socialism economy, supported by massive oil revenues resulted from nationalisation of oil industry •Industrialisation-led economy •Continue efforts to build modern social systems	•Massive damage to the social systems reflecting the wider disorders •Deterioration of social systems

Figure 2: Modernisation and Development project in Iraq.

CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO MODERNISATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The political context underlying the creation of the Ahmadabad Declaration motivated many developing countries to sign the document, Iraq being one of them. The 1970s was an important period for developing countries, especially with regard to debates about dependency, modernisation, and development, powered by the political contexts of "Third World" and "Non-Allied" movements.

The new availability of vast financial resources, in the form of oil revenues, pushed Iraqi development projects forward. However, these government-sponsored programmes were accompanied by state propaganda that espoused "revolutionary changes" that Iraqi society would have to undergo in order to achieve prosperity and modernisation, and this propaganda exposed a gulf between the "revolutionary" principles promoted by the government and the actual principles, values, traditions and social norms of Iraqi society. Issues such as human rights, the work environment, dictatorship and relationships within families and tribes were subject to new, imposed norms. When society rejected these new norms, they were met with state violence.

Despite the tense political situation, people did enjoy increased access to education, healthcare, affordable goods, power and housing. This was not to last, however, with unbalanced progress leading to an ultimate failure to maintain prosperity or consistently meet development goals. Part of the problem was the planned economy and the state centralisation of markets. Another part of the problem was the failure to create social systems capable of integrating the abrupt shift towards industrialisation, materialism and detraditionalisation (the abandonment of traditional norms and values).

The tragic end to Iraq's period of postcolonial prosperity began with the war between Iraq and Iran in the 1980s, deteriorated further with the first US Gulf war and subsequent UN sanctions, and culminated in the present era of re-colonisation, beginning in 2003. This crisis in Iraq must be seen as a turning point, illustrating the need for a new era in the relationship between developed and developing nations.

The long period of wars in Iraq has resulted in large-scale damage to both the country's social systems and its infrastructure. Images in media reports show the difficult, miserable and unsafe conditions of the daily lives of Iraqis. The problems faced by Iraq are comprehensive and complex, to the extent that they have been described as "unstructured problems…they cannot be explicitly stated without oversimplifying them."[21] The nature and correlations of these "unstructured problems" are much wider than the context of economic development.

My argument, which asserts the role of design in sustainable development, calls for design principles to be incorporated into policies that target the social systems in Iraq. In my view, this must be the starting point for any efforts aimed at improving the quality of life for Iraqis, who have lived through decades of war. This vision is based on two main principles:

1   Design is clearly related to all aspects of contemporary life: "There is no area of contemporary life where design – the plan, project, or working hypothesis which constitutes the 'intention' in intentional operations – is not a significant factor in shaping human experience."[22]

2   Design offers new and creative solutions that can complement and support many existing efforts and plans for restructuring Iraq.

The following conceptual model (Figure 3) provides a wider vision of a process that will deal with such unstructured problems. It takes into account the classification of complex issues and "metaproblems" that are generated from multiple variables and interrelated issues. The core of this model is the social system, where the design process reflects the fact that we cannot treat any of these problems individually or independently, as the aim is not about finding the truth, but rather improving the quality of life for the stakeholders, "those who serve the system, who are served by it, and who are affected by it."[23] The process is divided into four main phases:

- Explore: A thorough investigation of the problems of the existing social system, to uncover priorities and systems that will encourage initiation of the restructuring process.

- Create: Analysis, identification, and direction of strategies to be based on sociocultural practices and traditions, as well as the diversity of the society. This phase complements futuristic visions for better alternative systems.

- Interact: International co-operation to help Iraq's "land and society" better adjust to the rest of the world. This covers a range of activities relating to the economy, the environment, technology and so forth.

- Support the structure: Encouraging people to adapt and to play their role in supporting the new systems.
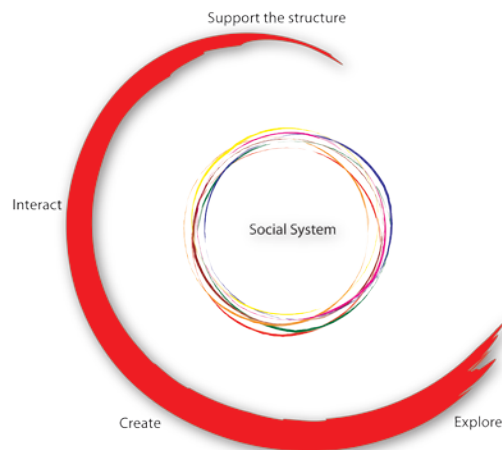

Figure 3: Conceptual model for design to deal with unstructured problems.

As part of this conceptual model, design will play an active role in defining the purpose of the new system, and creating the media to present it. This role is based on the nature of design as an appropriate intellectual and cultural practice which will lead the transitional process through:

1   Separating components, changing correlations, and producing new structures; and

2   visualising and communicating new structures.

Within this context, design will use its proven analytical strengths to rearrange the structure of functions in the existing system and create new structures. Designers will initiate this process based on their ability to synthesise and imagine new relationships between the components of social systems.

CONCLUSION

Contemporary design theories and practices are moving away from the traditional role of the discipline as merely "giving form," and engaging dynamically with other discourses relating to society, culture and the ways in which humans interact with one another. Integrating design into social processes empowers designers to interact with society and to enrich it, either by creating new cultural meaning or by protecting and enhancing existing values.

Design policies should promote culturally sensitive practice "that doesn't aim to preserve a pastiche historic identity of a place, but allows a region or city to be invigorated with new meanings and innovative culturally-relevant direction."[24]

The foregoing analysis of the kind of problems facing Iraqi society makes it clear that it is no longer possible to utilise design through a merely technical, "problem solving" approach. Furthermore, this is not the direction favoured by most existing design policies as a strategic approach aimed at competitiveness in marketing, manufacturing, and innovation. However, in the Iraqi situation, there is an "urgent and deep" need to develop novel design methods and principles to facilitate structuring of the existing fragmented social system there. And the solution will depend on:

• An in-depth understanding of the sociocultural factors determining the direction of future development;

• stability and democracy, with a functioning social infrastructure; and

• an collaborative environment embracing designers and specialists in other disciplines, such as sociologists, anthropologists, development officials and politicians, at both national and international levels.[25]

It might be too optimistic at the moment to think that we can solve these "unstructured problems" that bedevil the country but, if we can keep alternative options open, we may find the means in the future to offer better lives and sustainable development to the Iraqi people.

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Article

A NARRATIVE OF BEING, GROWING AND BECOMING ACROSS CULTURAL LANDSCAPES: ART AND ART EDUCATION ENCOUNTERS WITH SELF AND OTHERS

Jannie Visser

The political and educational reforms of the 1980s and 1990s in Aotearoa New Zealand required all education sectors to implement biculturalism in their curriculum. The early childhood education sector at the time congratulated itself on *Te Whāriki*[1] as the first New Zealand bicultural curriculum document, and its inherent commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Yet in 2003, Jennie Ritchie published study findings that indicated that the bicultural requirements were viewed as optional by many teachers and that there was a lack of strong commitment to bicultural development. Later research[2] appeared to indicate that, when teachers, children and family worked in true partnership, following the principles of *whanaungatanga* (relationships) and *manaatikanga* (care and respect), commitment to a treaty-based curriculum paradigm deepened in both thought and practice.

Over the last 25 years, I have been involved in early childhood visual arts education in Aotearoa New Zealand: as a student teacher, a teacher of young children and now as lecturer in tertiary teacher education. During that time I have encountered numerous, often contradictory, theoretical and pedagogical stances in visual arts and arts education: from a technocratic and formalist approach to a more child-centred, discipline-based paradigm and, in the last decades, the postmodernist and post-postmodernist viewpoints. The challenge for me as art educator has been how to respond to these different, often contradictory, perspectives while implementing an art curriculum framework embedded in the sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand. Over the years, I have become increasingly aware that conflict is inevitable as, although postmodernist discourse is increasingly evident in early childhood education *research*, research also suggests that the early childhood education sector is still marked by notions of child-centered pedagogy where process, creative self-expression and self-discovery are considered more important than content and context.[3] Research, moreover, has shown that tertiary education does not equip pre-service teachers with the strategies needed to be able to challenge current practices and to promote change.[4] What has resulted is an enduring status quo with regard to art and art education, a status quo which continues to emphasise a Western pedagogical paradigm that ignores "the two worlds that in Aotearoa New Zealand describe a bicultural nation."[5]

In this paper, I aim to share my narrative of how I searched for a way to weave together the familiar and taken-for-granted ways of thinking and behaving of my Dutch childhood and adolescence with the unfamiliar world views encountered in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is a journey centred on the construction of identity during my years of struggle to implement in my work with children and student teachers the bicultural aspirations inherent in *Te Whāriki.* The perspective within this story is wholly and subjectively that of a Dutch Pakeha woman who had to travel to (and live at) the other side of the world to develop an awareness of other "ways of conceiving, imaging and desiring,"[6] and of who she was, is and may still become.

The Dutch society of the 1950s and early 1960s, in which I was a child and adolescent, was characterised by bastions of religious and social ideologies. Each religious group had their own broadcasting channels, newspapers, churches, youth groups, playgrounds and school systems with associated curricula, and social class still determined educational

opportunities and future career options. Although there was a marked increase in participation in secondary education, few working-class children attended university as educationalists, researchers and politicians debated the asserted link between "school" success and social class.[7] Most children in my neighbourhood left school at 14 years of age; I and my brothers and sisters were an exception, as my parents wanted us to have the education opportunities they never had.

The art education model of the Roman Catholic primary school I attended was deeply embedded within a modernist paradigm where "drawing" (a core curriculum subject alongside religion, literacy, numeracy, history and geography) was valued as a contributor to physical, perceptual and aesthetic development, as well as a vehicle for teaching and learning about the doctrine and values of the Roman Catholic Church.

In my secondary school years, art and art history played an equally important role alongside the other core subjects of music, languages, history, geography, sewing and religion. Art classes consisted of weekly one-hour sessions, during which the elements and principles of design and art transmitted and perpetuated Western norms and ideals through structured tasks. This drawing of perimeters, aptly described by Kincheloe as "aesthetic policing,"[8] no doubt ensured that our art-making and art-viewing occurred within the context of accepted historical events, and the social and cultural values and beliefs systems that informed their interpretation.

I remember one particular experience that, in later life, helped me to understand that art and art education are never value-free. As a nine-year old schoolchild, I visited the Frans Hals Museum with my classmates. I had never before been to a museum and, as we walked past the formal seventeenth-century group portraits of orphanage and poorhouse governors, the teacher extolled their virtues and superiority as contributors to the well-being and prosperity of Holland's Golden Age. This experience in the end was, for me, not a lesson in religious and moral values, but more about social and personal identity. As Pere argued, "Learning is always a part of one's life experiences, and learning of formative years is particularly subject to culturally ascribed values."[9] Whereas I felt a sense of disconnectedness from these austere but privileged men and women of the past, I delighted in the painting *Farmers' Fairground* as I caught the name of its creator, Jan Steen. It was not uncommon for my mother to exclaim, somewhat exasperated, that our living room resembled "a painting by Jan Steen!" The representation in front of me affirmed the working-class world that I was a part of. Here were the children I played with in the street, the men that walked home singing from the corner pub, and the gossiping, ready-to-scold women.

A modernist, Eurocentric art-education paradigm had dominated my world for 19 years, and I brought these values and belief systems with me when emigrating to Aotearoa New Zealand. The early 1970s society I found myself in appeared on the surface to reflect the social harmony experienced in the Netherlands, with people of different backgrounds existing happily alongside each other. At the time, I did not sufficiently realise that what I was experiencing was a kind of artificially created status quo that denied the fact that Aotearoa New Zealand's sociocultural and sociopolitical past and present were founded on Te Tiriti o Waitangi. I had to become involved in the early childhood education sector to begin to develop knowledge and understanding of the implications of my responsibility as a partner to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. However, this entailed first of all "declaring war on [myself], of pulling up all the assumptions about culture, about time, about art, and testing their veracity."[10]

The playcentre I attended with my firstborn reflected the Dutch Froebel *kleuterschool*, with its valued notion of "learning through play" and its clearly defined core curriculum areas and activities. The hotly debated issues around biculturalism and multiculturalism in education that followed the policy and curriculum reforms of the next two decades were, as yet, not evidenced in our discussions.[11] In fact, the government at the time was not overly concerned with curriculum in the early childhood sector. Although we acknowledged the importance and value of cultural diversity, this took the form of adding culturally diverse resources and activities to our existing programme. Years later, I realised that this education approach is essentially assimilationist, as it continues to primarily emphasise Western values, pedagogy and contexts, and does not acknowledge culture as a whole way of life.

With the new policy and curriculum directions of the 1980s and 1990s, however, all those involved in mainstream early childhood education were challenged to confront these Western constructs of teaching and learning. As Locke stated at the time: "The Treaty of Waitangi has engendered much discussion, debates and unease across the whole of the Early Childhood Sector … The response to [charter requirements] has been varied and in too many centres there has been a feeling of intimidation, threat and vulnerability."[12] "Biculturalism" became a strongly contested construct, with some educators arguing that, in a multicultural, diverse society, emphasis should be placed on multicultural- rather than bicultural-inclusive arts education. Others argued that a focus on culturally diverse art forms and experiences within the existing curriculum not only continued to primarily emphasise Western models of art, pedagogy and contexts, it also ignored teachers' responsibilities as partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Others again argued that the implementation of a bicultural education programme was now a legal obligation, as a result of Ministry of Education policies and curriculum documents, and therefore "we might as well get on with it."

This exposure and participation in the deliberations on how best to define and implement biculturally inclusive education was to the benefit of my personal and professional growth. Looking back, I realise that my knowledge was more practice-based, and that a lack of a strong knowledge foundation in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and in the pedagogical and theoretical issues surrounding art and art education, stood in the way of my coming to grips with the main question that continued to occupy me at that time: What was the role of an art teacher in a bicultural society? Up till then, my early childhood education experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand had been strongly influenced by Grey's *Children at Play* and Brownlee's *Magic Places*.[13] Both texts advocated an art education model that emphasised the progressive, normative values of inventiveness, imagination and originality. "Art" was considered a medium for *individual* communication and self-expression; a vehicle for play and exploration.[14] The Department of Education supporting document *Tender Shoots* (1988), which outlined teachers' responsibility for the implementation of *te reo me nga tikanga Māori*, perpetuated these Western art and art education values.[15] Its focus on activities negated the inseparability of Māori "art" (a Western term in itself) and Māori culture, and the importance and value attached to the context, content and concepts of any work of art.[16] As a result, mainstream educators were not encouraged to examine in-depth political, cultural, social and pedagogical contexts and values. It was therefore not surprising that, for me, the debates around "biculturalism" became a "highly complex, evolving, and frequently contradictory field of action."[17]

On the one hand, government policy and curriculum directions encouraged me as a teacher to take responsibility for the implementation of the *reo Māori me nga tikanga* through specifically outlined activities in its *Taha Māori* programme document.[18] While putting these ideas into practice, however, I would be challenged by and subsequently engage in intense dialogue with a Māori colleague around issues of cultural dominance and cultural and political ownership and control. Central to our debates was the right of a Pakeha teacher to use *te reo Māori* and Māori images and stories in a programme that was essentially monoculturalist in its art education approach. My Māori colleague expressed her genuine concern that I, as a mainstream teacher, may redefine and appropriate things Māori.[19] These shared dialogues challenged the core of my personal and cultural identity; an identity that from birth had been formed around principles of individualism and independence. For me the development of a teaching and learning content and contexts that valued *te reo me nga tikanga Māori* meant that I provided opportunities for children to engage with Māori art activities and *waiata*. By doing this I thought to acknowledge, respect and reflect the unique place of Māori as *tangata whenua* and the principle of partnership inherent in Te Tiriti o Waitangi. For my colleague, however, my actions were considered arrogant, as it implied cultural knowledge and skills that I did not possess. I should have consulted with the appropriate *mana whenua* to ensure that the Māori artefacts were used within Māori and not European norms.

From 1988, it was clear that these issues were not going to go away, as government policies increasingly required the sector to address diversity, equity and biculturalism in their curriculum.[20] This political direction coincided with increased recognition of early education as the foundation for lifelong learning. In 1993, the draft of the early childhood curriculum document *Te Whāriki*[21] was published, followed by the revised 1996 curriculum document.

With the development of the document, the early childhood education sector showed a clear commitment to its partnership in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the unique place of Māori as *tangata whenua*, and its support of survival and revival of Māori culture and language.[22] *Te Whāriki* encouraged mainstream teachers to foster an [art] education approach that included perspectives of and interactions with *te reo me nga tikanga Māori*, its people, places, artefacts, stories, symbols, creative arts, crafts and activities connected to Māori children's lives.[23] As such, it provided "a basis for bicultural early childhood education in New Zealand."[24] In 2003, the Ministry of Education stressed that this was the responsibility of all educators, not just those who are Māori or those who work with Māori children and *whānau*.[25] In spite of all this, most of the policy documents and their implementation appeared to be informed by the essentially modernist, Western constructs of humanism, progressivism, and normative development theories.[26]

During those years, in my role as curriculum development advisor, the challenge of implementing the spirit of biculturalism inherent in the *Te Whāriki* document became apparent. Its open-ended framework of assessment, planning and evaluation based on children's interests, strengths and needs, and dispositions, made it easy for teachers to bypass the bicultural-inclusive requirements in a wide range of areas, including visual arts education.[27] Ritchie's study found that bicultural requirements were viewed as optional by some teachers and management and that there was a lack of strong commitment to bicultural development.[28] She argued that *Te Whāriki*'s non-prescriptive document framework, with each centre "weaving its own whāriki," may have been a factor in the marginalisation of Māori content. I would argue that its strong underpinning of a mostly Western paradigm of art and art education and of aesthetics may also have contributed to this. Moreover, such statements as the importance of meeting the *needs* of specific cultural groups through the inclusion of culturally specific people, places and artefacts within the environment and programme could be considered a "covert way of maintaining the status quo by placating minorities with superficial shows of greater social acceptance."[29] Not surprisingly, many teachers saw the document as an affirmation of what they were already doing.[30] Teachers' sensitivity and responsiveness to the "heritages, cultural values, customs, traditions, and … arts and crafts, stories and symbols"[31] of other cultures should never be a supplement to the existing curriculum. This may foster greater understanding, respect and awareness of the values, beliefs and practices of others; however, it does not necessarily lead to a reconstruction of the values and beliefs of the dominant culture and of the existing power structures.

During this time, encounters with the various theoretical, philosophical and pedagogical frameworks that have guided the visual arts education field over the years, combined with conversations with Māori colleagues on how to make curricular and pedagogical changes, contributed to my developing knowledge and understanding of how, as a mainstream art educator, I could adhere "to the principles of the treaty without promoting either tokenism or cultural stripping."[32]

The pathway I find myself on currently is considering the notion that a treaty-based pedagogy and art curriculum content and context is only likely to be achieved if I continue to examine my "belief about the nature of the world and [my] place in it."[33] This is particularly important as research outlines the impact teachers' personal beliefs about culture, and learning and teaching, have on what happens in the classrooms.[34] Dialogues with Māori colleagues around Māori visual culture education linked to issues of "power," "truth" and "subjectivity" continue to guide me on this journey.

I have become increasingly mindful of my own cultural embeddedness – certain personal constructs of art and aesthetics continue to strongly align to modernism and the aesthetic theory of formalism, no doubt due to my Dutch background. For me, the implications for future practice are twofold:

Firstly, the need to continue the process of critical thinking linked to action with the ultimate aim of achieving a treaty-based pedagogy and art curriculum content and context placed outside of a formalist, modernist model of art education. This is not easy, since a progressive-modernist paradigm continues to dominate the sector and, I would argue, has taken on ideological, dogmatic status.[35]

Secondly, the need to increase my understanding of Māori arts and cultural traditions as integral to protocols, approaches and strategies, "so as not to trample on the sacred practices and beliefs of Māori."[36] Although some may argue that the differences in Western and Māori world views make it not possible for a non-Māori teacher to teach Māori art,[37] the fact that, with few Māori teachers and a large percentage of Māori children in many mainstream settings, plus the dynamic nature of cultures, "Māori control over their own cultural domain can be problematic."[38] The role of mainstream teachers in bicultural development, Ritchie therefore argued, should be one of "facilitators of a process whereby Māori participants ultimately define what and how tikanga and mātauranga Māori are used."[39]

One art education approach that has the potential for a truly treaty-based art education approach linked to a strong pedagogical and theoretical foundation is that of "visual culture." "Visual culture" views "art" as expressions of people's social and cultural lives, rather than as an individual activity and a "self-contained object." It counteracts the modernist notion that "all the necessary resources … reside in the natural self, [not] in the collective culture and … in the specific art form the teacher was going to teach."[40] The visual cultural approach encourages both students and teachers to engage in the sharing of narratives, experiences and contexts around issues "of power, truth and subject."[41] As a result, not only are Māori knowledges, values, beliefs and practices more likely to be affirmed and normalised as part of the everyday classroom, the essentially different world views of both partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi are also more likely to be revealed.[42] Once these differences in values, beliefs, and practices are identified, we are then more able to identify and alter the imbalance in the "values mix" within our curricular and pedagogical documents and practices. This, however, needs to happen within a context of *genuine* collaboration, participation and power sharing, as we "cannot be expert in a culture that is not our own."[43] A failure to do so is likely to result in an "undermin[ing of] the cultural value of [Māori] concepts … [which in turn] undermine[s] the very fabric of cultural identity."[44]

A collaborative approach was used when considering ways of enhancing the treaty-based components in the Arts course in our field-based Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Teaching) programme. We also wanted to support students in the implementation of the treaty-based aspirations of *Te Whāriki* in their home centres. This ultimately led to the development of a component in which students researched *kōwhaiwhai* (patterns usually painted on the rafters of a meeting house). Students were required to develop, paint and explain a group *kōwhaiwhai*, its *whakapapa* and *kaupapa*,[45] which was to be supported by an original *waiata* or *waiata a ringa* (using *te reo Māori*) composed by the group and performed during the presentation. The relevance of the *kaupapa* and *whakapapa* to the group had to be identified as part of the presentation. It was also important that the *kōwhaiwhai* strongly reflected the value of *taonga tuku iho*; used the resources thoughtfully and respectfully; and showed extensive research and understanding of *kōwhaiwhai*, and appropriate use of *te reo Māori*. Students were further required to discuss ways in which aspects of their study could be implemented in their work with children. This discussion had to be linked to the treaty-based underpinnings of *Te Whāriki*. The group presentations took place during the *noho marae*.

This approach extended student teachers' understanding and implementation of Māori values and beliefs, and practices within their education programmes. Mainstream student teachers also increased their awareness of the need to be sensitive to the ethical issue of cultural ownership, and the need to acknowledge the cultural source of Māori art and its social, cultural, historical and philosophical contexts.[46]

My life and education experiences have increased my awareness of teaching as a social, cultural, political and subjective act, and the importance of critical examination of the content and context of pedagogy and practice. As research[47] has shown that tertiary education does not equip pre-service teachers with the strategies needed to be able to challenge current practices and to promote change, it is clearly important that I continue to consider the role I play in this, and ask to what extent I empower students to question underlying assumptions, values, norms and power issues inherent in current curriculum and practices in art and art education.

In this paper, I have shared my journey of involvement in early childhood visual arts education in Aotearoa New Zealand and my struggle to implement the treaty-based aspirations inherent in *Te Whāriki*. It was not until I came

to Aotearoa New Zealand that I became aware of how my experiences with art and art education shaped my social and personal identity. Over the years I have encountered numerous, often contradictory, theoretical and pedagogical stances in visual arts and arts education, which has ultimately led me to the understanding that, as a mainstream teacher, I am part of the system that still emphasises Western interpretations of art and art education, and of aesthetics. The pathway I find myself on currently is considering the notions of "altering the values mix" and of "visual culture" within a negotiated art education approach to ensure a true treaty-based art education programme. As a mainstream teacher, if teaching Māori visual culture, I need to be sensitive to the political and ethical issue of cultural ownership. My responsibility as an art teacher is defined by Aotearoa New Zealand's founding document of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the principle of *tino rangatiratanga*.[48] Legislation requires me as art educator to implement a treaty-based art education programme. What is vital is that I, as a representative of the dominant culture, respect the concern that I may redefine and appropriate things Māori.[49] I therefore need to continue to be aware of my own personal world view, my knowledge base, and biases. I also need to acknowledge that I "cannot be expert in a culture that is not [my] own."[50]

Ehara taku toa I te toa takitahu

Engari he toa takimano

My strength does not come from me alone

But through the efforts of many

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45   *Whakapapa* referred to the cultural identity of the group and acknowledged the "life journey" of all group members and formation of the group. *Kaupapa* referred to themes and topics being represented by the symbols and patterns of the *kōwhaiwhai*.

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Review

THE REFLECTION OF TRADITIONAL OTTOMAN COSTUMES ON KUTAHYA CERAMICS

Dilek Alkan Ozdemir

The costume culture -- which had it roots in the necessity to protect people from bad weather conditions -- has become a way of expressing oneself through the use of widely accepted status symbols.

Throughout time, the use of costumes has developed and people have created many different styles and shapes. However, costumes gained importance with the advent of the family as an institution. Weather conditions, the natural environment, religious beliefs, political views, and the financial status of the local people are also factors which affect clothing. In this respect, the costumes which began their lives as fur, leather, leaf and various parts of plants which people encountered in nature have evolved within the framework of certain patterns, especially since the 14th Century.[1]

Over the centuries, people shared their own traditions with other nations and were inspired by their designs or motifs as they changed location or migrated to somewhere else in the course of history. This being the case, it can be said that costumes present us with a kind of 'colourful history album'.

Each society has its own costume culture. The nomadic Turkish society of Middle Asia lived a life being permanently on horseback and thus their costumes were similar for both men and women. Of course, the variety of costumes and the importance attached to clothing increased when these people started to lead a settled life. The costume culture in Ottoman Turkey had unique properties which were also influenced by Islamic culture. Costumes were given great importance as they showed the status of people in society (see Figures 1, 2 and 3).

Figure 1: A Vizier and his Minion.

Figure 2: A Hunter.

Figure 3: Minion.

The sultans who loved clothing established weaving ateliers in the palace, and the designs drawn by the muralists were woven meticulously (see Figures 4, 5, 6 and 7).

The Ottoman Palace was leading the clothes' industry in Istanbul, the capital city of Turkey in the 15th Century. While people in Istanbul wore gorgeous and expensive clothes, the people in the villages and towns of Anatolia and Rumelia preferred plain fabrics and modest clothes (see Figures 11-19).
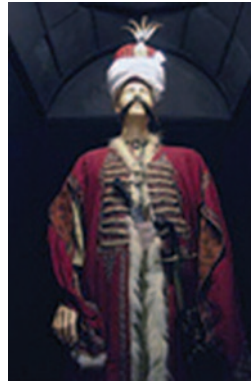
Figure 4, 5, 6 and 7: Ottoman Royal Costumes, c.1800.

Figures: 8, 9 and 10: Ottoman Royal Costume Caftans.

Figure 11: Belt.

Figure 12: Traditional Public Costumes at Anatolia in 1850.

Figure 13: Urban and Rural Costumes at Anatolia in 1870.

The most general feature of Ottoman costumes was that the costumes of men and women were similar to each other, and they were loose, cloaked and long. The costumes were mainly caftan-like robes with baggy trousers, cardigans, shirts, dresses, rawhide sandals and boots. In addition to these, the belt in which snuff bags and the dagger – a person's most important weapon -- were placed, had an important place in clothing. Each profession had its own costume.

Of course, an element which occupies a vast place in social life cannot be disregarded by art. The costume culture had been a theme in ceramics and tile art, as in every field of art, in Turkey. It is possible to see similar designs and

Figure 14: Peasant Costumes at Anatolia in the 19th Century.

Figure 15: Peasant Women and Two Men with Bridal Costumes at Anatolia in 1870. (The man on the right is a bridegroom.)

Figure 16: Traditional Public Costumes at Anatolia in 1870.

Figure 17: Traditional Public Costumes at Anatolia in 1870. (From Left to Right: Urban Man, Christian, Policeman.)

Figure 18: Traditional Public Costumes at Anatolia in 1870. (Two Men on Left: Swashbuckling Hereos of Southwestern Anatolian Villages and a Merchant.)

Figure 19: Traditional Public Costumes at Anatolia in 1870. (The Man on the Left: Soldier Belonging to the Irregular Troops of the Ottoman Army, and Rural Costumes.)

colours in fabrics, tiles and ceramics. They show the integral characteristics of Ottoman culture reflected even today. Besides the similarities in design, there are very differently styled ceramic products which depict the costume culture in the eighteenth century in Kutahya, one of the ceramic production centres of the country.

Kutahya is among the cities well-known for tile and ceramic art and is rich in ceramic and tile raw materials. Thus, every society ruling the city from the Phrygia to the Seljuks and Germiyans and then the Ottomans continued to sustain this art form. Tile ceramics has been both a branch of art and an indispensable source of income for the region over many years.

Many utensils and decorative products have been made since the 14th Century in Kutahya. The tiles and ceramics started with red-clayed examples in that century, and continued with blue-white examples in the 15th Century. White-clayed ceramics were decorated with various flower designs and underglaze techniques until late in the 17th Century. In the early Kutahya ceramics, the human figure was used in a limited sense due to the influence of Islamic art; therefore, plant designs and geometrical designs were focused on. Works with an excellent style in a modern sense began to be produced in Kutahya works since the early 18th Century. These ceramics were produced in a modern sense and showed varieties of designs during the course of the 18th century. In this period, Kutahya tile studios started to produce brand new products with a strong style and free brushwork. In addition to the small realistic flower motifs done with brush strokes, there were leaves, ivories, and human and animal figures. The most important feature of the white or cream-clayed works coated with white clay and transparent glaze was that there were designs depicting human figures with local costumes on them.

The women surrounded with various flowered branches in these works were generally shown with kaftans, dresses, baggy trousers, belts, and hats. There were also figures of men in the designs. Decorations were also seen on the flasks, bottles and sugar bowls (see Figures 20–33).

Figure 20: Bottle with Women Figures Hand-in-Hand with Rose and Tulip Motifs Wearing Caftans, Shalwars, High Head Dresses and Belts.

Figure 21: Plate with Women Figure Wearing Turquoise Dress, Shalwar and Belt; Man Wearing Green Caftan, Yellow Dress and Head Dress; and Flowers.

Figure 22: Plate with Women Figure Wearing Purple Dress, Shalwar, Turquoise Belt and Head Dress; with Flowers.

Figure 23: Plate with Women Figure Wearing Green Caftan, Yellow Dress, Shalwar, Wide Blue Belt and Head Dress; with Flowers.

Figure 24: Plate with Women Figure Wearing Green Bolero, Yellow Dress, Shalwar; Blue Belt and Head Dress; with Flowers and Smoking Tobacco.

Figure 25: Plate with Women Figure Wearing Purple Caftan, Shalwar, Turquoise Belt and Head Dress; with Flowers and Smoking Tobacco.

Figure 26: Plate with Women Figure Wearing Green and Black Caftan, Shalwar and Head Dress; with Flowers.

Figure 27: Pitcher with Two Male Figures Hugging; One Wears a Parish Cap, the Other Wears a Turban; both Wearing Caftans and Shalwars. Figure 28: Detail of Figure 27.

Figure 29: Plate with Male Figure Salesman Wearing Purple Caftan, Green Shalwar, Yellow Belt and Head Dress; with Equipment on Belt.

Figure 30: Plate with Male Figure Wearing Blue Bolero, Green Shalwar and Head Dress, Riding a Donkey; with Dagger.

Figure 31: Plate with Male Figure Wearing Turquoise Caftan, Dress, Shalwar and Head Dress; with Flowers.

Figure 32: Plate. With Male Figure Wearing Yellow Bolero, Shalwar and Head Dress; with Flowers.

Figures 33: Plate with Male Figure Wearing Caftans, Shalwar and Head Dress; with Labarum and Flower.

Figure 34: Water Bottle with Male Figures Wearing Traditional Costume Smoking Tobacco.

In conclusion, all these human figures and other motifs reflect and depict the features of the region. The artists of the period freely drew the figures and added the costumes which reflected the daily life and the status of the people. The different brush strokes in the designs on the plates show that they were not made by one artist. "Lack of attentive work indicates that they were produced serially to meet the heavy need."[2] No matter what the purpose was in making them, the works are interesting and have documentary importance in terms of reflecting the ethnic make-up of Kutahya in the era and for showing the local clothes.[3] The 18th Century was truly the period when Kutahya tiles reached the peak in their aesthetic interest, elegance, and quality.

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3   See *Bilgi University Index,* 2005, 20.

Review

ART OF *KATI*

Nilgun Salur

This paper aims to revise the understanding of *katı* art within Anadolu University classrooms. Earlier examples of *katı* have been examined and new projects have been initiated.

The art of *katı* involves engraving a special type of paper or tissue (like ebru painting, hat writing on leather or on any traditional motif) and sticking the engraved design to another surface by using a special glue called *muhallebi* which is made from starch and water. The end result can be *katı* landscapes or decorative buckets of flowers, alternatively it can be motifs used in decorating book covers, or handwritten books, or hat writing boards

Paper-cutting is one of China's most popular forms of visual art. Paper and scissors are the usual materials utilised, but sometimes an engraving knife is used. Paper cuttings have been a traditional art form that can be traced back to the 6th Century.

Figures 1-3: Examples in the Topkapi Palace Museum, Turkey.

Figures 4-7: Examples in Aynur Derya, Turkey.

By the 8th or 9th Century papercutting appeared in West Asia and later in the Ottoman Empire in the 16th Century. Within a century, paper-cutting was being done in most of middle Europe. Paper-cuttings are all hand-made. In Chinese folk culture, the art of paper-cutting occupies a significant amount of time allotment in various folk activities. Now, we have contemporary artists to show us the wonder of the paper-cut through their artworks in traditional and modern modes.

Figures 8 & 9: Paper-cutting in China.

By the beginning of the 16th Century it became known in the Ottoman Empire and it was especially popular in the period of Kanuni Sultan Süleyman.

Parallel to the general loss of intrest in the Turkish traditional arts of book binding, hat writing and ebru painting, *katı* art could not get enough support in the last century and faced extinction. Today, really only a few practitioners continue to work with *katı*, which needs a lot of time, patience and concentration (see Figures 10-13).

Figures 10 and 11: Helen Musselwhite's Swiss Examples.

Figure 12: Han Jing's Chinese Example.
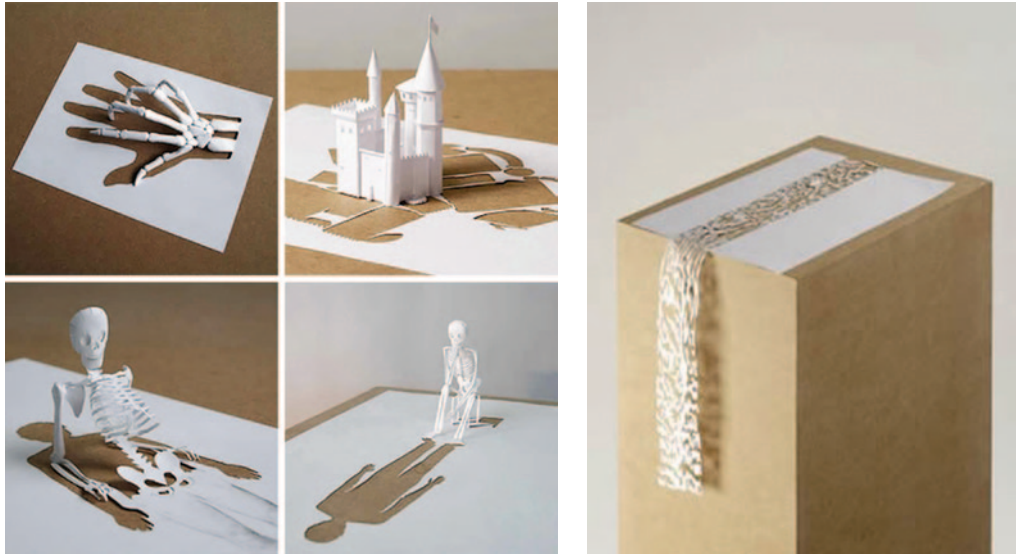
Figure 13: Tina Roth Eiseberg's Swiss Example.

Modern-day papercutters typically follow one or more of the 'traditional' styles, while others have begun to expand the art into new styles, motifs, and designs.

Figures 14 & 15: Patrick Gannon's Japanese Examples.

Figures 16-19: Karin Dickel-Jonasch's German Examples.

Figures 20-25: Peter Callesan's Danish Examples.

In our classroom *kat1* was used within the context of designing posters within a course on graphic designing. Graphic designing is one of the visual communication arts. Communication can be defined as the transmision of feelings, ideas, behaviours and data between two persons or a group of persons which can be determined as transmitting and receiving. Visual communication can be defined as exchanging data consisting of images. As a result the graphic designer, while processing the messages on a two-dimensional surface, combines many visual elements like typographic illustration, photography, colour and texture. We live in a world in which technology changes fast. But it does not matter how much the production media changes, in creative processes, good designs can only be prepared by using all the designing elements in correct ways.

Poster designing results in posters prepared to raise consciousness, to announce or advertise and to help marketing and which are appreciated as mass communication tools. They are also the result of graphic communication with the highest production rate in our time.

Posters can be divided into three groups according to their content: advertisement posters, cultural posters and social content posters. The most important property of a poster is to be perceptible. Many posters would not strike us in passing and we do not notice them. Making sure the poster one designs is distinguishable amongst many

other posters should be the first objective of the poster designer. Some advice which could be helpful is to lessen the number of images on the poster and to remember that typographic elements such as the slogan, photograph or illustration and the background are perceived as three different images on the poster. The designer should also lessen the words on the poster. Slogans should consist of 5-6 words at most, with 3-4 being ideal. Decorative and fancy fonts should be avoided except where absolutely needed. Simple characters and bold script read better from a distance. Large images work best on posters and a balance between visual and verbal components should be kept. When choosing colours, the designer should deploy bright and lively ones and contrasts between colours are important.

After being given the general introduction, our students defined a corporation or client to prepare a poster for. They then cut the papers and produced a visual to introduce their idea. They took photographs of their visuals and transferred them to a computer, using FreeHand and Adobe Photoshop to combine typography and photography to create their posters. Some examples are shown in Figures 26-34.

Figure 26: Hüseyin Aydemir in Turkey, Poster for Tema.

Figure 27: Sevda Hancı in Turkey, Poster for Güven Insurance.

Figure 28: Hasan Fidan in Turkey, Poster for Turkey Isbank.

Figure 29: Burak Kahraman in Turkey, Poster for PlayStation.

Figure 30: Başak Gökküş in Turkey, Poster for Akbank.

Figure 31: Ibrahim Yalcun in Turkey, Poster for Ganatibank.

Figure 32: Soner Kolluoğlu in Turkey, Poster for Formula.

Figure 33: Serap Mutlu Akbulut in Turkey, Poster for Turkey Isbank.

Our objective at Anadolu University is to expand the inspiring scope for graphic design students through deployment of their national cultural heritage. We wish to nourish their creativity with the exquisite works which are part of their cultural history over hundreds of years and to give them the opportunity to contribute to stemming the extinction of our national traditional arts by finding actual usage for them in contemporary design.

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MAKING FRIENDS WITH THE DIGITAL NATIVES

Steve Lovett

Figure 1: Evelyn Kawhiti, *Wahine Kauae Whakapapa*, 2009. Screen printed on both sides of a sheet of glass, image printed in four colours.

As an artist and art educator, my material and theoretical investigation in print seeks to make a contribution to the collective task of reinvesting in the medium.[1] My interest is in ensuring that print can continue to make a vital contribution to contemporary interdisciplinary art practices. My fear is that, with printmaking delivery in many art schools under pressure, the potential for printmaking and printmakers to contribute to contemporary art practices is reduced. Printmaking, in all its forms, contributes to a richer and more diverse set of interdisciplinary art practices. Without the "inter" component of interdisciplinary art practice that printmaking can deliver, the resulting default position is more of a single disciplinary art practice. This is a disciplinary practice that speaks to a potentially restrictive orthodoxy in art and art education. This may result in a narrowing of the scope of art discourse toward more neutral and centrist cultural positions that do not easily allow for difference.

I approach printmaking (both theoretical research and practical studio production) from two positions: as a professional practicing artist and as an educator working in tertiary contemporary visual arts education.[2] These dual roles create points of critique and observation on printmaking traditions in New Zealand. In the studio production, this creates opportunities to explore experimental approaches to developing new artworks through print processes. In the classroom, my dual roles as an artist and art educator necessitates critical engagement with the history of printmaking tradition and contemporary practice. I define printmaking traditions as a set of theoretical

discourses and practices shaped by dynamic artistic and cultural forces of change. The central question was, and it remains today, "*Is print just printmaking, an account of fetishised techniques?*" Or, "*Is print a more contentious practice that is always engaged with turbulent artistic, economic and cultural forces?* In our delivery of printmaking at Manukau School of Visual Arts, we propose a redefinition of printmaking as an expanding field of practices responsive to open and diverse theoretical positions. This approach situates printmaking and print practitioners (*always*) at the most incisive edge of contemporary cultural production. This is one of Ruth Pelzer's underlying messages in "Craft/Technik."[3] Pelzer argues that technology continuously exerts a transformative force within printmaking, changing modes of print production, delivery and the surface aesthetics of printed images. The technological change to printmaking practices brought on by the influence of photography and new media has shifted the printmaking terrain in ways that now cannot be ignored. The fact of technological and conceptual change to art practices is, in my view, one of the fundamental print traditions that we can present to our students. This dynamic view of printmaking practices continues to situate the medium among the most powerful critical, economic, aesthetic and political engines driving cycles of change, innovation, regeneration, maturity and renewal.

As educators, we need to research and present to our students that printmaking, driven by dynamic historical forces, engages with and continues to participate in the world of images that we respond to. This is a more expansive view of printmaking history, tradition and contemporary practice. Dürer's use of Gutenberg's press to print wood-type prints provides a useful practice model for contemporary practitioners. Dürer's use of what were in the fifteenth century the most advanced image-making processes available can show our students an artist making use of technology as it "falls out of" industry. This same model can be applied to the printmaking processes of engraving, etching and lithography in the eighteenth century, and screen-printing in the twentieth century. Therefore, as educators we need to challenge the rather strange notions that printmaking is today only the outcome of historically determined and culturally isolated techniques, and that this history is at a terminal point. As educators we must remember that, in the theatre of critical art actions, printmaking is always an agent of change.

Figure 2: Alana Webb, 2006. Installation view of Year 4 studio, handprinted wallpaper.

An unavoidable issue in contemporary printmaking is the confronting force of new ideas, new materials and new digital technologies on the maintenance of a narrow view of printmaking traditions. This confrontation demands reconsideration by artists and art educators of our modes of practice and what we deliver to students. In this challenge, there are opportunities in the contemporary interdisciplinary visual arts to reinvent printmaking for our students through the ongoing reappraisal of materials, processes and printmaking contexts. I am aware of the difficulties of finding practical solutions to the challenges of printmaking delivery in our classrooms and printmaking studios. Yet the task has acquired an increasing urgency, as many teachers, students, practitioners and art professionals have turned away from printmaking as a viable area of art practice. To address these issues we need to evaluate what new technology (including digital technology), new non-toxic materials and new practice contexts have to offer for students, educators and artists. Our preparedness to embrace the new in printmaking again is a willingness to expand the field of practice, adding to and shifting established dialogues, opening new critical questions for students and educators alike.

The digital in printmaking need not be intimidating. It is certainly a fact that anybody over 15 years of age engaging with digital artwork will be, like myself, a "digital immigrant."[4] Like immigrants everywhere we are connected to at least two cultures. This can be advantage. We are able to engage in both analogue and digital modes of visual culture, using these variable modes of thought to facilitate artmaking and related contextual discussion with the new digital natives[5] who are increasingly the students in printmaking studios. Recognising that, as digital immigrants, we are able to speak across a range of positions within contemporary printmaking, our delivery will facilitate interdisciplinary practice dialogues which emerge out of graphic design, time-based, post-object media and the fine arts.

This shift in practice is required today, as this is one of the moments in the history of printmaking for change. For the continued relevance of printmaking to an interdisciplinary visual culture we need to expand what we choose to recognise as printmaking. As art educators and as practitioners we will need to decouple contemporary printmaking from the necessity of conforming to the historical constraints of high art alone, initiating a reconsideration of the relationship printmaking has with print design, drawing, painting, photography and sculpture.[6] This work will involve a reconsideration of the contemporary interface printmaking can have with the expanding field[7] of new media and publishing options. Reconsidering the relationship printmaking has with contemporary media and practice is *not* about replacing historical tradition with novelty. It is, in my view, about allowing printmaking to actively respond to and engage with opportunities for artists to embrace the latest available imagemaking

Figure 3: Laura Robertson, *poem #10*, 2009. Gel transfer and screen print on wood panels.

technology to facilitate the expression of new ideas in visual form. To regard printmaking in this way will open the prospect for printmakers to operate in an expanded field of practices.[8] This will require new terms to describe altered relationships with inherited notions of what will constitute printmaking practice, skill, labour, craft and commodity values. A willingness to expand print discourses will make it possible for artists, educators and students to creatively engage with the medium to investigate concepts emerging from distinct fields of material and theoretical investigation within printmaking, reappraising the interplay between high art and popular culture.[9]

Today, students arrive in our classrooms and print studios engaged with new media –these are the digital natives Prensky described in 2001.[10] Their presence amongst us exerts dynamic change on learning culture, visual literacy and printmaking culture. The integration of digital culture into their everyday lives indicates that there are substantive tectonic changes occurring in the meaning of (visual) literacy for these students.[11] For the digital native, electronic equipment, software, file-sharing sites and online communities (amongst other non-textual and not hands-on media) are often the main sources of information experience and creative expression. As a result, these students have a very different relationship to visual culture and digital technologies.[12] Their use of digital media takes on subversive and highly personalised forms that contradict notions of entanglement in reductive creative choices, closely linked with empirical scientific and business models.[13]As art educators, we should not underestimate the influence student engagement with the look and form of new media has with the ways that our students approach visual culture, including printmaking. Informed by their exposure to and engagement with contemporary media, these students have developed art-making skills that do not necessarily involve the use of actual paints, brushes, liquid inks, presses, plates or blocks.[14] For these students, to start a printmaking experience with the "old" and available technology of dry point on plastic, or to use an elderly press, may produce nothing more than a stillborn image that bears little relationship to what they perceive as their visual culture, the world of shiny new media. For these students, an overemphasised focus on narrowly defined artisanal craft technique can be both alienating and restrictive. What is required from art educators is that we engage in a digital dialogue with our students to introduce them to the possibilities of printmaking.

This involves approaches to printmaking contexts that encompass popular culture and new technologies, and simultaneously acknowledge printmaking's longstanding art-historical practice contexts. This involves raising our gaze from the contingencies of materials and process to again invest in printmaking as a field of research and practice with the ability to dynamically infect and inflect interdisciplinary cultural visual arts activity. The resulting shifts in practice modes will result in a hybridised form of printmaking that can

Figure 4: Jacqueline Roach, *untitled Warp#3*, 2009. Gel transfer applied to aluminium, single detail from installation.

Figure 5: Augusto Aokuso, *Time Now*, 2009. Four colour process screen print developed from *Time* magazine cover.

be more aware of and address an expanding range of contemporary visual arts practices and student learning outcomes. This shift does not always necessitate immediate and prohibitive investment in expensive new equipment. This shift *will* require a renegotiating of resource access, allocation and control within studio programmes.

As educators, our first task in making a shift to reinvigorate printmaking delivery will be to reinvest in the scope of the print practices and references that we provide to our students. The 2008 Examiners' Report for Level 3 in printmaking suggests that there is a tendency to rely on limited artist practice references. This may have had the effect of directing the focus of student research along perhaps overly defined pathways, leaving little scope for innovative discovery. It also appears to be true that there is no actual impediment to art educators presenting to students an expanding range of artists and designers who investigate visual culture through print practice. This expansion, it seems to me, would be in step with the intentions of the New Zealand Curriculum Achievement Objectives Level 7 & 8.

As an art educator, I am concerned with the questions and opportunities for printmaking delivery to students that facilitate engagement with contemporary media and its contexts and operate from an informed historical awareness of a medium shaped by technological and social change. As I have outlined above, printmaking, when consciously operating from this informed position, is at its most incisive and operates at the leading edge of mass communication technology currently available to artists. As an educator and practitioner engaging with printmaking from this informed position, I am presented with the opportunity to re-evaluate questions of pedagogical ownership and delivery of new digital art-making technology in relation to printmaking delivery programmes in our schools and universities. The writings of Deborah Wye,[15] Marilyn Kushner,[16] Professor Carole Shepheard[17] and Sasha Grishin[18] propose that we can legitimately ask the question: Who it is that gets to apply digital technology (in the classroom and to which groups of students) and for what ends? In the best of all possible worlds it would be art teachers *and* technology, and media studies teachers who will deliver new media technology to students. It is critical therefore, that we question access to new technology delivery in art programmes for students not focused on design or photography courses. It is equally important that we explore ways to facilitate printmaking delivery intersecting with questions that arise from design, photography and new media.

The Territorial Divide[19] in New Zealand printmaking was first described by Professor Carole Shepheard; in her argument she identifies a divided territory without significant points of exchange between the analogue and the digital. In 1996 this divide was between practitioners (both emerging and established) and arts professionals. I suggest that the questions Professor Shepheard raised in 1996 are now of even greater urgency. Today the territorial divide in printmaking practices is more acutely positioned between institutions on one side of the divide and students, the digital natives[20] who will become our future practitioners, on the other. Whatever the reasons for the reluctance to address these curatorial issues in the past, today we have an opportunity to make intellectual and capital reinvestments in printmaking delivery that takes account of new contexts, critical frameworks, technologies and materials. Our teaching delivery must begin to facilitate these points of exchange.

The task of developing new visual knowledge is predicated on expanding the field of printmaking practices and contexts to encourage students to work across and between diverse areas of contemporary interdisciplinary visual art and design. This is a chance to be innovative and reinvest in an expanding range of practices that transform the printmaking medium, its delivery and reception. The dynamic present tense of art practices is difficult, fractious, post-postmodern and interdisciplinary. Therefore, as art educators we must engage with contemporary approaches to printmaking practices that directly interface with the increasingly digital worlds of our students and retain links with the analogue world of material culture. Our work is to reinterpret and re-present to our students notions of materiality, skill, craft and industry that can reanimate printmaking in a conceptually driven visual-arts culture characterised by post-object and post-photographic studio practices. This work we undertake will see us better able to continue to expand the field of printmaking practices,[21] ensuring a greater degree of relevance for the medium and its future practitioners.

Steve Lovett is a visual arts practitioner and art educator with an extensive print-based knowledge. Steve has taught printmaking at Manukau School of Visual Arts since 1995 and has been section leader for printed media since 1997.

Lovett's research interests are primarily concerned with questions of loss, and the narratives of location and displacement in print practices. He has also focused on the impact of new imaging technologies on more traditional printmaking practices.

Lovett has an extensive local, national and international exhibition record. He has demonstrated successful academic management of the print programme and the first-year programmes at Manukau School of Visual Arts.

In 2006 Steve Lovett was awarded the Graphic Arts Award at the XIX Ibiza Biennale, Ibiza, Spain.

1   This work is undertaken by many art educators, curators, practitioners and students. However, anecdotal evidence appears to indicate a reduction in NCEA Level 2 and 3 student folios presented for external assessment. These figures suggest that a very low number – between 150 and 200 print portfolios – were presented in 2008. This figure is set against the approximately 2500 painting and design portfolios for the same year. Capital and intellectual underinvestment in printmaking delivery compounds the effects of our changing relationships to imaging technology and materials and technology. But this is not the last act for printmaking.

2   In conversation with Trace Williams Auckland Printmaker and Art Educator, December 2008/January 2009.

3   Ruth Pelzer-Montada, "Craft/Technik," presentation at "Foul Biting? Theoretical Diversions in Printmaking," a panel discussion chaired by Malcolm Payne, IMPACT International Print Conference, Berlin 2005.

4   Marc Prensky, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants," *On the Horizon*, 9:5, October 2001 (MCB University Press).

5   Ibid.

6   GJ Fyfe, "Art and Reproduction: Some Aspects of the Relations between Painters and Engravers in London 1760-1850," in *Design and Aesthetics: A Reader*, eds J Palmer and M Dodson (London: Routledge, 1995), 196-208.

7   R Weisberg, "Critical Theory and Print," *Contemporary Impressions*, 1:2, Fall 1993.

8   Ibid.

9   K Varnedoe and A Gopnik, *High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture* (New York: MOMA, 1990), 19.

10   Prensky, "Digital Natives."

11   D Welch, "The L Word," *New Zealand Listener*, 25 October 2008.

12   J Rain, "The Generation Game," in *Echoes: Contemporary Art in the Age of Endless Conclusions*, ed F Bonami (New York: Monacelli Press, 1996), 48-54.

13   S Penny, "The Virtualisation of Art Practice: Body Knowledge and the Engineering World View," *CAA Art Journal,* Fall 1997.

14   Rain, "The Generation Game."

15   D Wye, *Thinking Print: Books to Billboards, 1980-1995* (New York: MOMA, 2002).

16   M Kushner, *Digital: Printmaking Now* (New York: Brooklyn Museum of Art, 1999).

17   C Shepheard, "The Territorial Divide: Issues in Contemporary New Zealand Printmaking," Unpub. MPhil thesis (University of Auckland, 1997).

18   S Grishin, *Imprint: The Journal of Australian Printmaking*, Fall 2007, 18-24.

19   Shepheard, "The Territorial Divide," 87-8.

20   Prensky, "Digital Natives."

21   Weisberg, "Critical Theory and Print."

Artist's Pages

THE GLASS CLOSET

Neil Emmerson

This project, *The Glass Closet* by Neil Emmerson, was presented as a "hit-and-run" public project and installed *as if* it was an exclusive, high-fashion, designer-label outlet on the main shopping street of Dunedin(available to be viewed through the window 24 hours a day, but open only by appointment). As a satellite event for the ANZAAE Conference held at the Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic, it enacts a relational slippage between opposed axiomatic positions like public/private, closure/disclosure and knowledge/ignorance in order to introduce the subject of internalised and externalised homophobia as a parallel to the common judicial and extra-judicial punishment of homosexuals, both locally and on the world stage. Costumes that play with the concepts of discipline and terrorism (sacred relics or perverse accessories?) are displayed as high camp parodies of international *haute couture* consumer culture that blend fetishised signs of the religious, penal and psycho-medical in the mode of an allegorical, disembodied confessional.

"Thus we must posit an aesthetics where theory and interpretation are juxtaposed to, or traced above, the effects of the passions, where a muscular contraction or spasm is worth as much as a concept."

Allen S Weiss, "Iconology and Perversion", *Art and Criticism Monograph Series*, vol. 4
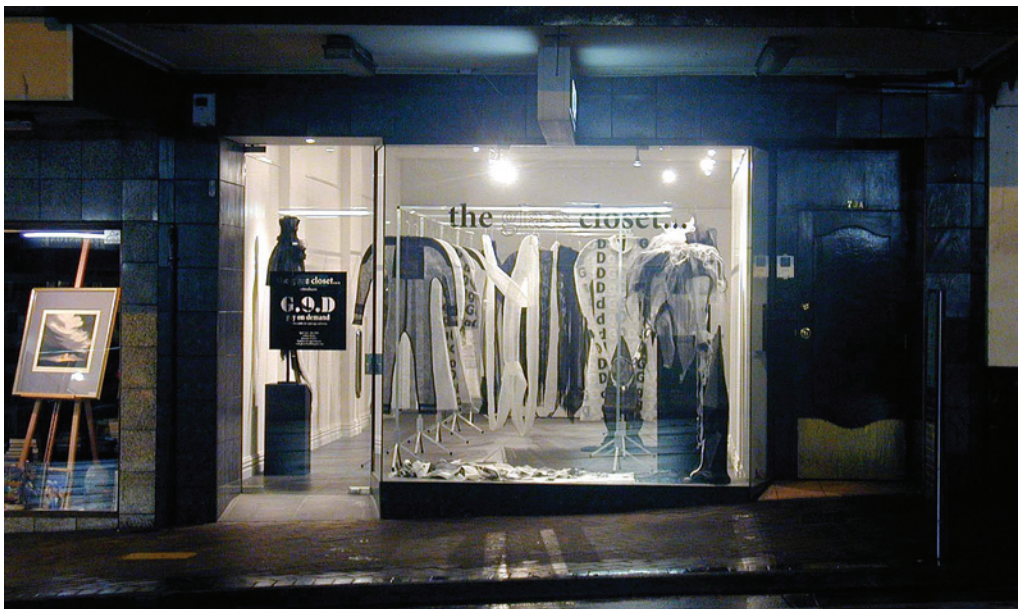(Melbourne: Art & Text Publications, 1988), 35.

Figure 1: Neil Emmerson, *The Glass Closet*, Installation view, ROCDA, Princes St. Dunedin, 2009.

Figure 2: Neil Emmerson, *The Glass Closet*, Installation view, ROCDA, Princes St. Dunedin, 2009. Plastic/nylon, various threads, zips, enamel paint and aluminium suspension system. Dimensions variable.

Figure 3: Neil Emmerson, *The Glass Closet*, Installation view, ROCDA, Princes St. Dunedin, 2009. Plastic/nylon, various threads, zips, enamel paint and aluminium suspension system. Dimensions variable.

Figure 4: Neil Emmerson, *The Glass Closet*, Installation view, ROCDA, Princes St. Dunedin, 2009. Plastic/nylon, various threads, zips, enamel paint and aluminium suspension system. Dimensions variable.

Neil Emmerson is an Australian artist living and working in Dunedin, New Zealand. He is a senior lecturer and Head of the Printmaking Studio at the Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic.