Landscapes: the Arts, Aesthetics, and Education 21

Christopher M. Schulte
Christine Marmé Thompson *Editors*

Communities of Practice: Art, Play, and Aesthetics in Early Childhood

Landscapes: the Arts, Aesthetics, and Education

Volume 21

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Contents

Introduction 1
Christine Marmé Thompson and Christopher M. Schulte

Collective Improvisations: The Emergence of the Early Childhood Studio as an Event-Full Place 5
Sylvia Kind

'A Cool Place Where We Make Stuff': Co-curating Relational Spaces of Muchness 23
Jaye Johnson Thiel

"Now We All Look Like Rapunzels": Drawing in a Kindergarten Writing Journal 39
Leslie Rech

Artistic Encounters: Ethical Collaborations Between Children and Adults 61
Shana Cinquemani

Fighting the Mad King: Play, Art, and Adventure in an Early Childhood Art Studio 77
Marta Cabral

Sensitive and Supportive Interactions: Tuning into Children's Requests for Help During Art-Making 93
Rosemary Richards

Children's Play and Art Practices with Agentic Objects 117
Marleena Mustola

Digital Aesthetics and Multidimensional Play in Early Childhood 133
Linda Knight

Beyond Screen Time: Aesthetics of Digital Playscapes for Young Children 153
Marissa McClure

Circumspection in Early Childhood Classrooms: Ontological Forays into Questioning, Being, and Making 165
Heather Kaplan

A Playful Event Awaiting Just *a*-Stone's Throw Away 185
Charles R. Garoian

Mothering as a Feminist Aesthetics of Existence 197
Laura Trafí-Prats

The Will-to-Research Children's Drawing 213
Christopher M. Schulte

Dancing Rainbows, Naughty Rainbows: Reflections on Teaching, Learning and Researching in the Arts with Young Children 229
Patricia Tarr

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Introduction

Christine Marmé Thompson and Christopher Mark Schulte

"The time has come," the Walrus said,
"To talk of many things:
Of shoes--and ships--and sealing-wax--
Of cabbages--and kings--
And why the sea is boiling hot--
And whether pigs have wings."

–Lewis Carroll, The Walrus & the Carpenter,
Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There, 1871

1 My Buddy Burt

For the first several mornings of Saturday Art Class, Burt could tell us only, repeatedly, plaintively, "I want my sisters!" No enticement was enough to alter his position. No, he did not want to draw, or paint, or listen, or converse. He wanted his sisters. Nothing less or different or more immediately possible would do.

Eventually as time passed, he would catch himself, listening just a little, showing some glimmer of interest, but a teacher's encouraging glance was met, yet again, by the same steadfast proclamation. Make no mistake, he insisted, "I want my sisters."

One such morning, this pattern clearly established, Burt sat morosely fiddling with his unopened sketchbook, ready to repeat his plaint. While Burt's steadfast abstention was not particularly intrusive nor a significant deterrent to other preschoolers' participation, it did not seem to be in Burt's best interests to fritter away two hours every Saturday morning of his fourth year of life pining for the company of his siblings (happily entangled in their own work, one floor below). I made it my mission to break through his resolve. I sat beside him at the small round table he occupied, acknowledged his initial declarations of unrequited longing, and asked him about the few scant scribbles he had inscribed on the cover of his otherwise empty sketchbook.

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Somehow, in the course of our lopsided conversation, it became apparent that Burt harbored an interest in sailboats. Hmm, I said, my father had a sailboat. His father did not, but he did have a big motor boat. Like this? I asked, drawing a very primitive and completely unseaworthy vessel in his sketchbook. And, suddenly, unexpectedly, we were off… at Burt's request, I would draw a very basic shell in his sketchbook and he would add details, few at first, sometimes a line of water somewhere beneath the boat or a sun in the sky above, usually a large blobby "island" that delimited the space where a boat might be. In the weeks that followed, he perked up when I walked into the room, and eagerly retrieved his sketchbook at the end of class to continue where we had left off, before the more formal lesson of the day, in which he now regularly participated.

I was absent from the preschool room for a couple of weeks, and Burt was a different young artist when I returned. He had convinced his student teacher to draw with him when I was unavailable. By this time, Burt was drawing the boats and invited Kayla to contribute the scenery. She had drawn a decorative wave pattern, to which Burt objected: Waves were not that pronounced in appearance, he maintained, as he showed her how to draw a more placid sea. The second week his inspiration came from another child at the table, whose obsession with pirates motivated Burt to draw his own: figures that became increasingly elaborate in the following weeks as he asked me to draw specific piratic features–most notably, the pirate's bandana–before beginning to draw these details himself.

In the 7 weeks of Saturday art classes this fall, Burt transformed himself from an uncertain and solemn onlooker to a confident and capable participant among his preschool companions. His was a text book example of Vygotskian learning theory: He invited a more capable peer to draw with and for him, watched closely and replicated the actions of his companion, elaborated and personalized each newly acquired skill as it was internalized for his independent use. This is a process that occurs continually at the sketchbook table, in preschools–in any situation where children are free to observe others performing actions they value or sharing ideas that matter to them. And yet, traditional early childhood doctrine would judge me harshly for marking in a child's space, even with his invitation, and would include Burt's student teacher in its shroud of disapproval. Would it be less censorious of Brandon, whose interest in pirates inspired Burt to disrupt his series of unoccupied watercraft and begin to construct narratives on the drawing page, as he had been doing in our conversations around it? Most likely, Brandon's role in this scenario would be ignored or dismissed, in order to preserve the illusion of a child acting alone, or, in this case, under the pressure of an adult gaze.

Young children's emergence as art makers, as described in conventional developmental accounts, is remarkably neat and tidy, far more orderly a process than the ones that unfold, on any Saturday morning, in the classrooms where I supervise young art teachers in their first officially guided teaching experience. Seeing what we see on any given morning, it is all but impossible to believe in the stage-like unfolding of a process so driven by inborn logic that it explains both Burt's sailboats and Brandon's pirates and the elaborate structures, costumes, battles, interiors, and characters drawn by other children, with varying degrees of detail and

intensity. And yet the traditional explanations are alluring in their clarity and precision, especially in the early years, and perhaps in the ease of motivating (or manipulating) children to produce versions of the schema we hold dear, baselines and skylines, arms attached to heads, and chimneys attached at a perpendicular angle to slanted roofs.

The mysteries that Burt presents are multiple, touching upon several major points that remain unresolved in early art education, among early childhood teachers and art educators alike. For, despite decades of challenges to the traditional conceptions upon which the field of art education long relied, stage theories and developmental psychology remain strongly associated with the art of young children in the minds of educators, perhaps more firmly rooted among teachers than among the general public. Perhaps this is because the points made by sociocultural and postdevelopmental scholars are subtleties, small but highly significant shifts of attention that seem less radical than they truly are. Taken seriously, examined closely in their implications for practice, these more recent perspectives on art and childhood constitute a sea change as marked and disruptive as the waves Kayla drew beneath Burt's boat, as imperceptible as Burt's own movement from director to author of his own plays with materials and ideas, from disinterested onlooker to active member of a creative community.

2 A Community of Practice

The 15 authors who have come together to populate this text, this virtual gathering of critical international scholars, share histories of involvement in contemporary theory and research in early art education, and a common inclination to question conventional wisdom, "those things that are given to our present experience as if they were timeless, natural, and unquestionable: to stand against the maxim of our time, against the spirit of our age, against the current of received wisdom" (Rose, 1999, p. 20). They do so from the perspective of their own complex and shifting roles as teachers and teacher educators, researchers and theorists, parents and grandparents and advocates for children. Together, they provide a comprehensive introduction to new ways of thinking about the place of art and play in the lives and education of young children. Enlivened by narratives and illustrations of children engaged in play and art making practices, the authors offer perspectives on the lived experience of being a child and the excitement of creating and playing with meaning in social settings, and in dialogue with materials, peers, and adults. It is our hope this text will counter prevailing assumptions about art and play in early childhood, and trouble the often predictive methods presumed essential to research it. In their place, we co-construct an imaginary for thinking differently about the child's interests and interactions, and the complexities of knowing, being, and working together in the world.

Representing a range of positions and locations across the globe, the authors nonetheless share many things: a commitment to well-crafted narrative in/as

research, a dedication to *being there* among children, eyes and ears attuned to the significance of rapidly unfolding events. They share theoretical sources, well beyond the standard works of early childhood and art education, though in constant dialogue with them; as Christopher Schulte notes in this volume, in writing as in life, "we are always to some extent bringing the old into the new." And the authors in this volume are also exploring new ground, each venturing into territories that are uniquely relevant to the issues that matter in the realms of childhood, art, play, and aesthetics that command their attention. The diversity within this community of authors, the shifts of perspective that occur from one chapter to the next, reflect the palimpsestic nature of the subject at hand. As McArdle and Piscitelli (2002) note, the theory and practice of early childhood art education may be best understood by looking closely at the recurrences, repetitions, and refreshment of ideas that coexist in every moment. This book stands within a tradition of understanding teaching and learning as an unpredictable series of events grounded in relationships between and among adults and children, their attention mutually directed toward the world of ideas, experiences, and things that bring them together within their own communities of practice.

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Collective Improvisations: The Emergence of the Early Childhood Studio as an Event-Full Place

Sylvia Kind

For several years I have been working as an atelierista at the Capilano University Children's Centre, a campus daycare at a small Canadian university. In this role I work with children ages 1–5 years, educators from the Centre, and adult early childhood education students, facilitating artistic engagements, small group arts-based projects, and various artistic interventions and events. Our studio is a small room adjacent to the Children's Centre and connected to the classroom where adult students enrolled in the early childhood (ECCE) program meet for classes. To get to the studio the children need to walk outside of the Children's Centre, across a laneway, up a small flight of stairs and into the studio. In this way the studio is located between children's and adult's spaces and acts as a connecting point, prompting extended consideration into ways educators and children might re-imagine their work together. The studio has also taken shape through a search for a deeper understanding of what engaging in studio research, or art practice as research (Sullivan, 2005), in early childhood contexts could look like. Even though the studio and my role as atelierista find significant inspiration in the philosophies and approaches of the pre-primary schools in Reggio Emilia, and the School of Education and Childhood Studies, in which the ECCE program and Children's Centre are located, has made a sustained and dedicated commitment to exploring the pedagogical principles of the Reggio Emilia approach, we have resisted implementing or applying their practices. Rather we have tried to stay in a living, emergent engagement and continuous experimentation with thesep ideas and approaches; an experimentation characterized by listening, such as listening to how things function and move together while seeking to "energize new modes of activity" (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 87).

In creating a studio, we imagined it as a gathering place that would bring educators, children, materials, and artistic processes together in an experimental interplay,

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producing particular encounters and events. Although we have engaged in rather intense experimentations (Kind & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2015; Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kind, & Kocher, 2017) we do not follow a free-flow or 'anything goes' approach. Rather, we have been looking for ways to enable emergence, provoke sustained engagement with particular ideas, and to engage in prolonged investigations into materials, and processes (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2017). We are interested in what might be produced and how we could envision artistic processes, children, materials, ourselves as educators, and art in early childhood differently.

At its heart, the studio has been characterized by collective experimentation and inventions, play-full engagements, and an attunement generated through sustained and learned attention. By this we mean that sensitivity to children's processes and to movements and encounters with materials is not something immediately attained. It is cultivated over time. While an idea of experimentation can suggest, particularly in young children's artistic practices, that nothing ever gets settled, created, or formed, and always is in a (usually messy) state of process, of not-yet-becoming, over time the studio has become a place of more and more refined expression as we look for ways to draw attention to, settle in to, dwell in, and experiment with the ideas, stories, problems, and processes at hand. Throughout our experimentations we feel the constant tension of keeping things in movement and the need to pause and sustain our attention *to* something. These tensions of staying in movement and the desire to settle somewhere propel the work. The studio also emphasizes art as a social practice (Knight, 2008; Sunday, 2015) rather than primarily an individual affair. The arts are meaningful not just in the doing, making, or unfolding of a work, but also in how a culture, ways of being together, and a sense of belonging are created through the arts. After about 8 years of this work we are beginning to understand some of the movements, emergences, and potentialities of the studio, and some of how the studio works. In this chapter I hope to articulate some of these things.

1 Studio Inspirations

I came to studio and atelierista work as an artist and educator, with an understanding of artistic or studio practices as research processes. Throughout graduate studies I had been deeply engaged in thinking about art practice as research, with a focus on a/r/tography (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Springgay et al. 2008), a form of artistic and practice-based research that brings together the practices of the artist, researcher, and teacher. According to Irwin (2013), a/r/tography is a methodology that is at once a creative activity, a pedagogical strategy, and a research inquiry: a generative, productive, artistic, form of research-creation. For the most part this learning took place within the company of others, in a dynamic community of other artist-researcher-teachers. It was a vibrant time of considering art practice, and the materiality and processes of artistic creation, as instances and acts of research. These experiences continue to influence the studio's orientation and evolution, and my work with the children and teachers.

My first encounter with the infant-toddler and pre-schools in Reggio Emilia was a deeply moving experience and provoking encounter. In this context the studio, or atelier, is understood to be at the heart of learning (Vecchi, 2010) and is conceptualized as a place of research, rich in artistic languages and materials, where "things dance together with one another" (Vecchi, 2010, p. 15). In the schools in Reggio Emilia, in the children's artistic processes, productions and projects, and in the intense commitment to taking the arts seriously I could see many resonances with the ideas and research-creation process I had been working with, and began to understand the roles of artist, teacher, and researcher, as shared and interchangeable between children, atelierista, and educators. There was something deeply familiar in their work, yet at the same time profoundly moving in the scope of the educational project, the collective nature of it, and the sense of Italian solidarity. Each subsequent visit has presented new perspectives and rich creative stimuli and I continue to be inspired and motivated by their ongoing inventiveness, artistry, and innovation.

As I began work at the Children's Centre, implementing what I had encountered in Reggio Emilia was impossible. At first this appeared as a practical problem as I couldn't see how to engage educators and children in similar practices without a history together and a deeper sense of art as a social practice. I could also see that a bodied, textured, haptic, sensational (Springgay, 2011) *experience* of the arts and affective knowing was missing, or had been very undeveloped, in favour of more instrumental and representational purposes. For instance, paint was used *for* individual children's expressions, drawing was used *to* convey a child's ideas. This was beautiful in itself, but the rich vibrancies of relational-material experimentations, knowing through making, taking time to dwell in the materiality of the processes, and a bodied, experiential, heart-felt, drawn out, *lingering* understanding of art as a material practice was undeveloped. This impossibility soon became a highly generative situation as it shifted the focus from developing practices *for* children to a much more collective engagement where an educator's own sense of artistry, and our artistic lives together would be nurtured as well. The studio then was shaped both by the vision of what was possible (for Reggio has shown the possibility of it) and the impossibility of it, resulting in processes of inventing and creating as we go along, slowly gaining a feel for the fluxes and flows of materials and children's divergent approaches, and how we might move in concert with these rhythms. Ingold (2013) describes this kind of attunement as "the art of inquiry" (p. 11), where we "follow the movements of beings and things" (p. 11), and in turn learn to respond with increasing discernment and insight.

2 Emergence and Experimentation

Much of my early work as an atelierista took place during the daily activities of the Centre and focused on fostering the educators' dispositions to watch and to listen with an emphasis on learning from the children's processes and engagements (see

Kind, 2010). In this way, the first movements were to pay attention: giving close attention to children's artistic processes, approaches, strategies of working through the problems they encounter, and how the materials moved with the children and moved us in return. It was a slow work of noticing. Then after several years, it became necessary to develop an actual studio space. From the beginning the studio wasn't conceptualized as a space of production, an 'art room' or area where children would work on projects and artistic creations, or engage in specific art learning. Rather it was imagined as a space of collective inquiry that afforded both children and educators time to dwell with materials, linger in artistic processes, and work together on particular ideas and propositions. Individual ideas and interests and the singularity of each child were certainly valued, yet it was the collective and collaborative which we wanted to nurture, creating a relational space of investigating and creating together; constructing, making, and composing understandings. We wanted to resist superficial approaches to project work and easy adoption of 'Reggio inspired' approaches. Thus the studio was not conceptualized as a *container* for creative acts and materials, but an emergent space itself inherently creative and creating and constantly becoming. I was not interested in filling the room, preparing it, or creating a specified "art space" but wanted to see how it would take shape in its use. These concerns echo Springgay and Rotas' (2015) question of how a classroom might operate as a work of art, and how we might linger in the "vibratory spaces of activeness that are co- and re-composed" (p. 557).

We began by putting things into play such as paper, seed pods and other natural materials, magnifying glass, stethoscope, charcoal, graphite, and so on. Not deciding ahead of time what something is or should be, what it should mean or be for, but putting things into play as a question: What happens if? What will this do? What do you think about this? We spent extended times responding to the materials and drawing together with the children as we tried to create a collective space of mutual and reciprocal engagement. We were careful to draw *with* and not *for* children, drawing alongside them in a sensitive engagement with the children's marks, movements, inventions, and forms of representation. Creating a collective practice takes time as adults we needed to learn to move *with* children's movements and enter this dance together (Manning, 2007). This of course is not without risk, as an adult could easily dominate in unintended ways and a child could come to rely on the more sophisticated imagery of the adult, undermining their own confidence and agency in addressing representational problems and discouraging children's trust in their own instincts and pictorial inventions. Yet we also resist child centered practices and romantic notions of a child's artistry as an individual, inner, and private affair, best left un-influenced by an adult. Art as social practice emphasizes art as relational and as a "set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than as an independent and private space" (Bourriaud, 2002, pp.112–113). And so in drawing together we try to *move with* children's emerging imagery and experimentations, aware that this will be full of difficulty. Our drawing together is always held in this tension, yet we have found intense generativity in dwelling in these tension-filled spaces.

What emerged from this was a particular pedagogical orientation of growing attunement, thoughtfulness and tact (van Manen, 1991), listening (Rinaldi, 2006), attention to children's meanings (van Manen, 2002) and the life and movements of materials (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2017). This manifested itself in rich experiences for the children and in the pleasure we experienced as we, atelierista and educators, learned to play along. Often teachers are supported in developing knowledge, skills, and artistic abilities so they can instruct children and lead them in their artistic growth and development, or try out ideas so they can implement similar projects with children. This places an educator as the guide for a child's development. While a teacher's own learning is vital, and educators should be watchful of children's growth and learning, we aimed to embrace an image of a child who is deeply interested in their own artistic learning, the protagonist of their own growth and development (Rinaldi, 2006), with a desire to have their drawings, for example, recognized and received by others. The studio nurtures this for educators as well, creating a space for teachers to learn alongside children, to experiment with materials, and echo some of the children's processes in a search for their own sense of pleasure and delight in drawing or art making. Trying to keep a growing sense of artistry alive for ourselves as well as for the children has been a vital aspect of our work together.

And so we drew together a lot in the early years, and still do, gathering with the children around a single sheet of paper covering the large low table in the studio, sometimes singing and storytelling, playing with each other's movements and lines, experimenting with materials, and attending to each other's marks, rhythms, sonorous elements, enactments, and pictorial representations. As we drew we were in search of ways of being responsive to children's divergent drawing and mark making processes. We didn't begin knowing how this would look or what the outcomes would be, yet were committed to trying. Thus over time the studio became an experience, an event in the making. The *experience* (O'Donoghue, 2015) of the studio became a moving sonorous, gestural, textural, material, improvisational "dance of attention" (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 5); a dance of attention that is concerned with the "immediacy of mutual action" (p. 6). It is "not attentiveness *of* the human *to* the environment but attentiveness of the environment to its own flowering" (p. 6). Manning and Massumi describe this as:

> an intertwining of fields of emergent experience not yet defined as this or that. Not yet defined as this or that, yet their qualities already interact. The fields, their immediacy, play off each other, lending their qualities to each other, composing a single field of mutual action, of co-fusion and changing contrast: co-motion. An immediate commotion of qualitative texturing. A generative holding pattern already moving qualitatively toward an experience in the making. (pp. 4–5)

As we drew together we found unique delight in the struggle and difficulty of drawing and this "co-motion" (p.4) with children. We felt pleasure in the intense and immersive concentration, the sense of being fully present in the moment when all else seems to fall away, the struggle of working through to some kind of satisfying (or perhaps more accurately, a not-quite-yet satisfying) point of pause, the surprise, and sometimes even the disappointment of seeing what has taken shape, and the pleasure of marks on the page and on our hands. The moment of pause offers

both a delight in the imperfection of what has emerged, and at the same time an anticipation of what might be yet still to come. Each drawing-event seemed to offer the hope of being propelled towards another yet to come, and perhaps even more resonant drawing-event. We entered together the gestural-heart-felt-bodied-experienced-rhythmic-movements of drawing and our perception of drawing becoming enlarged as we became more attuned to children's gestural and sonorous enactments and the rhythms and movements of drawing with others. There also is a need to keep in motion, especially if we think of drawing as a practice, never quite arriving, always moving towards a more attuned perception. We found also a unique pleasure in the struggle of drawing. To teach how to solve this difficulty, as if it could be easily solved, would miss the generativity of it and so we try to stay in it and the experience of drawing together. We were inspired as well by Berger's (2011) description of drawing as a "desire to get closer and closer" (p. 156). He writes, "When I'm drawing I feel a little closer to the way the birds navigate when flying, or to hares finding shelter in a pasture, or to fish knowing where to spawn, or trees finding a way to the light, or bees constructing their cells" (p. 149). Through drawing we are drawn closer to children's movements, enactments, and concerns and we become curious what children seem to be drawn to, and how drawing *draws* them into particular entanglements and compositions.

3 Drawing Games

Much of the work in the studio has evolved in relation to these times of drawing and creating together. In this project I am working with Pritti, an educator from the 4-year-old room, and a small group of children who come to the studio one morning a week. The number of children varies each week, usually around four to eight children and occasionally one other educator or practicum student. There is a core group of children who come each week along with a few others who are new to the studio or participate only occasionally. Pritti and I have worked together on various arts based projects for several years and as is our typical rhythm, we begin our time together in the fall with fairly open explorations while trying to find our way to a rich topic and generative idea so that we can settle somewhere. We decide ahead of time what materials and processes would be most generative to start with and begin with fluid and "intra-active" (Lenz Taguchi, 2010) play-full explorations. Rautio and Winston (2015) describe intra-active playing as "never 'free' but always interdependent, never 'guided' but always generative and becoming. Intra-active play is about being 'in it' together: becoming human beings in relation to one another and to the world" (p. 17). We have a purpose, an open and fluid structure to our time together, and over the course of the term develop a more refined focus.

During this initial exploratory time we find ourselves compelled by the story *There's a Nightmare in My Closet* (Mayer, 1968). The story has been told and retold countless times in the years that the children have been in the Children's Centre and it slips into the studio in children's conversations, enactments, and narrations,

in the images and metaphors that are evoked, the drawings and clay constructions that take shape, and it refuses to leave. Pritti and I are hesitant, I perhaps more than her, about welcoming monsters and nightmares into the studio explorations as we think we have more generative directions to pursue. But we are compelled by the children's insistent fascination. Each week the nightmare joins us so we begin to pay attention.

We make this attention visible by projecting images from the book on the wall so they appear life-size and invite the children to narrate what they see happening. In the story a boy lies in bed and a nightmare hides in the closet. The children respond excitedly to the projections, and a rush of dramatization, eager elaborations, and conversations ensue. We then turn to drawing to help us make sense of some of the things children are engaging with. In this way we bring drawing into play. Drawing has the potential to mediate ideas and as a language and medium for thinking and communicating (New, 2007) it offers time to slow down, to pause in the rush of interactions, and to attend to the particular aspects of the story that compel the children. It also makes the children's narrations and propositions visible, giving us something to talk about (Kind & Lee, 2017).

As children draw we notice that drawing a figure lying down presents particular difficulties. We bring attention to this and begin to talk with the children about problems in representation, bringing attention to these points of difficulty and hesitation. Olsson (2009) describes experimentation as "staying in the process of constructing problems" (p. 5) and proposes that while the teacher has the responsibility to listen carefully to children, there also is the obligation for "arranging situations where children can work with their questions and problems" (p. 11). We begin to entertain the question *what if* we acknowledged that drawing is a problem, settled into the challenges, and began to see the joy in the difficulty and struggles? Experienced the creative pleasure of working with, in, and through problems? We recognize that representation is a problem and problematic in so many ways as it asks us to engage with what it means to render a representation of the world, from whose view, whose understandings, from what position; what it means to look at, or look with; who or what is represented, and from which perspective. There are histories in looking and the objectifying power of the gaze and in a very practical sense, it is difficult to render in two dimensions the richness of a multi-dimensional, lived, storied, textured world. We, adults and children, are together in this. We want to orient ourselves to this difficulty while giving space to the pleasure children seem to find in encountering certain challenges. And while experimentation invites us to think beyond representation (O'Sullivan, 2006), to what is activated, to what things do or become, rather than what things are, this does not mean we do away with representation. We play, experiment, and invent *with* it.

In children's drawings we can trace a trajectory of representational development from first marks to recognizable figures. Each movement in this trajectory is characterized by an encounter with particular difficulties and the puzzle of how to make marks increasingly more differentiated so they are recognizable and intelligible to others, and satisfying to oneself. We bring what we know of children's artistic development into play, not so we can teach skills or govern development, but to help

us appreciate some of the representational difficulties children encounter. To draw, and to stay in the process of drawing means you will encounter problems and have to somehow work though them. This working through is essential in order to keep drawing. Thus we begin one of our morning together in the studio with a conversation:

Sylvia: "What have been some of the problems we've had as we've been drawing?"
Oden: "Drawing the boy in the bed!"
Sylvia: "Chloe, do you remember the problem you had? You were trying to draw: how the boy would look when he's lying in the bed."
Simon: "…maybe lying down."
Sylvia: "We didn't have problems drawing people standing up…"
Simon: "…but lying down…"
Sylvia: "Yes…lying down was becoming difficult."
Chloe: "We have to draw a bed…draw a square…"
Simon: "Draw the bed first!"
Sylvia: "There's going to be a bed…"
Aiden: "…and a big boy…"
Sylvia: "…and he's going to be lying down."
Chloe: "Do we draw the head first or do we draw the pillow first?"
Aiden: "The head first, then the pillow."
Chloe (jumping around excitedly): "No no no!! The pillow first; that way the head will be on top of the pillow."

The puzzle of how to draw a boy lying down prompts many assertions and experiments of how to draw particular elements and in which order, and the story morphs and changes as their next set of drawings take shape. Drawn nightmare families, belly buttons, moustaches, and storms emerge in a dynamic interplay along with constant elements of the story: a nightmare, a closet, and a boy in the bed. Images and ideas move rapidly around the circle of children drawing at the table as they take up each other's comments, propositions, inventions, and speculations.

The project is propelled further by a decision to try drawing what Aiden looks like lying down in a bed. A table is transformed into a bed, Aiden lies down and a blanket is tucked around him. Maddie gently pats his arm as if lulling him to sleep, Oden pats his head, other children run their hands along his back, walk around, climb on top of him, and sit on the floor underneath the table-bed. There are recursive movements of touching and drawing as children move to the drawing-bed and back to their chairs and places on the floor. For several weeks we engage with the difficulty of drawing a figure lying down as the children take turns lying in the bed, posing for each other, while others draw and find ways to work through this difficulty. A rhythm of drawing emerges: a table is moved, a bed is made, a child gets in, blankets are tucked around, and aspects of the story are enacted. We then settle into drawing the child in the bed who, like the boy in the story, is anticipating the appearance of the nightmare. We have used drawing boards as they can be moved and children can decide how close they want to be and as the weeks progress, the draw-

ing boards move from the studio table to the floor, to and from the bed, inching closer and closer to the child on the bed. There are multiple divergences and small inventions in these repetitions, through which the drawing-bed becomes a center of activity with both the drawer and the one being drawn in relation. Each week Pritti joins the group of children in the circle of chairs around the bed and draws alongside the children.

Still, drawing from observation is not just about creating a likeness. There is the act of seeing, of *really* looking, the repeated movements of glancing between the subject and the paper, making marks that correspond to what is seen, and inventing satisfactory graphic equivalences. There also is the intimate sense of touch, of *touching* the subject through one's drawn lines and with one's hands. Each drawing becomes a tactile dialogue, a bodied, felt, *relational* encounter. The drawings become, not a picture *of* someone, rather traces of a story, echoes of a nightmare hiding nearby, and indications of person being looked at and encountered. There is a rhythm as well between posing and drawing – feeling in one's body the pose, the pleasure of relaxing in bed in the center of the room, and the playfulness of settling into a pose that is perceived as being difficult for the drawers. Taking turns drawing and posing lends itself to an empathetic relationship between being the author of one's own drawing and the subject of another's drawing. Directions are exchanged between the child in the bed and those doing the drawings:

"Close your eyes! We have to figure out how to draw you with your eyes closed."
"Look his feet are sticking out from the blanket!"
"I can only see one ear and one hand. How can I do that?"
"Look at me! Look at how my hands are behind my head!"
"See! I'm wiggling my hands. Try to draw my hands!"
"Draw my eyes! I don't want to be invisible!"

There is pleasure in being noticed, a strong desire to be seen and heard (van Manen, 2002), and to be *recognized* and acknowledged (Hoyuelos, 2013).

4 Staying in the Movement

One morning we gather in a circle to review our processes and to talk again about the challenges we have encountered in drawing. We begin the conversation in a circle and with the energy of the dialogue chairs move, children walk back and forth, turn around on their chairs, sitting backwards and forwards. There is constant movement. Like the children and the chairs, the conversation moves in many directions. By now Oden is sitting backwards in his chair so I slip a drawing board between the back of the chair and his forward facing body. The child, chairs, drawing boards, bed, play together and evoke images of other life-drawing studios (Fig. 1).

In the studio configuration there are strong echoes of images from art history of a reclining figure surrounded by male artists. The 'look' suggests that we are in a

Fig. 1 Studio drawing

conventional configuration with children trying to render an objective view of what the figure looks like. But something else is happening here. A rhythm evolves of children moving back and forth from their chairs to the child in the bed, showing their drawings and waiting to see how they will be received. The bed has a particular magnetism, drawing children closer and closer as they show their images to each other and share the small inventions and variances that they've added to enliven their drawings. Oden draws three monsters in love, and Simon draws a bed that turns into a bunk bed, which continues to evolve into layers of beds: first a single bed, then a "bunk bed", then a "nunk bed" and finally a "funk bed". We see beyond the conventional, the potential of the objectifying gaze, and the passivity of the one being observed, to something else and find that the bed-position emerges as a dynamic matrix, a powerful position. And each drawing a record of an exchange.

Pritti joins the small line of children and approaches Chloe in the bed with her drawing. "What do you think?" she asks. Chloe considers Pritti's drawing. Her eyes scan the drawn figure on the bed, moving top to bottom and up again. "You have to draw stairs up to here," her finger indicating a distance between the floor and bed. Without hesitating Chloe takes the black sharpie from Pritti's hand and begins to draw bold lines on her paper. She considers what she's doing and names it as a ladder. "It's a ladder," she says, continuing to draw. "If the nightmare's under the bed and I don't want to get caught by the nightmare…um, if I don't have a ladder I'll just get caught by the nightmare."

Chloe: "You could draw the nightmare."
Pritti: "Where would I draw the nightmare?"
Chloe, indicating a space beside the ladder: "Under the bed".

Pritti moves aside with these instructions and Maddie, Nayla and Simon move around eager to share their drawings. Maddie moves her board in front of Chloe. She's drawn a closet with the door cut open and a nightmare, drawn directly on the board, hiding behind. They repeatedly play with opening and closing the drawn and cut out paper door, laughing, shivering, and hiding their faces as the nightmare appears. "It's too scary," Chloe says, laughing as she passes the board back to Maddie and Nayla.

Simon: "Chloe, want to see mine?"

His drawing has two side-by-side beds, each with a figure lying inside, and a rectangle enclosing two ghost-like figures. The rectangle has lines like a ladder leading up to it. He points to each figure in turn.

Simon: "Here's you and you and here's the silly nightmare and here's the scary nightmare."

Chloe considers the drawing in front of her, traces her finger over the ladder-like lines. Her question recalls her previous suggestions on Pritt's drawing.

Chloe: "You did the stairs to go up to the door?"
Simon: "Yah!"
Chloe: "There's two Chloe's in this bed?"
Simon: "Yah and two nightmares!" (Laughing) "What?" (points to the two drawn Chloes) "I drawed that wrong!!"

They both find the idea of drawing things wrong and bodies multiplying quite funny and laugh together. Chloe then smooths her hands over the paper and points to the two nightmares. "You have to draw dots on this one and stripes on that one," she says. "No…stripes on *this* one and dots on this one." Simon touches the drawn nightmares in turn. "Stripes on this one and dots on this one? Okay!" Chloe reiterates her suggestions with a degree of certainty and reinforces her directions by pointing to the figures. "Stripes. Dots. Stripes. Dots." Simon takes his drawing board and returns to his chair repeating "Stripes, dots, stripes, dots…".

There are constant exchanges at the bed and Simon returns with stripes and dots drawn on to each of the nightmares.

Simon: "Do you want to see mine now?"

Chloe pauses with Simon's drawing, smiling as she considers the emerging images.

Simon: "Two Chloes and two nightmares: What, how did that get there? How did another Chloe get there?"

This again strikes them both as very funny. Chloe touches each of the drawn Chloes. In her touch she seems to turn towards Simon and remembers his bunk beds. Manning (2007) describes touch as a gesture of turning towards another, a

desire to be affected. She writes, “To touch is always to touch something, someone. I touch not by accident, but with a determination to feel you, to reach you, to be affected by you.” (p. 12). In responding to his drawing Chloe recognizes Simon’s earlier bunk bed inventions. In this way Chloe doesn’t just look *at* Simon’s drawing in objective dis-interest, but looks *with* him and alongside him as she considers his particular interests and orientations.

“Do a bunk bed,” she requests.
Simon responds, “A bunk bed?”

Chloe, traces her finger underneath the two side-by-side beds of two Chloes and suggests, “Do…do…do a….um…” She hesitates as she touches the two Chloes as she’s presented with a visual problem of how to turn two side by side beds into bunk beds. “Ask Sylvia for another piece of paper and draw an alligator under the bed.” In this response she brings her own strategies of drawing into play and joins her approach with Simon’s. Over the months of drawing together we noticed that her approach was to draw until a problem point, then take another piece of paper and, starting from the beginning, draw until a new difficulty appeared, then begin again. We see Chloe’s strategies and approaches join up with Simon’s past drawings and the storyline of another nightmare story where there is an alligator under the bed. Simon returns sometime later, having decided to draw bunk beds rather than an alligator. He shows Chloe his image of a tall thin triangular shape divided into more than 12 sections that are stacked on top of each other with small figures inside each one (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 Simon and Chloe

Chloe: "Do the eyes, you can do the eyes."
Simon: "Uhh, I didn't…I don't want to do the eyes."
Chloe: "There's no eyes?"
Simon: "No."
Chloe: "You can't see the eyes?"
Simon: "No. The eyes are invisible!"

Chloe considers this and seems to accept it as a plausible situation.

Simon: "These here, these are all you in a tower!"

Chloe runs her fingers up and down the tall bunk bed-tower. "Do a ladder so I can get up to the top."

Simon: "A ladder?"
Chloe: "Give me the pen I'll draw the ladder."

Chloe takes the Sharpie from Simon's hand and opens the cap.

Simon: "Yah the ladder…but I want to draw the ladder too!"
Chloe: "I'll show you."

Chloe begins to draw lines stretching from the top of the tower of beds down to the bottom of the page. Simon begins to protest at this.

Simon: "But I already know how to draw ladders. I already know how to do that. Chloe….Chloe, I already knew how to do ladders! But…" (he takes the marker from her hand) "there needs to be a taller ladder."
He extends Chloe's ladder to the top of the bed-tower, stands back, and asks "How you think?"

Here at the bed we become attuned to the children's desire to refine their representations and to make them more and more intelligible to each other, and the desire of the child in the bed to recognize themselves and to see themselves imaged in the drawings. There are engaging challenges of learning to consider and respond to each other's drawings and entertain each other's propositions, while envisioning other possibilities. In this way drawing is "an exercise in orientation" (Berger, 2011, p. 149). It seems they are not so much reading for meaning or for the narrative elements, although these are certainly at play, but for how to extend each other's work, insert their own particular views and desires into it, connect to the orientation of the drawer, and engage with the processes of continuously creating new difficulties to work through. According to Merleau-Ponty (1962), to be sentient is to open up to the world, to touch and be touched by the things of the world in an active interplay between the perceiver and perceived, or drawer and the drawn. We become aware as well that what seems to matter to the children is to keep things in motion, to keep drawing: to stay in the movements and the event of drawing. In this there is the continual necessity of encountering, working through, and inventing new challenges, to keep in the movement towards increasing complexity while provoking each other, and enlarging the choices that might be made.

To keep things in movement, the children have constant proposals for how they could pose problems for drawing. One day the children play with Lily's suggestion and imagine that the nightmare could be in the bed. They sit around the empty drawing-bed with their drawing boards and draw imagined nightmares lying there. The rhythms of drawing repeat but this time evolve into heated discussions and arguments as children notice others appropriating what they consider to be their own ideas and imagery. We are surprised by this as the tone of the studio has tended to be much more collaborative. Finally, as the discussions continue, Lily sighs and exclaims, "I think I made a mistake. We need someone in the bed!" We see in this children's desire to have their work received by someone and to carry on the conversations. To stay in the play with the elusive nightmare and each other. We find as well that others are needed to propose possible suggestions so that ideas can be more fully realized and multiplied, and kept in motion (Kind & Lee, 2017).

5 A Studio of Delight

Ingold (2015) writes of the choreography of knotting – a rhythmic process of circular looping gestures that gathers in a material while simultaneously creating an opening through which it can be further propelled. The loop and twist motions of knotting that catch and propel, give insight into "the way forms are held together and kept in place within what would otherwise be formless" (p. 14). I begin to consider the movements and pauses of the studio as acts of joining and knotting. Knots are also always in the middle of things and "their ends are always on the loose, rooting for other lines to tangle with" (p. 22). What seems to hold us here, in this project, over several months, are these entangled and knotting tensions that converge at the bed (Fig. 3).

Ingold (2013) describes improvisation as a rhythmic quality of working with the ways of the world. Following Deleuze and Guattari's ideas, he views artists and makers as itinerant wayfarers. Their work is not *iteration*, a repetition or re-presentation of the world, but *itineration* as they join with the forces and flows of the world. In the studio we join with the force and flow of drawing. The studio emerges as an event-full place in the play of children, educators, atelierista, the nightmare story-lines, the trajectory of children's increasing fluidity in graphic representation, the difficulty of drawing alligators, ladders, bodies lying down, the portability of Sharpies, drawing boards and chairs, the bed in the center, the pillow and blanket, speculations on where the nightmare might be and how it might appear, the child anticipating receiving the work of another, and their intense desire to stay in the movement of things. These things dance together, or as Ingold proposes, move in rhythmic *correspondence* with each other, as things are entangling, joining, and knotting *with* each other. This is not so much the and-and-and of assemblage, but a with-with-with: a choreography of "alternating tensions and resolutions" (Ingold, 2015, p. 23). The puzzles children encounter in their trajectories of learning to draw

Fig. 3 Pritti in the drawing-bed

become lines that inter-weave, twist together, are held in tension, knot and entangle. Like lines they are "joined up" (Ingold, 2015, p. 23), with the joinings establishing "relations not of articulation but of *sympathy*. Like lines of polyphonic music whose harmony lies in their alternating tension and resolution, the parts possess an inner feel for one another" (p. 23). In this way the harmonies of each part "reside in the way that each strand, as it issues forth, coils around others and is coiled in its turn, in a counter-valence of equal and opposite twists which hold it together and prevent it from unravelling" (p.11).

These metaphors of knotting and coiling help give shape to the studio and my work with the children and educators. I begin to look for ways of bringing elements in the studio together in such a way that they loop and twist around each other and hold each other in generative tension. There is intense pleasure in this work, in the difficulty and complexity of it, in the creative struggles of trying to figure things out and become more attuned to what is going on, and in trying to understand more of what experimentation does and brings about, so that we might more deliberately work with the processes of knotting and join with the emergence of the studio and what it (and we) still might become. This is thought in movement, or "thought in the act" (Manning & Massumi, 2014), where every work is an experiment, a process of invention and thinking otherwise. As Ingold (2015) describes, this movement is not a support or addition to knowing, "moving *is* knowing" (p. 47). And what characterizes increasing expertise and fluidity with drawing and our work in the studio is not content or specific art learning, but "greater sensitivity to cues in the environment

and a greater capacity to respond to these cues with judgement and precision" (p. 48). We see this expressed both in the work of the children and in ourselves as we move together with the studio's emergence.

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‘A Cool Place Where We Make Stuff’: Co-curating Relational Spaces of Muchness

Jaye Johnson Thiel

1 ‘A Cool Place Where We Make Stuff’: Co-curating Relational Spaces of Muchness

For the past 4 years, I’ve embraced the gift of working-playing-researching-creating at a community center nestled in the outskirts of a small southeastern college town. A working-class community of Color (self-identifying as approximately 60% Latinx/40% African-American), the folks living in the neighborhood around the community center (affectionately known as the Playhouse) have gradually opened their lives to those of us who visit and facilitate activities at the center. As our lives entangle, we have shared laughter, hardships, ingenuity, care, frustration, creativity, food, tears, and a myriad of other things, some of which, I am sure, I am woefully unaware. The Playhouse and its surrounding community is a work of art, full of productive energy that is sometimes creative and at other times exhausting.

Over the years we have had several adult visitors come to the Playhouse (educators, other community center leaders, preservice teachers, etc.). Some of these visitors are there to work with and learn from children, others are operating their own community spaces and are observing our collective efforts, and a few are engaging in their own research projects. For each initial visit, we invite the children, rather than the adult leaders, to give a guided tour. Simply put, the center is ultimately a space of shared ownership and the children are best equipped to showcase the work they do while they are there. One day while I was tidying up materials on the shelves, Tywana (one of youth who comes to create-make-do-be at the Playhouse on a regular basis) was giving one of these guest tours. I’d heard many different neighborhood children give the tours before and they always seem to talk about the artful practices they engage with in the various rooms of the Playhouse which

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include spaces for building, painting, designing, cooking, reading, writing, and thinking. Typically, children showcase their various creations and explain the things they often do in each workspace. But as Tywana stood in the main common area with her guests, she made a couple of statements that I found incredibly insightful regarding the space and the work we all do there.

Stretching her arms out past her sides to indicate inclusion of the space and everything in it she explained, “The Playhouse is a cool place where we make stuff.”

A few seconds later pointing to me she added, “They also like to have fun.” In these two short sentences Tywana spoke profoundly to the spirit of the Playhouse. Her words embodied the careful Reggio-inspired planning and decolonizing ethic those of us at the Playhouse embrace as part of our commitments to working with young folks. Not only did she proudly shoulder the responsibilities of tour guide but she also articulated adults as powerful collaborators in art-making practice.

To hear Tywanna define the space as one of a collaborative artful community was invigorating. This had not always been the case at the Playhouse. Before my colleagues and I stepped in, the space was run by a national organization that clung tightly to rules, regulations, and control over the space, bodies and objects found in it. Thus, open art explorations weren’t part of the daily schedule and art experiences rarely consisted of more than prepackaged crafts. Keeping this in mind, it was of utmost importance that we didn’t fall into the same trap of colonizing bodies as groups before us had done. In other spaces, my colleagues and I have written in great detail about the ways we listened to the rhythms of the community to create guiding principles for our work at the Playhouse (Jones et al., 2016), and my co-director and I have written about our deliberate attempts to shift literacies of race and class through material change during the first few months of transitioning from one space to another (Thiel & Jones, 2017). At times, we struggled (and still do) with all the conceivable ways that community space is “preliminary, anticipated, challenged, unrepresentable, inoperative, non-existent, possibly impossible” (Bippus, Huber, & Richter, 2011, p. 2). But we knew we ultimately wanted a space where children were treated as the competent, capable, creative, and curious humans they are. We wanted openness, accessibility, and limited adult intervention and we wanted to cultivate a social-class-sensitive community center that didn’t shy away from issues of equity and justice. The Playhouse aspired to be curated as something different, something unexpected, something joyful, something that embraced the seemingly impossible, and yet….

2 Making Impossible Things Seem Possible

How do we attempt to make the impossible possible? It isn’t easy. Personal experience has taught me how tricky it can be. Historically speaking, such attempts often get wrapped up in systems laden with deficit approaches and normalizing motives that all too often end in violence to everything in their path, similar to the

nothingness in *The Neverending Story* (Ende, 1993). This happens for several reasons: acquiescing, remedialism, conquest, domestication, mastery, etc.…. Educational research (and the lived experiences of the world) have documented these fabrications in depth.

As a community researcher, I often grapple with my own material-discursive role in producing spaces for and with children. There is something very colonizing and capitalistic about cultivating space, similar to the ways in which Western civilization has taken land and developed it agriculturally, industrially, and domestically. Walking into a community to open a maker-space for children doesn’t seem much different in the broader scheme of things. And perhaps, there are always threads of ‘settling-the-other’ in creating any space that children (or other community members for that matter) didn’t curate solely for themselves. Communities and research are not immune to capitalism’s hunger and sooner or later both must deal with the ways it ravishes and nips at the heels of good intentions. Even the concept of curating has experienced its bite, as at times, curating is used as a hyper-capitalist enterprise encouraging consumers to buy things as part of curating the lifestyles and images they want. Conversely, curating has lots of other possibilities for communities of practice once it is unhinged from its partnership with capital. But how? What are the co-constructed relationships that flitter and fly in communal spaces such as the Playhouse? What becomes possible when children are seen as co-curators of space, rather than passive users of pre-determined utilities? These are questions that will guide this chapter and the thinking that unfolds through the making of its words.

3 Art in Spaces It Normally Isn’t Found

Educational endeavors feed this notion that learning is restricted to designated spaces of teaching. Basically, this implies school, school buildings, and schooling of any kind. However, pedagogy is slippery and can be found in the most unlikely and impossible of places. In fact, public pedagogy is happening around us everywhere and every day, in grocery stores, churches, street corners, open fields, and dense woodlands. Pedagogy can be found just about everywhere. So why would we think that art is not lurking in these same spaces? Isn’t pedagogy art itself?

Over the years, my work in education has led me to believe that the absence of aesthetics in pedagogical design is one way the alliance of teaching and schools has formed. I am not referring to aesthetics as a Bourdieu (1984) distinction which prioritizes what is fashionable and pleasing based on social class systems and the socio-cultural construct of economics. Nor am I referring to a perceived dichotomy of what is/isn’t beautiful or what is/isn’t art. Rather, I am speaking to a more relational aesthetic (Bourriaud, 2002). A relational aesthetic is defined as, “A set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space” (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 113).

Furthermore, Ceppi and Zini (2003) reminds us that:

> When we talk about relational space, we mean an integrated space in which the qualities are not strictly aesthetic but are more closely related to "performance" features. This means that the space is not composed of functional zones but of the fluidization of functional zones. In the relational space, the predominant feature is that of the relationships it enables, the many specialized activities that can be carried out there, and the information and cultural filters that can be activated within the space. (p. 3)

Ceppi and Zini (2003) go on to add that relational space "derives…from a way of seeing, reading, studying, and interpreting reality, and representing it with critical awareness" (p. 4).

The Playhouse was built on this promise, one that departs from and entangles with the relations of a host of contextual bodies including the material, spatial, social, and political. Where Bourriaud (2002) and Ceppi and Zini (2003) may have been focused on the human/artist as the conduit of these relational experiences, feminist new materialism offers us a way to explore these other actants as conative in their own right, "seeking alliances with other bodies to enhance vitality" (Bennett, 2011). In this way, relational aesthetics produces the everydayness at the Playhouse as art itself and uses the pulsating vivacity and liveliness of the community as pedagogical apparatuses on which curriculum emerges. The emphasis, then, becomes the ways the space is using-used not only by humans but by all living and nonliving things. Likewise, Dunlop (2009) reminds us that:

> Curriculum is found in the human eyes, in rivers, in animals, in the language of music, poetry, art, science, history, anthropology, in what is public, intimate, beloved. These are the stories lodged in the house of the earth and in your body. (p. 16)

Recognizing stories as being lodged in the Playhouse earth, walls, objects, history, people, etc., it was important to listen to and acknowledge the ways curating is always already included in the people-places-things in the community and consult these stories as the philosophies on which the Playhouse space is co-constructed, setting the conditions for possibilities to bubble. For this reason, it was the geographies of the children and the community that we looked toward for guidance (Jones et al., 2016) in planning and creating the Playhouse. Additionally, we considered the (1) physical space by making changes that allowed for openness and transparency, (2) the materials by contemplating accessibility and variety, and (3) the community discourse regarding the community center by asking the children and families for their visionary input. I have come to see this work as co-curating or co-curatorial.

In *Ways of Curating* Hans Ulrich Obrist (2014) writes,

> the act of curating, which at its most basic is simply about connecting cultures, bringing their elements into proximity to each other—the task of curating is to make junctions, to allow different elements to touch. You might describe it as the attempted pollination of culture, or a form of map-making that opens new routes through a city, a people or a world. (p. I)

He continues later in the book by explaining that curating is not about handing a room over to an artist and asking the artist to fill it up. Nor is it a job where the

exhibit-maker serves as the sole creative voice in what is curated and showcased. Rather, he suggests:

> The process always starts with a conversation, in which [one should] ask the artist what their unrealized projects are, and then the task is to find the means to realize them…curating could be about making impossible things possible. (p 10)

Furthermore, to curate, is to take care of. It is "cultivating, growing, pruning and trying to help people and their shared contexts to thrive" (Obrist, 2014, p. 25). However, to assume that I and those who merely visit the Playhouse each week for a few hours (rather than live in the neighborhood) are its sole caretakers is absurd and drips of conceit and colonization. This is why I've come to see the ethos of the Playhouse as co-curatorial. I use co-curating to refer to the ways bodies, space, objects, and discourse come together. As Tsing (2015) explains, "life requires the interplay of many kinds of beings" (p. vii), not just the human ones. As co-curators, people-places-things-animal-vegetable-mineral work together to cultivate, grow, prune, and help the Playhouse thrive. Rather than focus attention on controlling and containing bodies to *be* in certain ways (Make this! Do that! Sit here! Go there!) co-curating embraces the porosity and permeability that is ever-present by asking, "Let's see what happens if…".

4 Coalescence of Tiny Bubbles of Muchness

> When you draw a glass of cold water from your faucet and allow it to warm to room temperature, nitrogen and oxygen slowly come out of solution, with tiny bubbles forming and coalescing at sites of microscopic imperfections on the glass. If the atmospheric pressure happens to be falling as the water warms, the equilibrium between gas molecules leaving and joining the air/water interface becomes unbalanced and tips in favor of them leaving the water, which causes even more gas to come out of solution. Hence bubbles along the insides of your water glass. (*Scientific American,* 2016)

The above quote is the scientific explanation of why bubbles occur on the side of a water glass. I see this explanation as a nice metaphor for the ways possibilities bubble from the seemingly impossible. Through careful co-curating, I hoped relational spaces of *muchness* (Thiel, 2015, 2016) would bubble up at the Playhouse. I began to be curious about muchness, a theoretical concept I developed in part while spending time with children at the Playhouse. With its inspirational roots in my Southern, working-class girlhood and Tim Burton's reimagining of *Alice in Wonderland,* muchness is theorized as an affective moment of intellectual and creative fullness that pulsates between bodies, space, objects, and discourse. These moments are bursts of energy that are made possible through the coalescing of various entanglements within the relational event/aesthetic. Muchness is not something that is merely seen but is also felt at various speeds, forces, and flows of liveliness. Muchness flourishes between objects-spaces-materials-humans and is expressed in "how bodies turn towards things" (Ahmed, 2010, p. 31). Residuals of muchness might be pleasure, happiness, accomplishment but also might be frustration,

disequilibrium, determination. Muchness is a force that makes someone or something stick *with* and come back *for* more, despite obstacles.

Take for instance an encounter I observed in the Playhouse building room when a young boy tried to put several blocks together to create a machine that could be picked up and carried during play. He was focused and excited about the prospect of working with the blocks in the building room to create a machine that could be taken outside as one piece—not blocks but block-machine. Smooth, the blocks are not amendable to sticking together on their own. Rather, the blocks need an adjoining force. Cleverly, the child tries tape and it works—at first. But as soon as the young boy picks up the block-machine to carry it with him, it crumbles, blocks falling in all directions to the floor. After several attempts, the boy boils with frustration and throws the blocks as audible sounds of disgust bellow from his chest. But rather than walk away, he circles and then sits to pick up the blocks and looks for another way. The next time I see the young boy, he is armed with a glue gun attaching the blocks in various ways, testing each to see if the machine was sturdy. Rogue drops of hot glue occasionally drip off the glue gun tip and onto his hands but this does not discourage the work. Glue-blocks-hands keep going, going, going, until the machine is created and carried outside to join in a group play story that revolves around villains and saving the world from destruction—with a machine that was to be part of the solution to a better right now within the play universe and all the while.

Muchness swirled between the spaces of this encounter. The activity wasn't forced. It sprung up on its own. The process wasn't interrogated. It materialized unquestioned. The method wasn't directed. It unfolded in the impetus of the moment. The product wasn't critiqued (good or bad). It just was. As Ahmed (2010) points out,

> There is political struggle about how we attribute good and bad feelings, which hesitates around the apparently simple question of who introduces what feelings to whom. Feelings can get stuck to certain bodies in the very way we describe space, situations, dramas. And bodies can get stuck depending what feelings they get associated with (p. 39).

Rather than a feeling, muchness is a potential, a condition that is ever-possible under specific and various circumstances. Ever-present moments of fullness and creativity that spark and flicker from the unexpected, the unanticipated, and the unnoticed.

5 The Unlikely Pedagogy of a Mushroom

With its wild and untamable unpredictability, the mushroom is a perfect metaphor for co-curating artful spaces of muchness. Anna Tsing (2011) offers a strong theoretical concept for us to consider relational aesthetics in her study of mushrooms and what she calls the "arts of inclusion" (p. 1). She explains how plantation agriculture has exploited and strangled the wildness that once begot edible plants. Slowly, humans began to govern and tame the land and the food that grows on it.

What once grew wild and unruly now grows in manicured rows corralled in fences. It is not farfetched to believe this damage is far-reaching, well beyond agriculture. It seeps into the lives of people whose sedimented histories are tied up in the plight of plantation agronomy and industrialization and continues its attempt at usurping folks of their liveliness. Its residue can be seen in the boarded-up mines of coal country, in abandoned factory buildings, in subsidized mobile home and rental housing policies, in water supplies contaminated by lead, and in bodies marked as too dangerous, too poor, too brown, too black. At times it seems that "all that taming and mastering has made such a mess that it is unclear whether life on earth can continue" (Tsing, 2011, p. vii), yet in some spaces, it does.

Tsing's (2011) work explores the idea of "third-nature" or "what manages to live despite capitalism" (p. viii). A mushroom is one of these things. The mushroom ignored the efforts of plantation farming, pushed back, or up as the case may be. Mushrooms continue to grow outside fences and farms "emerg(ing) in damaged landscapes" (p. 18) and thriving on their own terms. Although Tsing is referring to what is considered the natural (animal-vegetable-mineral) world, in many ways, those far-reaching places and bodies that capitalism has ruined are also a third-nature. Despite capitalism's best efforts, many folks continue to emerge on their own terms in landscapes that are often vilified and forgotten.

I believe art itself is a kind of third-nature, creeping like the jasmine vine into and on the recesses and crevices of that which will stand still long enough for it to grab hold. Bourriaud (2002) echoes these sentiments when he writes that "art has no prior useful function—not that it is socially useless, but because it is available and flexible, and has an 'infinite tendency'…to the world of exchange and communication" (p. 42). Drawing attention to the ways art produces and is produced, relational aesthetics can work against (and in spite of) capitalism by rethinking what counts as art, how art is produced, and who gets to produce it. Furthermore, like Tsing's (2011) mushrooms, relational spaces of muchness can't be tamed or domesticated. In fact, it has been my experience that 'muchness farming' (or deliberately trying to make muchness) tends to strangle the possibilities muchness offers.

Tsing (2015) calls us to the art of noticing the unruly edges of third-nature. She writes,

> We hear about precarity in the news every day. People lose their jobs or get angry because they never had them. Gorillas and river porpoises hover at the edge of extinction. Rising seas swamp whole Pacific Islands. But most of the time we image such precarity to be an exception to how the world works. It's what 'drops out' from the system. What if…precarity *is* the condition of our time—or, to put it another way, what if our time is ripe for sensing precarity? What if precarity, interdeterminacy, and what we imagine as trivial are the center of the systematicity we seek? (p. 20)

When vulnerable to the other, we become aware of our own fragility and interconnectedness. We notice how world-making exists outside our progressive, commercialized, and standardized lives and how world-making bubbles in the spaces we neglect. We start to see the tiny bubbles that coalesce on the glass *and* recognize the precarious nature of bubbles—they often burst when touched.

6 On the Margins of Possible Futures

Like the mushroom, the Playhouse grows on the margins, or maybe in the folds of where capitalism acquiesces and at the same time forgets. Perhaps it seems quite simplistic to engage Tsing's (2015) concepts with that of art-making practice but there is something intensely profound in looking for the places where variance emerges from the throngs. One such variance is the discursive absence of academic progress which has never been a Playhouse goal. Rather, we gather collectively and see what comes of it, making the space one of unpredictability where "multiple futures pop in and out of possibility" (p. viii). However, the subtle and not-so-subtle material effects of political economy crop up nonetheless. We are not immune from the rote standardized worksheets that children beg us to help them with after school. Nor do we escape the pains of food insecurities faced by many in the neighborhood. Even so, muchness continues to swirl when children play-create-make-do-be.

I recall a day in the summer when relational art was at an all-time high, springing up from random encounters of people-places-things. The day started like most of the summer days at the Playhouse. After a picnic lunch on the playground, children burst into the building eager to play-create-make-do-be. Fluidity between the indoor and outdoor space produced a hive of action where children swarmed around and flitted about engaging with various art-making practices. On this particular day, warrior costumes, block towers, and paper superheroes were bubbling up in the nooks, crannies, and open spaces within and around the building. The creative energy was palpable and seemed to pulse and vibrate along with the sounds of laughter and chatter and paint splattering as tiny hands with brushes squished it against the side of paint cups vigorously.

Typically, paint is given a specific purpose. It is used to add color to canvases or possibly hide the markings of indiscretions. Paint is used for the act of, well—painting, and at the Playhouse children have access to a rainbow of paints and their kindred tools. No one needs to ask for paint. It sits on shelves in plastic bottles waiting to be pumped into small plastic cups and dipped into with brushes. But this day, paint was devious. It pushed back against self-containing notions and its possible futures.

I didn't notice the formations being fabricated with paint within the aesthetic relationship (Bourriaud, 2002) right away. I was busy working with a group of young boys as they created swords to take into playground battle. And thus, I missed the moment when paint diverged into a state of wildness. It was the drips of paint leaving a trail on the floor and leading to the back door that first garnered my attention. I confess that my first thoughts were "Crap! Someone has to clean this up." And I'm fairly certain I sighed audibly.

Following the paint-crumbs, I noticed the paint made its way down the steps and onto the red dirt. In a semi-shady, far-corner of the playground laid a striped piece of cloth serving as a blanket. On the edges of this blanket were several trays of paint (see Fig. 1).

"Perhaps our young artists chose to paint outside today," I thought.

Fig. 1 A bountiful paint picnic

But I was wrong.

Soon after, a group of girls rushed by me in skirts they had created for themselves out of fabric remnants (see Fig. 2). A few boys followed suit and created grand attire for themselves as well.

At this point, my curiosity had gotten the best of me, and as I watched one girl walk out with a stack of red plates under her arm and another girl carrying a blob of clay, I asked, “Whatcha doing?”

Smiling, they answered, “Having a birthday picnic.”

Soon, half of the folks at the Playhouse that day were circling around and sitting on the picnic blanket ready to enjoy their feast created with various shaped containers of paint and balls of clay. I watched as children mixed, tossed, and served each other food dishes on small red plates—dishes that were made of paint and clay (see Fig. 3). Using brushes as eating utensils, the group pretended as if they were lapping up and gorging on a celebratory feast (see Fig. 4). They laughed. They sang the birthday song. They “drank” cups of paint-filled tea (see Fig. 5). It was a muchy, muchy picnic that lasted over an hour and clean up was almost as long.

Before the picnic, I would have said that paint is an undomesticated, open-ended material. And in lots of ways paint is unruly in its own right. It sloshes. It stains. It drips into unintended places. But through the art of noticing, I realized the third-nature of paint. Paint doesn’t have to be used for painting. It contains all the

Fig. 2 Dressed in our picnic best

Fig. 3 An artful dish served colorfully

Fig. 4 A heaping scoop of art

Fig. 5 Paint-filled tea cups

possibilities of picnics, too. Bourriaud (2002) explains that “producing a form is to invent possible encounters, receiving a form is to create the conditions for an exchange” (p. 23). As paint dripped off plastic forks (see Fig. 6) it was clear that the picnic provided a form for receiving and inventing possibilities for paint beyond their typical use.

Fig. 6 Dripping with possibilities

It is important to mention that without the access to materials, that is, without the ability to forage (Tsing, 2011) for art-making tools, paint's possibilities may have remained bound to its predetermined utilities. The assemblage of paint-space-kids "allow[s] us to ask about communal affects without assuming them" and what "potential histories are in the making" (p. 23). Although this moment may seem trivial, instances such as these offer opportunities for children to engage in creative endeavors that work against deficit discourses that attempt to define who these kids are and who they might become through systemic raced and classed historicities.

Furthermore, the relational aesthetics of the Playhouse offers a way to "experience art's capacity for resistance" (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 31). On this occasion, the resistance was small—paint defying its boundaries and pushing against discursive productions of what paint can do. But these small moments of playful resistance ready bodies for much larger resistances that are yet-to-come. And while capitalism urges us to consume, it also warns (and expects) working-poor folks to engage in rationing. Consumerism is often under investigation and scrutiny for the working-class. Practicing the art of scarcity was of no concern at the picnic. Children embraced using paint and supplies in abundance, a marked difference from the ways they are encouraged (or discouraged) to use supplies in many formal and traditional pedagogical settings. As Ceppi and Zini (2003) write,

> A relational space is an environmental fabric rich in information, without formal rules. It is not the representation of a School, but a whole made up of many different identities, with a recognizable feel about it, in harmony with a set of values and references that guide each choice and line of research. (p. 4)

The pursuit of wildness or organic happenings cultivates the sensation of muchness at the picnic. Absence of adult intervention helps keep fantasies of mastery and

domestication at bay. Instead, art blisters and bubbles in the unfolding of the co-curatorial practices between humans-space-objects and their impossible possibilities.

7 Douse Dame Da and the Yet-to-Be

As I continue my work at the Playhouse, events like the picnic remind me to continuously ask, "how can we react to each circumstance in such a way as to produce differences rather than assimilation" (Obrist, 2014, p. 15)? How can I ensure that the Playhouse continues to be a relational space of muchness? What conditions can I engage in that offer many possibilities for things like paint but also for the young people who come to the Playhouse each week?

Obrist (2014) offers four historical functions of curating: (1) preservation, (2) selection of new work, (3) contributing to art history, and (4) displaying and arranging the art. I've found these four ideas helpful in thinking about untamed spatial yearnings and how they might serve as starting points for co-curating relational spaces of muchness.

Preserve To preserve "free-living" assemblages that flourish despite capitalism we must stop trying to constantly work toward advancement or progress (Tsing, 2015, p. 23). This sounds counter-intuitive because capitalism has taught us that progress is something we should embrace and, as Tsing reminds us, progress has been used to garner support for justice as long as one can remember. However, "the problem is, progress stopped making sense" (p. 25) because it constantly pushed for a better tomorrow—but tomorrow never came. Perhaps we can move past progress and work for a *better right now* by caring for the folks who are constantly marginalized by institutions by helping preserve their cultural difference rather than trying to change it.

Selection of New Works In a curatorial sense, work selection is self-explanatory. However, in a relational sense, selection of new works might refer to the ways we engage with pedagogical design and thinking. How might the rhythms of community and public pedagogies influence the materials and conditions art educators and community researchers engage in with young folks? How might their everyday practices inform the spaces we co-create with children? Is it possible to unhinge our pedagogies from the clutches of hyper-capitalism?

Contribute to Art History History is always remaking itself and at the same time, certain histories are sedimented and deeply embodied. Co-curating encourages educators to be cognizant of the ways histories embed themselves in people and in objects, as well as implicating us in the perpetuation of some of these repeated histories. It is not enough to stand back and acknowledge historical violence: One must also work towards creating new histories through their own political and social contributions. If we are co-curatorial in our work, we are much more likely to see past our own understandings of world-making and embrace new ones.

Display and Arrange Art Historically speaking, a curator pulls work together and arranges it in interesting ways so others might enjoy it. Relationally speaking, art is more about the ways things come together to encourage precarity. Relational art "arises from an observation of the present and from a line of thinking about the fate of artistry activity" (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 44) rather than the rationality of it all. Co-curating encourages educators to display art not as final products but as a process that unfolds materially, discursively, culturally, socially, and politically. Additionally, pedagogical arrangements are easily commodified, as arranging implies order and control. Perhaps we can embrace the gift (Kimmerer, 2014; Tsing, 2015) of art-making's uncertainty and the unlikely spaces where muchness unfolds in hopes of ushering in openness, exchange, and interaction.

Douse dame da is a Japanese phrase that means possibly impossible. In a world usurped by capitalism it seems that finding liveliness pushing up out of the ruins is—well—douse dame da. Yet in a small working-class community on the outskirts of a college town in the southeast where folks find themselves on the capitalist margins every day, art flourishes within the crevices of the relational spaces of muchness bubbling and brewing in the cracks. For it is exactly this interstice (the small space that lies between things) where "new 'life possibilities' appear to be possible" (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 45). Stories like the paint picnic remind us to ponder "to what extent and in what ways the processes of learning and teaching could change if school culture welcomed the poetic languages and an aesthetic dimension as important elements for building knowledge" (Vecchi, 2010, p. 16). Co-curatorial work offers us a way to engage in such thinking with children and create "cool places" where everyone and everything can have the opportunity to "make stuff" in copasetic ways.

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"Now We All Look Like Rapunzels": Drawing in a Kindergarten Writing Journal

Leslie Rech

It's noon on Friday. The class of 22 five and six year olds is buzzing with barely contained energy. They have a substitute teacher today and the rules, if not suspended, are surely subject to change. The class has been asked to draw/write a story in their writing journal featuring a chameleon, a character in one of their readings from earlier in the week. Kayla, a vivacious kindergartener with silky, wheat colored hair forever spilling out onto her paper, works determinedly, if not quietly, at the far end of a low, six person table. An avid talker on the quietest days, she has actually kept a low profile today as she is being filmed for a research project on children and drawing. Still, today, her work is punctuated by constant motion and whispered dialogue. Mouth open, tongue resting on her lower lip, she repeatedly taps her pencil on the table, wiggles it during pauses, talks quietly to herself, the crayons, her paper. Kayla's other tablemates, Allie, Suri, Jack, and Nevin, are at various stages of completion with their journal pages but they sneak looks as Kayla continues to add details to her already crowded drawing. In addition to two orange and black chameleons, she's drawn a yellow sun, a blue swatch of sky, green grass with black weeds, three pink and purple clouds, assorted flowers, and a single figure with an orange ruffled dress (Fig. 1). Kayla holds the drawing up to show Allie across the table, taps it with her pencil:

Kayla: That's me.

Allie, Kayla's tablemate and regular conspirator, looks at the drawing and looks back up at Kayla, troubled:

Allie: Am I in your story? You said you'd make me in the story.

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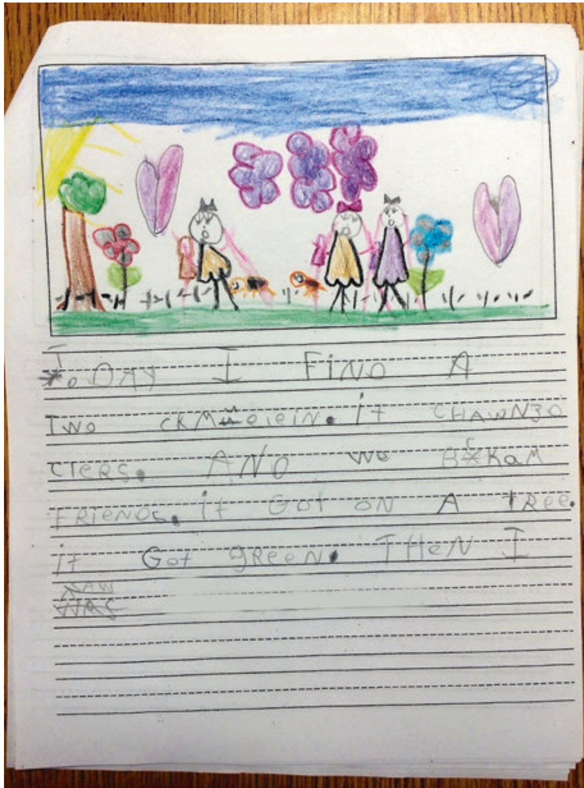

Fig. 1 Kayla's writing journal, 4-22-16

Kayla taps her neck with the pencil, answers quickly:

Kayla: Can't because... it's about a chameleon.
Allie: A fiction story has people in it. It's a fiction story so people can be in it.
Kayla: I know but I didn't have room because I had to do some weeds and two flowers and a tree and some clouds... so I didn't have enough space. I'll... I'll write your name down here ok? And make you right there...

Kayla points to a small patch of white between a blue flower and a chameleon. Allie holds up her own page in response.

Allie: Look, look, look, it's a chameleon with hair (giggles)
Kayla: Good one!
Allie: It's a made up story, that's why I made hair.

Kayla laughs, leans down and wiggles her pencil above the lines of her writing journal, pursing her lips and wagging her head in a parody of serious writing. Several minutes later, Allie whispers:

Allie: Kayla... Kayla... look I made it with babies!

Allie giggles. Kayla is focused on her writing and does not respond. As she works, she mouths the name, *Allie*, looks up, goes to get Allie's name tag where it is taped alphabetically on the white board. Their teacher, Ms. Walcott, calls these laminated tags "resources" and tapes them up throughout the room for students to use as they need, provided they put them back in the correct place. Kayla skips back to her seat, sits down, wiggles happily in her chair, and quickly copies *Allie*, mouthing the letters as she writes. After she's put the nametag back she adds a period after the name.

Kayla: Now, let's *draw* Allie.

She draws a circle in pencil, puts the pencil down searches for a crayon, then stops.

Kayla: I don't have enough room.
Allie: Yes you do, it's right here.

Allie points to an empty space next to a flower. Nevin, on Kayla's left, touches her paper, rubs the space Allie pointed to with his forefinger.

Nevin: You could write it on top... of the grass. On top of the grass.

Kayla gives Allie and Nevin a look of mock horror and holds her hands up in a stop gesture.

Kayla: Okay, pah-leeeease let me focus.

Kayla laughs, repeats the phrase in a silly, closed lipped voice, gesturing with both hands in parody. She continues the drawing, using black crayon for the outline of the dress as she did for the first figure. Allie interjects holding out a magenta crayon:

Allie: Make me this color hair, make me this color hair.
Kayla: I'm making the dress color, okay?
Allie: That, this a dress color? This color... dress?

Kayla ignores her, again absorbed in the drawing. She adds Suri's name.

Kayla: Now the pink heart, pink and purple.

Kayla pulls out pink and purple crayons with an exaggerated affect and points the pencil at her paper, at the name *Suri.*

Kayla: What? I forgot to draw you. Can you believe that?... I'm always forgetful.

Allie points to a blank space in Kayla's drawing.

Allie: Can you make a heart right there?

Kayla fills in the halves of a two-sided heart with hues of pink and purple.

Kayla: Now I'm gonna draw Suri.

She says this, as she often does, to the paper itself, as if she's informing it of her intentions. She squeezes a third face into the drawing, no longer concerned about lack of space. She mutters:

Kayla: Black, where's the black?.

Allie, finished with her drawing, has been watching intently:

Allie: We have the same dresses because we're friends?

Kayla answers without looking up, touches the figures with her forefinger:

Kayla: Uh huh, that's me... that's you...
Allie: We have to hold hands.

Kayla stops drawing. Her figure is all the way on the left hand side of the picture plane. There is no way she and Allie, on the right, could hold hands.

Kayla: No we don't.
Allie: Okay then I'm holding Suri's hand.

Nevin comments softly, something I can't pick up on audio, but I think I hear the word grass. Kayla whips her head up and mock-sweetly addresses Nevin:

Kayla: Stop telling me what to do honeybun. Thank you. You understand me? Goodness gracious. You are so weird.

She continues to work on the details of Suri's face in pencil. Seized by a new idea, she leans across the table:

Kayla: Suri, I'm gonna make you a bow.

Suri smiles, opens her mouth in approval and excitement.

Kayla: And I'm gonna add purses... and I'm gonna add high heels.
Allie: High heels for me? High heels for me too?

Suri, Nevin, and Allie lean forward to watch as the figures are shod in high heels. Ms. Nanda, the assistant teacher advises the class to make sure their sight words are spelled correctly, that Ms. Walcott would want them to be spelled correctly. Suri, having snuck several furtive glances at the camera throughout the writing period, speaks up for the first time:

Suri: Don't forget purses.
Kayla: Allie, what color purse do you want me to make for you?
Allie: Uh... color? This color.

Allie picks up the magenta crayon.

Allie: Can you make me the purple color?

Jack, standing on Kayla's right, watches carefully. The boys have not commented since the dressing up process began. Kayla announces to the crayon plate:

Kayla: And my color purse will be...

She picks up the brown crayon and mouths the word brown, draws her purse, adds a pink detail, picks up her paper and taps it on table. At this point I think she is finished, but no, she puts the paper back down:

Kayla: One more heart on this side.

She flutters her hands as she gathers the pink and purple crayons, draws a last two-sided heart with pencil, fills it in with color, puts her crayon down, scoots her chair in and raises a hand. I ask her to tell me about her story. She reads the text, clapping carefully at the periods, a technique Ms. Walcott has demonstrated in class to help students understand where periods go in sentences. Kayla points out each feature and tells me the figures have purses and bows. She clearly has a new idea while she's explaining and grabs a pink crayon:

Kayla: I'm gonna make long hair for us.

Allie hears this and looks alarmed as Kayla draws out long strands of pink hair:

Allie: I don't really need long hair. I don't need long hair. I have short hair. So please don't, please don't give me, uuuuuuuuuh, I have short hair!

Allie and Jack crowd each other, leaning over to watch Kayla closely. Kayla raises her shoulder, tilts her head and strokes a lock of imaginary hair.

Kayla: It looks so fancy.
Allie: I don't think it's fancy cause I have long hair and I normally have short hair.
Kayla: But look, we look like Rapunzel.
Allie: Oh, hee, I like Rapunzel!

Kayla addresses the group, tilts back in her chair, smiling huge, lifting her arms out:

Kayla: Now we all look like Rapunzels!

1 Introduction

Children's drawings, as artifacts, have fascinated researchers for the last two centuries. Countless studies have been conducted on and papers written about children's drawings from psychological, anthropological, linguistic and aesthetic perspectives; studies cataloging thousands of shapes, forms, and subjects of children's drawings, processes involved, and collections of cultural comparisons (Ivashkevich, 2006; Pearson, 2001; Thompson, 2006a, b).

What these studies suggest is that children are prolific visual communicators, adept at coordinating a variety of modes of representation to communicate experience. For just this reason, drawing as tool for facilitating language and literacy has long been employed by early childhood educators. The common core standards for English Language Arts in kindergarten now recommend that a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing be used to compose a diverse range of texts including those expressing opinion, explanation, and narration, and that drawing be used to provide additional detail to verbal descriptions of people, places, things and events (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

Soundy, Guha, and Qiu (2007) suggest that drawing as a pedagogic tool has been studied little since its addition to the language arts curriculum. Thompson (1999) and Ivashkevich (2006) suggest that the problem with many studies of children's drawing is that they are based on drawings solicited from children by adults on specific topics and analyzed out of context. These studies often focus predominantly on aesthetic or developmental concerns (for example, Gardner, 1980; Goodnow, 1977; Kellogg, 1970; Lowenfeld & Britain, 1987). In literacy studies, researchers have followed other trajectories, looking at drawing as a mode of story-telling that supports literacy (for example, Adoniou, 2014; Dyson, 1990, 1997; Edwards & Willis, 2000; Hopperstad, 2010; Kress, 1997; Mackenzie, 2011; Newkirk, 1989; Selvester & Steffani, 2012; Soundy et al., 2007) Current research in art education approaches children's drawing as events of performative, collaborative, and relational meaning-making (Ivashkevich, 2009; Pearson, 2001; Schulte, 2011, 2013a, 2013b; Thompson, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2006a, b, 2009; Thompson & Bales, 1991; Vollrath, 2007; Wilson, 1997, 2005, 2007, 2008).

It is from this position of looking at drawing as other-than-artifact, as a performance or practice, as a confluence of elements, that I make sense of children's drawing in the kindergarten classroom. I see children's drawing events, as what Bennett (2010), after Deleuze and Guattari (2004), would call *assemblages*, and Latour (1996), *networks of actants*. Few studies have looked at the particular ways in which daily classroom drawing operates for children. Aoki (1993), Dyson (1997), and Heydon (2013) distinguish between the official curriculum of school and the everyday "lived" curriculum of children, and Marsh (2010), in her literature review on children, culture, and creativity, identifies the need for research that focuses on young children "in relation to their own cultural interests and priorities" (p. 12).

The aim of this chapter is to tease out relationships between children, drawing, and curriculum with an interest in locating creative, transgressive, and agentic spaces in an educational climate that seems, on the surface, to have little room for such. Using video recordings from a year-long ethnographic case study of drawing events in the language arts curriculum of a public kindergarten, I look at ways in which children employ drawing in their classroom writing. This project focused specifically on children's drawing in writing journals; the seated, self-directed drawing designed to facilitate or complement the language arts lesson of the day. How does drawing function for children in their daily negotiations between the official classroom curriculum and their own interests and desires? Using an eclectic

array of theories, including Aoki's (1993) notion of lived curriculum—the unofficial, child led practices of the classroom; Bennett's (2010) vital materialism—the agency and affect of *things* in relation to human experience; and Bakhtin's (1981) theories of dialogism—the ongoing conversation between language and the individual, I explore the subtle and not so subtle spaces of classroom drawing.

2 Analyzing Drawing

At first glance, Kayla's chameleon drawing does not seem unique. She and her peers use many of the drawing conventions (e.g. a yellow sun, a blue band of sky, clouds, flowers, stick figures) that have been documented across early childhood classrooms and cultures (Ivashkevich, 2006). Yet, despite the inclusion of such ordinary elements, Kayla's drawing is singular in the ways it evolves and in the coming together of the events and relationships that affect and transform her drawing-writing decision-making. These events are not easily accessible in classroom observation. Things move fast in kindergarten, children faster. But with an ethnographic sense of the local classroom culture and micro-analyses of video recordings of drawing events in action, connections and meaning begin to emerge. I approach analysis from what Tobin (2000) calls *looking awry*, a method of looking for things that stick out in transcripts that can be applied to video recordings as well. I see these occasions as speed bumps, places in the video recordings where things stick out, call for attention, or cause me to stumble in the process of interpreting. What has become most visible in the project overall is the dialogue between children, drawing, things, and culture (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 Kayla's drawing, detail

3 Drawing and Writing Together

Much research in language and literacy education shows clear connections between writing and drawing, finding that classroom drawing functions pedagogically as a rehearsal for writing (Graves, 2003; Newkirk, 1989). However, Newkirk argues that conceptualizing children's drawing as rehearsal is an example of how writing is prioritized both in school and in studies of literacy. He argues that for many children, drawing is not the rehearsal, but the main event and that many children do not distinguish between text and picture.

Dyson (1986) and Newkirk (1989) suggest that we look at drawing and writing as children do: as interwoven. In Kayla's case, she begins the drawing with a blue sky, a yellow sun, green grass with little black weeds, three pink and purple clouds, two chameleons, two flowers, a tree, and a figure (herself). She asks me:

Kayla: What should I write for my first sentence?

I whisper:

LR: I can't talk when I'm filming

After several starts and stops, she writes a story that follows much of what she's drawn on the page:

Today I find a Two ckmuelein. It chawned clers. And we Bekam Friends. it got on a tree. It got green.

Her drawing-story addresses the official subject, the chameleon. But one chameleon becomes two, a tree appears, and colors change. Almost 30 min into the writing period, something happens to change the drawing's trajectory:

Allie: Am I in your story? You said you'd make me in the story.
Kayla: Can't because... it's about a chameleon.
Allie: A fiction story has people in it. It's a fiction story so people can be in it.
Allie: Look, look, look, it's a chameleon with hair... It's a made up story, that's why I made hair... Kayla... Kayla... look I made it with babies...
Kayla: I know but I didn't have room because I had to do some weeds and two flowers and a tree and some clouds... so I didn't have enough space. I'll... I'll write your name down here ok? And make you right there...

With the prompt from Allie, the drawing begins to expand. Kayla writes:

Then I saw Allie.

She squeezes the figure of Allie into the heavily populated horizon. She and Allie discuss dress color. Kayla touches Allie's name, the text she's just copied from a resource, repeats "Allie", touches a blank space next to it, says "and … Suri". Someone has already passed her the resource. She writes: *Suri.*

From this point, the drawing veers from the original story, becomes something else, something related to girls and girlhood, flirting with womanhood, fantasy, and friendship (Paley, 2007). In his study of writing development in a first grade

classroom, Newkirk (1989) categorizes several relationships of picture to text including the *redundant*, in which the text duplicates the subject of the image and *textual or pictorial imbalance,* in which either text or image offers more specific information than the other. What Newkirk does not address in his schema are drawings that move beyond the text, not just in detail but in subject as well. Kayla's drawing becomes more than the official story, it becomes a vehicle with which she and her peers engage in play and she addresses her own desires. The children's drawing and talk reflect tensions between the constraints of the assignment and the range of Kayla's narrative and reveals the creative potential of image making. Allie says, "Look, look, look, it's a chameleon with hair... It's a made up story, that's why I made hair." Should we see Kayla's narrative as a derailment of official curriculum? As a waste of class time? Katch (2001) asks, how do we tell when play helps or hinders? For me, part of addressing this question has to do with thinking about how children experience drawing.

4 Drawing Things

> Thing power gestures toward the strange ability of everyday ordinary, man-made items to exceed their status as objects and to manifest traces of independence or aliveness, constituting the outside of our own experience (Bennett, 2010, p. xvi) (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3 Allie, Jack, Kayla, and Kayla's drawing

Fig. 4 Kayla locates the crayon she wants

Drawing on the work of Adorno, Deleuze and Guattari, Foucault, Nietzsche and others, Bennett (2010) advances a theory of new materialism she describes as *vital* and *vibrant*. She suggests that the world is made up of ecologies of human and non-human assemblages, ad-hoc groupings of diverse elements, acting in and on one another. I see these human-non-human assemblages in the kindergarten classroom. The pedagogic spaces we inhabit with children include environments that may or may not have natural light, functional furniture, and working tools and materials. In Kayla's case, the chair, the table, the way these objects are arranged in the room, the placement of the textual resources, the crayons and pencils on her table, the lack of erasers, the shape and size of her writing journal, what she's wearing that day, whether or not her hair is tied back, all these things have subtle effects on her drawing/writing for that day. Kayla is particularly responsive to materials and it is not uncommon for her to have altercations with her tablemates over crayons and pencils (Fig. 4).

The point here is not to imbue classroom objects with an anthropomorphic, humanesque agency but to consider, as Bennett suggests, the affect of *all* the bodies, living and non-living, that are interacting in a particular context or assemblage. For example, on one occasion, Jackson, a student often given his own drawing/writing space and headphones to allow more focused concentration, spends several minutes of a writing period picking up crayons that have rolled to the floor. The desk he's been given is imperceptibly slanted. Because he is not at a regular classroom table, his crayons are loose rather than secured by the rim of a plastic plate. In this situation, the will of the crayons (to roll on the floor from a slanted desk) have an effect on Jackson's ability to focus on his work. At another table, Hetra grabs the sharpest

Fig. 5 Jackson's crayons, Hetra's crayons

crayons from the crayon plate and keeps them to the right of her paper, spurring the frustration of her peers. Even with control of the sharpest crayons, Hetra writes before she draws and her drawings are done quickly and without much detail. Is Hetra's reluctance to put more time into her drawing related to the lack of adequately sharp crayons or to the inability of the paper and crayons to be erased? Jackson demonstrates an interest in the color and shape of the crayons, which he carefully arranges in his palm, tapping them into alignment, patting them before returning them to a plastic bag. Hetra lines the sharpest crayons up in a similar way, tip side down, before carefully tucking them into a box rather than returning them to the crowded and chaotic crayon plate. Kayla clearly prefers the sharp-tipped pencil to the duller crayon for rendering the details of her figures. The hardness of the pencil tip lends itself to details, a material technology Kayla and others have learned without instruction (Fig. 5).

These kind of subtle events are easy to miss in a crowded classroom. How would our understanding of children's drawing and writing change if we attended to how the position or shape of a chair or desk, the sharpness of the tip of a pencil or crayon, or the density of a color or ease of mark-making or erasure impact a drawing/writing event?

4.1 Drawing as Thing

As I watch Kayla interact with her drawing, it occurs to me that the drawing itself is material, a lively, transmutable thing with which Kayla engages. The drawing space is a white piece of thin paper with a framed rectangle printed at the top and rows of

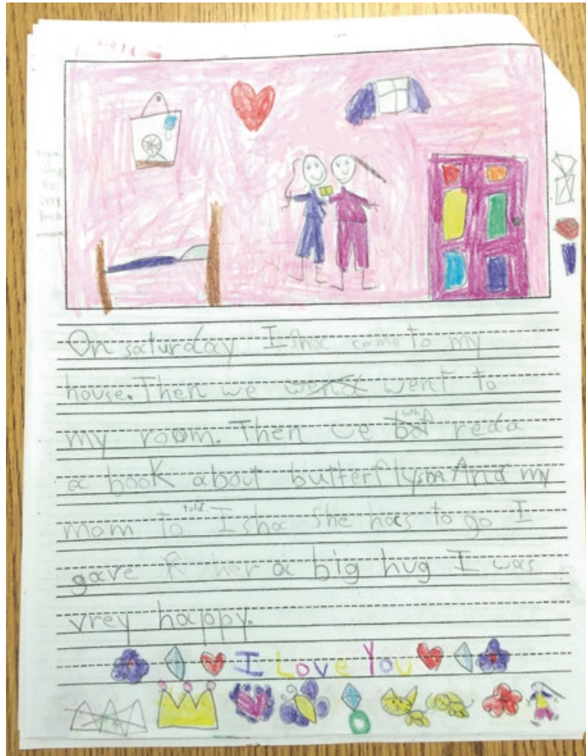

Fig. 6 Chong's writing journal, 4-14-16

writing lines at the bottom. The shape of the drawing space affords and constrains both the size of the images and the orientation of the composition. Some children push at these material boundaries in subtle ways. For example, Chong, one of the more quiet, independent, and focused participants in the classroom, peppers her writing with emoji-like characters, some clearly related to the text, others, seemingly random (Fig. 6).

Despite the decreasing proportion of drawing to writing space at this point in the year, many children still spend more time drawing than writing. This suggests that the ever shrinking rectangle of drawing space exerts a particular pull. The images and associated meanings that materialize in this space possess for children the affective agency of Bennett's (2010) *vibrant matter* or Latour's *actant*s. In Kayla's case, the confidence and speed with which she lays down the initial images of sun, sky and chameleon in crayon and pencil suggest that the drawing is subject to her will. But, there are moments when I hear whispers of the drawing leading her in other directions. Anyone who draws knows that marks land on the paper in ways and with a power we cannot always predict and sometimes feel unable to direct or control. The results can leave us feeling either or both uncoordinated or extraordinarily skilled, sometimes frustrated, and other times surprised and grateful. I wonder if

this unpredictability is part of what makes mark-making especially lively for children. As Kayla begins to write the first letter of her drawing-story, she makes a mistake:

Kayla: Oh... stop, stop, stop. Wrong letter.

She talks to the paper as if she is not in control of what happens there. She makes an erasing gesture. Ms. Walcott will not let them keep erasers at the table because they spend too much time trying to fix mistakes. Kayla crosses the letter out and makes a new one, on the line above, wiggles her pencil and goes back to work on the face of her first figure. Later she tells her pencil/paper/drawing assemblage:

Kayla: Now, let's draw Allie.

"Let's" means "let us." Who then is the "us" in this assemblage? Here, Kayla does not seem to be addressing her friends, who are busy with their own drawing. Is it too imaginative to suggest that the "us" being addressed here includes Kayla, the writing implements, and paper that need to interact to produce a representation of her friend Allie? Kayla talks to the emerging drawing in the present tense, as if she and it are in this together, and she needs to prepare and elicit the cooperation of the drawing for the task ahead. Kayla is not alone among the children in this class in her communication with drawings. Lionel whispers, "Chewbacca, Chewbacca, Chewbacca" and smiles at the half finished image of a Wookie. Salma pushes back from the drawing of herself and her friend Alexandra on a playground, and grins at it approvingly as if it's behaving in a particularly pleasing way. Whether these children are addressing the imagined subjects of their story or the tangle of waxy marks that manifest their physical presence, some*things* on the pages of their journals provoke these responses.

4.2 Drawing as Assemblage

Just as the marks of pencil and crayon on paper converge in her drawing as thing, a convergence between Kayla, tools, drawing space, and other elements coalesce to become another thing, another form of vibrant matter. The drawing contains traces of Kayla's skill and imagination, which in turn, carries traces of her engagement with popular culture, of the influence of comments from her peers, of drawing conventions devised by other children at her table and in her class, and of cultural expectations of pictorial representation, writing, and story-telling. These and other factors come together to interact in this particular drawing on this particular day. Sometimes the assemblage resists converging influences. For example, elements Kayla puts down on the paper in earlier phases of the drawing constrain later steps: once she has drawn herself and Allie on opposite sides of the paper, the figures cannot, as Allie would like, hold hands, as can the images of Allie and Suri, which have been drawn side by side. Sometimes the assemblage works to produce unexpected outcomes: Suri, quiet with her peers in general and more so in the company of my

adult presence as well as the camera, is moved by her image within the narrative, pulled by the powerful draw of feminized play to remark: "Don't forget purses."

Once it is finished, the drawing loses much of its vitality. Kayla quickly tucks it away when it's time for lunch. If Kayla's parents are at all like me, the drawing will be posted on the refrigerator for a few weeks and then go into a box, saved but unconsidered for years to come, until perhaps the adult Kayla will rediscover the drawing while going through childhood memorabilia. But the significance of this drawing lies not in it's future, but in the present of its creation. Begun as an official classroom assignment, this drawing-writing becomes the unofficial theater in which Kayla and her peers play with ideas about girlhood, glamour and friendship (Ivashkevich, 2009; Paley, 2007). Though it may appear conventional, Kayla's drawing operates as a catalyst for events and utterances among peers, not to mention emergent literacy. The presence of a substitute teacher on this day, or more precisely, the lack of Ms. Walcott, allows the process of drawing to shift and change, perhaps becoming a bit more free than drawing on other days. Though all the drawing events I recorded are unique in their assemblage of interacting artist/authors, tablemates, audiences, subjects, discourses, and daily classroom events, a visibly recurring phenomenon in many of these recordings are children smiling at, talking to, whispering towards, touching, pushing, and patting their drawings, suggesting there is something in drawing that talks back to children.

5 Drawing(s) as Dialogic

What is the nature of this back and forth between children and drawing? Thinking about drawing as an assemblage that contains vibrant, vital, and material qualities leads me to thinking about the back and forth between people and culture, or what Bakhtin (1981) theorizes as dialogized heteroglossia. To make this argument, I push together Bennett's idea of material agency with Bakhtin's idea that language both echoes and transforms the utterances of others. This leads to the question: if children talk to drawings, responding to the materials used in their making, the process of their unfolding, and their form, color, texture, and meanings, do drawings talk back? (Fig. 7)

5.1 Dialogized Heteroglossia

In their studies of the novel, Bakhtin and his circle introduced the concept of heteroglossia or double voiced speech. Bakhtin suggests that when we speak or write, words are only half ours as we are also citing the utterances of our social worlds: "The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention" (p. 293).

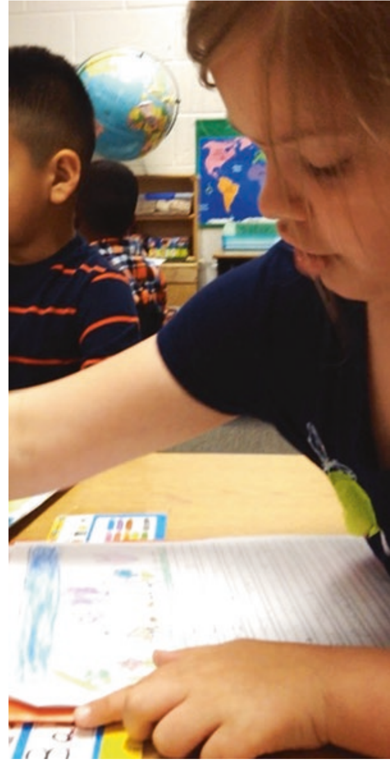

Fig. 7 Kayla talking to her drawing

This is compelling for me when I think about children drawing and the images they borrow, transform, and spread to others. Bakhtin uses the “utterance” as the most basic form of speech act and suggests that all utterances carry within them the elements of individual, social, and historical speech. If we think of drawing as a heteroglossic utterance, it allows us to theorize how iconography and other pictorial conventions develop and are used in particular contexts and communities, how text relates to image, and how images of local and global culture infiltrate children’s drawing. Bakhtin (1981) suggests that language can be both heteroglossic and dialogic. This means that language can simultaneously echo the voices of others and talk back to them, producing new meanings. He gives the example of the parodies found in street carnivals, the players not only citing the words of others, but changing their meaning by adding their own accents and intonations:

> The authentic environment of an utterance, the environment in which it lives and takes shape, is dialogized heteroglossia, anonymous and social as language, but simultaneously concrete, filled with specific content and accented in an individual utterance. (p. 272)

The dialogized heteroglossic utterance can be not only a verbal, but also a visual, physical citation; the appropriation, whether copied, mimicked, parodied or glorified, of words, phrases, ideas, or ways of moving, writing, or drawing, that others have used before. Sherlock (2014) suggests that citation is central to social negotia-

tion: “The citation of the words and the images of the other thus involves a continual renegotiation of social values in every day life” (p. 4). By citing others – their parents and teachers, their peers, characters from popular culture – children have an immediate and accessible way in which to play, explore, and evaluate their world. Tobin (2000) suggests that researchers can map children’s citational references:

> Whether speaking or writing, people communicate by cobbling together a text composed of citations, allusions, and repetitions of the words of others. I’ve extended Bakhtinian theory into a research method by tracing out allusions, and intertextual associations in interview transcripts of children’s talk. I call this method *Bakhtinian text mapping*. (p. 143)

Though many scholars use the concept of citation to focus on utterances or reported speech (for example Goodman, Tomlinson, & Richland, 2014), I argue that the notion of citation can be extended into the material and visual world of drawing. I see drawing events as dialogic, cobbled together texts made up of citations, allusions and transformations. What some call “copying” is a valid and valuable way for children to address and engage their social worlds. For children, drawing is a multimodal performance in that it often includes verbalization, bodily movement, things, and text. Thinking about children’s drawing in dialogic terms means thinking of drawing as an event that makes children’s citations visible in the body, in language, and on the page. Because these citations do not often fit within the official genre of curricular language, they are often dismissed as unproductive.

5.2 Drawing(s) and Children in Dialogue

Kayla’s drawing on this particular day offers a wealth of examples of dialogized heteroglossia. Her embodied parody of writing behaviors, such as the “serious” writing she performs for Allie and her verbal mimicry of adult speech (“Stop telling me what to do honeybun. Thank you. You understand me? Goodness gracious.”) illustrate the carnivalesque pleasures to be found in dialogizing official adult discourses (Grace & Tobin, 2002). I also see Kayla in dialogue with the drawing itself as a thing. For example, she performs a pink and purple heart with fluttery hand gestures before she draws it. She draws out long pink skeins of Rapunzel hair on each figure and mimics stroking it on her own head. It could be simply that this day’s drawing functions as a repository and record of Kayla’s practice with girlhood (Ivashkevich, 2009) and her gallery of tablemates add to and collaborate on the performance, but it could also be that Kayla cites her own drawing, mimics it, and converses with it as something that acts and has an affect on her.

Kayla spends more time on her drawing than on her writing, as do most of the children in the class. In school curriculum, where writing is prioritized and drawing is often seen as merely “coloring” (Newkirk, 1989) this higher level of engagement with drawing may be viewed as unproductive. But, what if Kayla’s dialogic interaction with her drawing allows her to exercise a level of visual-verbal decision making, a key component of emergent literacy, that she would not otherwise experience?

Fig. 8 Montage of Suns

I suggest that there is something particularly productive about classroom drawing, that the assemblage of child, material, drawing, teacher, peers, and culture move drawings in different ways than self-initiated drawings. Of the children in this class, some are more absorbed in their drawings than others. Matteo, Salma, and Chong, for example, tend to keep their heads close to the paper and if they speak at all, it is softly, towards the drawing. Others like Kayla and Lionel are more social, showing, discussing, asking for feedback. But in each event, there are traceable elements of their classroom experience, whether it be conventions copied or altered, friends added to the story, images from popular culture transformed, or classroom discourses addressed or resisted. In any event, classroom drawing contains a wealth of information of children's lived curriculum (Fig. 8).

5.3 Drawing Conventions as Individually Accented Language

Bakhtin suggests that genres naturally develop and coalesce in the languages of professions such as priest, farmer, fish seller, and doctor: "These languages differ from each other not only in their vocabularies; they involve specific forms for manifesting intentions, forms for making conceptualization and evaluation concrete" (p. 289). I would argue that the often repeated, more often ignored, drawing conventions of sun, sky, flower, etc. are visual citations that become part of both the representational repertoire of a class and part of the individually accented language of individual children. As in speech, visual conventions can be transferred via copying, mimicking, or parodying another's work and occur both in and out of the classroom. Ivashkevich (2006) points out that children are more likely to copy than not: "Contemporary research has proven that children's drawings possess a set of powerful conventions that are preserved and recycled within different children's groups and subcultures, and that children are more likely to make use of available graphic symbols than to invent them on their own" (p. 46). In this particular classroom, conventions for representing the sun, sky, grass, trees, flowers, and houses were demonstrated early in the year to facilitate the visual communication of *setting*, a narrative element emphasized as part of their official Language Arts curriculum. Conventions that appear in one drawing are often quickly adopted and adapted by others, especially among friends and tablemates, and further co-mingled when Ms.

Fig. 9 Hearts and flowers Montage

Walcott experiments with switching seat assignments in an attempt to find the best working dynamic among peers. Though many teachers frown on copying as unoriginal and anti-aesthetic (Thompson, 2006a, b), Ms. Walcott allows and even encourages such sharing of ideas and conventions and instead focuses on challenging her students to construct narratives that make use of accessible framing devices and elements. It is within this frame of easily identifiable classroom conventions (sun, sky, grass) combined with more individually accented conventions (hearts, flowers, bows) that Kayla's drawing emerges. If we look closely and carefully at Kayla's drawing as process and product, we can see how she deploys images of friends, hearts, flowers, and bows to construct a world of meanings and values, and presents us with a map of her individually accented ideological becoming (Fig. 9).

5.4 Drawing Conventions as Maps of Ideological Becoming

Bakhtin (1981) points out that heteroglossia or another's speech in another's language occurs not just in artistic forms like the novel but also in everyday speech. He suggests that double-voiced language in everyday speech takes on another role:

> The topic of a speaking person takes on quite another significance in the ordinary ideological workings of our consciousness, in the process of assimilating our consciousness to the ideological world. The ideological becoming of a human being, in this view, is the process of selectively assimilating the words of others. (p. 341)

This notion of citationality suggests that in the visual and verbal citations in children's drawing are traces of their ideological becomings. In Kayla's case, the language of girlhood in the form of purses, princesses, long tresses, and heels features in this particular story and the conventions of hearts, flowers, and bows are repeated in her drawings throughout the year. In looking closely at Kayla's drawing performances, at her selectively appropriated conventions and citations, we get a glimpse into what it means to be and become a girl in this and other settings. For example, hearts are a common visual symbol in popular culture. Why have hearts become a part of the daily visual lexicon of Kayla, Sorsha and Chong, but not of others in the class? What about the heart speaks to them? Can we read a sophisticated sense of

Fig. 10 Hearts triptych

self-reflective irony and humor in Sorsha murmuring to her drawing: "I'm making hearts again." (Fig. 10)

6 Conclusion

Looking at Kayla's completed drawing gives little indication of the back and forth of ideas and exchanges, the transformations and connections in the life of the drawing during its coming into being. As I watch and re-watch each video, new ideas about teaching, research, and adult-child interactions continue to emerge. What is most salient to me about this and other drawing events I've analyzed from this project, is the idea that drawing allows a space for children to make sense of curriculum in ways that are relevant to their interests and desires. Perhaps Kayla could have written a more detailed and structured chameleon story had she spent less time playing with images of girlhood. Maybe this hyper-feminine narrative was not a positive experience for Allie. Perhaps it made her tablemate Jack uncomfortable. But the point here is that on this occasion, classroom drawing allows Kayla, a child who self-identifies as "silly and forgetful", who often requires reminders and redirection during writing time, an engaging space for constructing narratives, working independently, negotiating social interactions, and living curriculum in ways that read as joyful and agentic.

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Artistic Encounters: Ethical Collaborations Between Children and Adults

Shana Cinquemani

1 Artistic Encounters: Ethical Collaborations Between Children and Adults

It was our third day of Saturday morning art class. Seth[1] walked over to me, one of the flip video cameras in his hands. “Will you build something so I can film you?” he asked. Flustered with the class full of 14 preschool aged children, I responded to Seth that perhaps he could find a friend to work with him instead. Instantly, I realized I had made a mistake. Why didn’t I want to help Seth create his video? My realization came just in time, and as Seth turned around to walk away, I called out to him. “Seth, come back. Of course I’ll help you.” I sat down on the carpet among the odd shaped pieces of wood. Seth was very clear on when I should begin. He started filming, offering me positive feedback on how my sculpture was coming along, and even encouraging me to use certain blocks rather than others (see Fig. 1).

Me: So I’m gonna build something. I don’t know what it is yet though.
Seth: I know…can you use these two pieces next?
Me: Sure! [I add the two pieces that Seth requested I use].
Seth: Okay. This is gonna be looking great.
Me: It looks great?
Seth: Yeah, it’s gonna *be* looking great.
Me: So it’s *gonna* look great. It doesn’t look great yet?
Seth: Yeah…just add one more piece and then it’ll look great. [I add one final piece].
Me: Is it done?
Seth: Yeah. [At this point, Seth ended the recording].

[1] All names have been changed.

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Fig. 1 Screen shot of Seth's video of my construction

At the time this exchange with Seth took place, I was engaging as both teacher and researcher in a 10-week long research project grounded in challenging traditional ideas about power and knowledge (Foucault, 1980) in work with young children. It was my aim to destabilize what Foucault refers to as erudite knowledge (that of teacher/adult) and rather explore the subjugated knowledges of the children with whom I was working. Foucault (1980) argues that when subjugated or disqualified knowledges merge with erudite knowledge, a genealogy is formed. This genealogy can be understood as embodying tactics in which the disqualified knowledges are brought to light. In this way, when merged with erudite knowledges, these disqualified knowledges are emancipated.

Through this research it was my goal to create a genealogical space that challenged traditional ideas about relationships between children and adults in the art classroom. I frame my understanding of these kinds of traditional relationships through both Wilson's (1974) and Efland's (1976) ideas about school art, which as Gude (2013) notes, is still evidenced in art classrooms today. In the conventional school art structure, "we [teachers/adults] give children materials and ideas and encourage them to make art in the ways we think they should with the subject matter we believe appropriate" (Wilson, 1974, p. 3). As such, the relationships between children and teachers are grounded in children making based on adults' requests and ideas.

Despite my ambition to create this kind of genealogical space, my first instinct to suggest that Seth find a friend to collaborate with and my initial disregard for his attempt to work with me, is rooted in the exact type of traditional teacher/child relationship I was hoping to destabilize. By asking him to work with another child, I was quietly suggesting that as an adult and teacher I was not an appropriate artmaking partner, but more so a "dispenser of materials" and encouragement/support (Eisner, 1973, p. 8). Additionally, my rejection of his request strengthens my position of power as the person who controls the flow of artistic ideas. This was not the space I had hoped to cultivate, and thankfully I recognized this with enough time to

accept Seth's proposition for collaboration. I wished to foster a space where children's interests were valued and the relationships between adults and children were more collaborative than hierarchical. In this kind of space, both children and adults could offer ideas and, as such, engage in a kind of democratic artmaking collaboration (Wilson, 2007) rather than artmaking initiated only by adults.

Within this chapter I explore new visions for collaborative work between adults and children, conceptualized as respectful interdependent relationships and ethical encounters. These theories are grounded in the work of Emmanuel Levinas (1987, 1988, 1989a, 1989b) who argued that there is no singular or ethical "right" way to interact with another human being; there is no single way to be a teacher or student. Rather, he argues that our interactions with other people are complex and subjective (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005) and that there are many ways to engage ethically with others. Engaging in a theoretical exploration of Levinas' work as it relates to early childhood art education, I will share examples of collaborative artmaking experiences between children and adults. At their core, these encounters challenge traditional ideas of what it means to be a teacher and a student in the early childhood art classroom by confronting established notions about the role of adults in children's artwork. I argue that when adults can allow themselves to be directed by children (rather than vice versa), we can create an art classroom space that fosters a democratic exchange of ideas and empowers young children to enact their own artistic desires.

2 The Early Childhood Art Educator: A Spectrum of Images

Traditionally, the role of the teacher in early childhood art education can be understood as two extremes on a spectrum of relationships, ranging from curator to director. If we believe the myth that children are inherently creative (McClure, 2011), then we believe that children simply need space and materials to express themselves. This reflects the role of the teacher as curator – organizing the classroom to best suit the needs of the children, and then standing back to watch it unfold. In this way, teachers don't really teach. They become people who simply set up the environment. Those who practice this pedagogical ideology often argue that they don't "teach," and instead use terms like "facilitate, guide, encourage, nurture, [or] support" (McArdle, 2008, p. 367). These same types of teachers may argue that children will naturally pass through pre-determined developmental stages, and so there is no need to formally instruct. This notion can be traced historically to the idea that the teacher's job is to remain primarily hands off (Derham, 1961; Kellogg & O'Dell, 1967; Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1964/1987).

In art education, this often results in the understanding that "in order to do it 'properly', teachers must *teach without teaching* and *manufacture the natural*" (McArdle, 2008, p. 367, original emphasis). They must create conditions where children can produce the types of artwork that adults feel comfortable with, a type of school art that reinforces children's spontaneity, expression, and innocence (Efland, 1976). In manufacturing the natural, the teacher inadvertently begins to

shift away from the sidelines and plan more formal and structured lessons. This results in typical school art activities for children that are “game-like, conventional, ritualistic, and rule governed…[using] conventional themes and materials fed to children” (Wilson, 1974, p. 6). It then becomes the role of the teacher to create and execute such activities, producing experiences where the children are more “acted upon, rather than being active participants in artistic processes” (McArdle & Piscitelli, 2002, p. 12). Here, teachers are conveyers of artistic rules and certain types of knowledges that are acceptable within the school art classroom. Thus, we are presented with a double-sided idea about the role of the art teacher: as either facilitator/guide or as rule maker/conveyer of artistic knowledge.

There are, of course, many ways of being an art educator beyond simply curator or director. Many of these methods reject the aforementioned traditional roles in favor of an approach founded on collaboration between teachers and students (Boldt & McArdle, 2013). In this way, the role of the teacher becomes one of co-collaborator; it is participatory. Rather than simply stand back or control, the teacher exchanges their skills, knowledge, and ideas with the children with whom she is working, creating a climate of cooperative learning (McArdle & Piscitelli, 2002). Here, perhaps we can see the image of the teacher and their relationship with children as co-choreography, a “reciprocal, interactive, creative, spontaneous process, where each partner…is entitled to creative agency and input” (Anttila, 2013, p. 121). However, this image of the teacher must also be open to accept a position as becoming, as one whose practices shift and change depending on the needs and experiences of the children. Over the course of this research, I (and my two assistant educators) had many opportunities to collaborate with the 4- and 5-year-old children enrolled in the Saturday morning art class. Most often, these experiences existed in a space around traditional collaboration due to the children’s own desires. Rather than engage in the type of co-choreography described above, our roles shifted as we allowed ourselves to be directed by the children.

3 When Children Lead and Teachers Follow

I conceptualize my experience with Seth as a type of child-led collaboration. While we did work together, I offered nothing more than the role of player in Seth’s carefully constructed video work. He allowed me elements of freedom in my construction, but ultimately controlled most aspects of our experience. Rather than attempt to offer suggestions about Seth’s video work, I took direction from him, positioning him as the leader in our work together. Seth seemed to enjoy this type of collaboration, and on this day, also requested that I film him and Ben, another participant, building a city and a volcano outside. Due to the children’s request that we “make art outside” we had brought various materials outdoors into the courtyard just beyond the art building. Seth and Ben were working with small pieces of wood (the city) and red yarn (the lava from the volcano). By this point, I was aware that Seth had realized that he could film himself. I had watched him stand the flip camera up

Fig. 2 Max's drawings, cut out by Alice (from left: a shark, a caterpillar, and a whale)

on its end carefully, and then step in front of the camera, declaring "I'm gonna have the camera take a video of me!" Based on this knowledge, his request that I film him and Ben clearly had something to do with my participation in the activity since, if he so desired, he could do it himself.

Over the course of this research, there were other children who also engaged us (the three adult educators – Jennifer, Alice, and me) in similar types of directed collaborations. Max was a frequent collaborator. A fairly shy child he rarely engaged in art experiences with other children, but often sought out the company of adults (i.e. Jennifer, Alice, and me) during artmaking. During our voluntary sketchbook drawing time he would ask for our opinions on what he should draw or even what colors he should use. Most often, he would reject our ideas or suggestions, and come up with his own ideas. However it was clear that he felt most comfortable drawing while in our presence and engaging us in dialogue. After a few weeks he became very interested in drawing and cutting. He would spend time carefully creating small drawings on colored construction paper and then ask us to cut them out for him. We all developed a similar schema for this practice, cutting carefully around his images, thereby creating a small border as to not invade his drawing space. At the end of the program it became clear that these works were especially meaningful for Max, as he selected some of them for inclusion in the final exhibition (see Fig. 2).

This type of directed collaboration was a common occurrence in our working experiences with Max. He became very comfortable asking us to do certain tasks related to his art (such as cutting). On one occasion he even asked Jennifer to finish an artwork for him as he moved on to a new project. He had been collaborating with her for almost a half hour on a wooden sculpture, telling her where to place the glue as he added on more blocks. When another project became more inviting, he asked her to finish gluing the sculpture alone. As he walked away he told her "remember to build it" and "you know what to do, right?" (personal communication, 2014).

It is evident here that Max's experience collaborating with Jennifer was grounded in differing ideas about what it means to work together. Max felt comfortable working alongside her, directing her on when and how to add glue or position blocks. Additionally, he felt confident to walk away from this partnership to complete a different work, trusting that she would finish building his piece as he had directed. It seems that both types of "collaboration" were equally comfortable for Max. Yet, Jennifer felt differently. While she was happy to work together with Max while he was next to her, she seemed frustrated when he told her what to do to finish his work.

While we allowed ourselves to be directed in our collaborations with Max, in our work with another student, Steven, we became members of an active audience, as his passion was storytelling. He would work, silent and dedicated, on stories in his sketchbook. Sometimes his stories were encapsulated in a single page, while others spanned several pages. As the assistants and I walked around and engaged in discussion with the children about their drawings, Steven would often pull us aside to share his story. Fully aware of the nature of our photographic documentation, often accomplished with our iPhones, Steven began to ask us to document his stories in video form as well. He would show his drawing and narrate the story for digital documentation, always asking to view the video once it was complete.

He worked this way with other media as well, most often telling stories. On one occasion he carefully built four creatures out of wire (a snake, a bear, a giraffe, and an elephant) alongside Jennifer. She recorded the process of him creating his animals, and then he requested that she take a video of their fight. She writes in her field notes:

> There was a lot of problem solving while making these animals and Steven talked out loud while thinking of the possibilities and processes. For the elephant he told me to do the feet; I suggested he do the feet and he said, "let's both do the feet" and we each took one to work on. After all of the creatures were finished there was a fight between them and he wanted me to record it; the giraffe was the only survivor…Afterwards he wanted to watch the video. "That was fun." He smashed the remaining creatures up even more but agreed to let us keep the giraffe for the art show despite initially wanting to take it home to show his mom and dad. "Now they look just like one piece of wire all smashed up. They will know next time." (personal communication, 2014)

It was clear that in these moments, Steven enjoyed performing both for the camera and for us. He liked being able to control what was said, and the way he showed his drawings or sculptures to us. This type of collaboration seemed more comfortable for Jennifer, who perhaps assumed that because she was helping Steven do something that would be challenging for him to do alone, her participation was legitimized. Steven was able to create videos on his own using the flip video cameras (and did this very often!) but they were a never in service of recording his two or three-dimensional artwork. Rather, they were narrations of classroom events in a documentary style. He never attempted to set up the camera and act in front of it as Seth did.

Samantha also had an interest in storytelling, but her desire to get her words on paper seemed to supersede the story itself. As she was not yet able to write herself, our collaborations most often resulted in us acting as scribes for her work. She sought out Jennifer's collaboration in this vein on two different occasions. The first time she selected a small blank book (purposefully offered to the children so they could create stories) and carefully drew six images. Jennifer recalls that Samantha's story changed during the creation, being finally determined only when Jennifer wrote down her words:

> There were several times that I had to leave the table and each time I returned the story Samantha was working on became more elaborate than if I had stayed seated with her the whole time. On one of the pages she'd originally told me about a volcano and then changed it to a tornado. She dictated the text she wanted to use for each page as well as where it was written and what color it was written in. When she reached the last page she wasn't ready to end the story so decided to leave it open-ended. (personal communication, 2014)

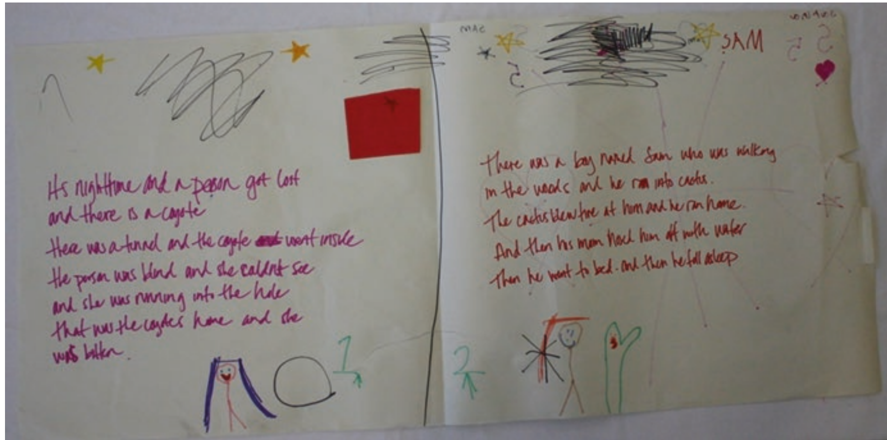

Fig. 3 One of Samantha's stories, recorded by Jennifer and illustrated by Samantha

Two weeks later Samantha enlisted Jennifer in more story writing collaborations, this time moving beyond the pre-fabricated book structure we had provided (see Fig. 3). She requested a long piece of paper off a roll and wrote two short stories, each containing only one image. The first was a story about a coyote, while the second featured her friend Seth. Jennifer reflected on the nature of this type of collaboration with Samantha, and noted that "she talks very fast and wants to include a lot of information, which changes each time she retells it." Jennifer noted,"Samantha likes writing stories and mentioned that she never has the opportunity to do so at home because her mom is too busy to write for her" (personal communication, 2014). Once again, this collaboration (like Steven's, but unlike Max's) was comfortable for Jennifer as helping Samantha write her stories was something she would have been unable to accomplish on her own. This type of collaborative assistance was necessary in order for the full nature of Samantha's ideas to come forth.

4 Working Together: Understandings and Values of Collaboration

These types of child-led collaborations stretch our understanding of collaboration and specifically the way we conceptualize interactions between adults and children. Wilson (2007) posits:

> In pedagogical settings we must also understand the ways children and adults interact and influence one another; within the larger culture we must understand the visual cultural transactions between and among children and adults. And we must understand these visual cultural and pedagogical transactions in light of conditions such as coercion, cooperation, and collaboration. (p. 6)

He argues that much of the art that is created in traditional school classrooms functions as a type of co-production between adults and children, rather than the sole work of the children whose personal hand may have physically created it. Teachers almost always have a role in the work that children create in the classroom, often dictating stylistic influences, color palette, size, and other factors. For Wilson, artwork created by children but based on the choices and/or influences from adults exists not as the work of the child (most commonly understood as child art) but as a form of "*other than* child visual culture and *other than* adult visual culture" (original emphasis, p. 9). In a democratic type of collaborative "other than," both adults and children would offer ideas and ways of working together, where each is able to maintain a level of equivalent status (Wilson, 2007). In such deliberate collaborative relationships, the ideas of both children and teachers are valued and considered as a part of the pedagogical context. These experiences bring children's ideas and interests to light: as Wilson notes, children's interests are normally hidden.

These collaborations can only occur when both parties embody this idea of working together. It is the togetherness created when working collectively that truly transforms pedagogical spaces and practice. Green (2001) understands the idea of collaborations between two parties (artists specifically) as a type of manipulation of the singular figure. In these relationships, there is a deliberate rejection of the singular identity in search of a composite identity (Green, 2001), which offers the possibility to extend beyond the single role of teacher, student, adult, or child. Thus collaboration creates "new understandings of artistic authorship" (p. x) and identities, challenging the roles of artist, teacher, and learner.

When we work together, the self is stretched (John-Steiner, 2000) in new and previously unknown ways, and one has the potential to become something different. Collaborations, artistic or otherwise, have the ability to create a "third independent existence" where the boundaries between the partners are annihilated (Green, 2001). Yet, the destruction of these boundaries (or traditional identities) does not eliminate the difference among those involved. There is not a loss of singular or personal identity or needs, but a translation of understanding (Green, 2001). As understood by Bhabha (1994), translation activates communication and openness to change or new understandings. Therefore, these types of partnerships present opportunities to change the domains in which the collaborators work and expand understandings of the field (John-Steiner, 2000) as well as their identities.

In collaborative encounters between adults and children in a classroom, space is provided for knowledge to be co-constructed. In this space children share what they know, and what they wish to know, and adults and children engage in this process of coming to know together. John-Steiner (2000) understands this as a type of constructed knowing that "emphasizes situated, contextual, and integrated modes of thinking over the more traditional and prevalent separate modes of knowing" (p. 6). Within this understanding, each person involved in the constructed knowledge exists as an instrument of social change, in that we are always engaged in re-enacting and re-constructing social experience and thus knowledge.

It is in this type of space that this research was situated. Understood through this context, the classroom experiences that both the children and I engaged in fostered

the appropriation of new roles (student/teacher/collaborator) and opportunities for those who often experience limited power to become empowered (John-Steiner, 2000). This empowerment exists in opportunities to direct adults, engage in play or collaboration with teachers, create work inspired by their own ideas, and learn in a space where knowledge is co-constructed rather than passed down from above. If both teachers and students can understand their identities in new ways, this opens the door for a more democratic exchange of ideas and learning.

5 Ethical Encounters

I understand the child-led collaborations described earlier as fostering the co-construction of knowledge and newness in adult/child relationships, conceptualized as a type of ethical encounter between teacher and student, between adult and child. I draw upon the ideas of Emmanual Levinas (1987, 1988, 1989a, 1989b) and his understanding of the ethics of an encounter as a way to frame this interpretation. The analysis of these events as such runs counter to a more modernist and universalistic idea about ethics and the ways in which people (in this case specifically adults/children or teachers/students) interact with each other.

A universalistic idea of ethics is based on a normative relationship between right and wrong that is inherently void of social or historical context (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). Dahlberg and Moss argue that in the case of universalistic ethics, the ethical relationship is grounded in a generalized understanding of how people should act and/or think in any given situation. There is a balance between rights/responsibilities and duties/expectations in a linear sense; there is one way to interpret a situation, one right action, one wrong action, one consequence.

In examining the relationships and interactions between teachers and students through this universalistic view, there are singular ways to fulfill these roles: one ethical way to be a teacher (maintain control over your class, communicate your knowledge to your students, teach skill and technique) and one way to be a student (listen and obey your teacher, complete your work on time in the correct manner, follow directions). In the same way, collaboration can also be interpreted through this framework; it must be grounded in an equal relationship between collaborators, where ideas are exchanged back and forth and both parties contribute equally to the final result. In the interactions between teachers and students in a classroom, this might also extend to the notion of rejecting children's requests for help or assistance in moments when they can complete the same activity by themselves.

In rejecting this modernist conception of ethics, a postmodern perspective is grounded in ideas about "responsibility, relationships, situatedness, and otherness" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 69). Rather than seeking a generalized truth, this new conception of ethics pays careful attention to the competencies of individuals and the value of the relationship. The complexity of making decisions substantiated the value of each person's ability to determine what is best in any given situation, resulting in trust for people's capability to make value judgments rather than simply fol-

lowing generalized rules that dictated behavior (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). Thus, ethical relationships are understood as a complex moral activity rather than a single action with a single consequence. Sevenhuijsen (1998, as cited in Dahlberg & Moss, 2005) discussed notions of the relational self, understood as "a moral agent who is embedded in concrete relationships with other people…The self is not conceived as an entity, but as the protagonist in a biography which can contain all kinds of ambiguities and unexpected turns" (as cited in Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 75). Thus, ethical relationships can be understood as spaces of responsiveness, responsibility, and attentiveness to the needs of others.

For Levinas (1987, 1988, 1989a, 1989b), in order to ethically engage with others, we must accept the unknowability of the other. If we presume to know the other, we simply reduce them to Sameness; we reject their possibility to be other (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). In this type of ethical relationship, the other is not simply unknown, it is unknowable; we recognize that the other is like us, resembles us, but exists as exterior to us (Levinas, 1987). Our relationship with them is, in ways, a mystery. In this context, interpreting children as "others" is empowering and productive rather than dismissive. By not assuming that we know children or their desires, we are able to create a space that genuinely considers children's intentions and ideas. The acceptance of children's alterity (the state of being other or different) creates an ethical relationship because we reject the idea that we can really know.

When discussing ethical relationships, Levinas frames knowing as a negative attribute. He compares the act of knowing to actions such as possessing, appropriating, grasping, and seizing.

> But in knowledge there also appears the notion of an intellectual activity or of a reasoning will – a way of doing something which consists precisely of thinking through knowing, of seizing something and making it one's own, of reducing to presence and representing the difference of being, an activity which *appropriates* and *grasps* the otherness of the known. (Levinas, 1989a, p. 76, original emphasis)

By allowing the unknown to ground our relationships with others, we are able to live in spaces where uncertainty, ambiguity, dissymmetry, and interruption (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005) are valued. In work with young children, we can embrace these qualities, and rather than know or assume, we can listen to children and allow ourselves to accept the fact that we may not really understand their intentions and respond to them in the moment.

Rather than grasping or attempting to know the other, Levinas argues that one must think "'otherwise than being' – beyond essence and the autonomous and rational self" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 79). Dahlberg and Moss continue:

> It is responsibility for the Other, rather than autonomy, independence, and rights of the self, that constitutes an ethical relation. Indeed, for Levinas, freedom comes not from the exercise of choice and independence but through affirmation of the Other and one's own responsibility. (p. 79)

Levinas calls for a type of interdependency rather than autonomy, understood as "the recognition that we are all in more or lesser degrees dependent on the care, attention, and respect of others" (Sevenhuijsen & Williams, 2003, as cited in

Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 82). Additionally, this notion of interdependency rejects traditional ideas of independence as good or normative and dependence as bad or abnormal, rather existing in a space in between.

At its core, the notion of interdependence is connected to the act of collaboration itself. When any two parties rely on each other for work to be produced or to continue, it creates conditions for care and respect. John-Steiner (2000) argues that this idea is closely related to the feminist notion of the "self in relation," where one's own identity is developed in the context of her or his meaningful relationships with others (p. 79). This type of intersubjective relationship is, as Levinas (1987) argues, one that allows people to enter into relationships with each other without allowing one self to be "crushed" by the other (p. 77). Interdependence and the exchange of ideas that occurs through working with another in an ethical relationship helps to foster trust and a positive emotional environment for collaboration (John-Steiner, 2000).

The conditions of a relationship grounded in interdependence offer opportunities for love, friendship, and human togetherness (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005), allowing for both the respect for and the acceptance of difference. Levinas (1988) posits,

> The other is unique, unique to such an extent that in speaking of the responsibility for the unique, responsibility in relation to the unique, I use the word "love". That which I call responsibility is a love, because love is the only attitude where there is an encounter with the unique. (p. 174)

Levinas (1987) argues that it is only by showing the ways in which love or responsibility for the other contrast ideas of power or possession over the other that we can discuss ideas about communication. He argues that this is neither a "struggle, nor a fusion, for a knowledge" (p. 88), but a relationship grounded in respect and appreciation for difference.

It is particularly important to note that this type of respect and responsibility is not approached through the practice of putting oneself in the position of the other. It is not a representation of sympathy or communion (Levinas, 1987), but responsiveness. This concept moves beyond simply trying to think of how you would feel if in the position of another, but is grounded in a simple acceptance and recognition of difference at its core. Dahlberg and Moss (2005) argue that responsiveness is a major element in understanding the ethics of caring, and something that also persists within the field of early childhood. In writing on the image of the teacher in early childhood art education, Tarr (2008) argues that one must be a responsive educator; this position is crucial to upholding the quality of arts education for young children. She notes that children need a responsive educator who values children's thoughts, ideas, abilities, and interests; one who understands and supports the ways that children use art to represent their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions; one who supports the ways in which children create meaning through various forms of artmaking; and one who observes, listens, and reflects upon children's lives and experiences (p. 23). These ideas of responsiveness, responsibility, love, and respect all ground ethical encounters with children. Levinas (1989b) notes that it is only when one becomes truly responsible for another that they can enter into dialogue with them.

6 Child-Led Collaboration as Ethical Encounters

I interpret the child-led collaborative work created in this Saturday morning art class with Seth, Max, Samantha, and Steven as moments of ethical encounters. I frame this position in the perspective of first person, writing specifically about the way that I interpret these collaborations, even the ones that I did not experience first hand. While Jennifer and Alice may have different ideas about the value of their collaborations with the children in this program, the curricular and pedagogical practices in place allowed these experiences to occur, and I hope that they encouraged these young teachers to reconsider the meaning and value of their encounters with children.

In these moments, by letting myself be directed, I was offering the children the opportunity to control both their experience and my level of participation in it. I did not assume that I knew or understand their plan or ideas – this is their unknowability. If I aimed to control my type and level of participation in our collaboration, then I assumed that it is possible in that moment for me to fully know or understand either them and their ideas. This idea can be extended to position the encounters between teachers and children in traditional art classrooms as spaces of coercion (Wilson, 2007). Children are not encouraged to explore ideas or concepts that are interesting for them; they are simply doing what they are told. In rejecting these types of coercive encounters, I embraced these young children's alterity; I quietly offered spaces for them to explore their own ideas and decide if and how they wished for me to be a part of their making. In order to allow myself be directed, I had to be comfortable giving up elements of power traditionally associated with being an adult educator. In these small moments, I was no longer in control. The children exercised power in order to tell me what to do, what materials to use, where to cut, when to begin, etc. I was a part of their artistic plans rather than vice versa.

Through these collaborations, I fostered the idea of interdependency rather than independence. There were moments where I could have encouraged the children to work alone, moments when *my* presence was not completely necessary. I could have offered Seth a tripod to enable him to film himself building, or one to Steven so that he could film his own stories. I could have encouraged Max to cut out his own drawings, which he was fully capable of doing. However, I chose to engage in this work with them instead (and encouraged Alice and Jennifer to do the same), being aware of the fact that I did not, or could not, fully understand their desires for me to participate. In the case of Samantha, her collaboration (specifically with Jennifer) was grounded in a more tangible sense of interdependence, as Jennifer's work in their collaboration was something that Samantha could not complete on her own. Being in kindergarten, Samantha was probably already experiencing instruction in letters and perhaps even words (she could clearly write her own name), yet it was clear that she desired for Jennifer to be her scribe. One can assume that she wished for her stories to be able to be easily interpreted, allowing any viewer/reader to understand them.

Rather than attempt to know these children in these moments, I became comfortable in this ambiguous space and accepted our interdependence on each other. To

allow myself to be directed and comfortable in this space also involved a great deal of trust between the children and me. We all had to have confidence in this type of new child/adult relationship. I had to trust the children to direct me and control their own making. Additionally, they had to trust in my way of teaching and understand that I truly cared about their artistic interests. They had the opportunity to direct me because they were not being controlled or directed themselves.

In reflection, I can offer some conjectures regarding these young children's desires to collaborate. Perhaps Max liked the aesthetic quality of the smooth edges that I could achieve with the scissors and he could not. Maybe he simply enjoyed the attention and time we shared as we sat together in a loud and often rambunctious classroom. Perhaps Seth desired to be a filmmaker rather than a performer. Or maybe he wished to direct me in artmaking and construction, as he was often directed by his own teachers. Perhaps Steven wished to be only a storyteller and performer. However, since these encounters exist in a space of ambiguity, conjectures are not needed to in order validate our collaborations and interdependence upon each other.

This perspective is a new way of thinking about our interactions with young children in classroom spaces. Rather than simply lurking on the sidelines or encouraging children to work alone or with their peers, educators can become partners in learning, changing the roles of both teacher and student. We can begin to accept the unknowability of the young children with whom we work, accepting those moments where we do not understand why they are making the choices or requests that they are. It is in these types of spaces that adults and children can truly co-construct knowledge together.

Interestingly, the experiences which I write about here were all extended by the children themselves. While many of the fourteen children in the class bounced around to various projects on different days, the collaborative work initiated by these children in particular involved mediums/projects that they often revisited each week, and sometimes worked on independently. Steven was enthralled with the notion of recording – stories, the classroom, other children. While he continued to create stories in his artwork and often asked us to record him retelling or acting them out, he also worked extensively with the flip video camera to create films of his own. Additionally, Seth grew fond of using the flip video cameras to document, in particular his own work and experiences. For Max, drawing, cutting, and building with blocks became staples for him. Over the course of 10 weeks, he became increasingly comfortable with the language of these materials, and his work developed. By the end of the program he was beginning to become comfortable working unaccompanied and spent time carefully making. Finally, Samantha's interest in storytelling was most certainly fostered and encouraged by these collaborations. Her first story quickly spiraled into many, and it seemed that she enjoyed the individualized time Jennifer devoted to her. While this was not an activity she could chose to continue on her own, it was clearly something she valued. The time taken by Jennifer to listen to her stories and write down her ideas word for word was something missing from her experiences with her mother (as she herself noted) and perhaps at school as well.

The fact that these experiences that began as child-led collaborations fostered further interest in medium, technique, and even product speak powerfully to the value that we as adults have in collaborative experiences with young children, especially when we sit back and allow ourselves to be guided by the children themselves. I understand this reversal of the traditional teacher-student relationship in favor of ethical collaborative encounters as transformative and powerful. In these moments, a third space was created, where I was able to see these children in new and exciting ways. At the same time, the children had the opportunity to see us (as adult educators) in new ways as well, as partners or collaborators rather than just as teachers.

It is interesting to note, however, that these requests to collaborate came from the children's ability to see us as something other than simply "teachers" to begin with. We were viewed as adults who were interested in their ideas and their voluntary art, teachers who could be enticed to play or create with them. Before even asking for our collaboration in these specific moments, they understood that we wished to participate in these types of experiences with them. This image was a deliberate construction carefully presented to the children during the very first day of these Saturday classes. On this first morning, I invited the children to join me in a conversation about our art class, and what my hope for it was. I told them that I was not only a teacher, but also a researcher – someone who was interested in asking questions and finding out the answers to them. I told them that this class was all about what *they* were interested in; I hoped they would tell me the kinds of things they wanted to do and what they wanted to experience, and then I would do my best to make that happen for them. This was a very deliberate attempt to balance the sense of power normally weighted in the adult's direction in a classroom environment. How much these children understood my interest in their work and ideas, or my desire to foster spaces of collaboration with them, is not clear. Yet it is clear that some of the students' sensed my willingness to work with them, either in tandem, or simply as a classroom partner who was happy to facilitate their exploration of their own ideas.

By deliberately engaging in these pedagogical artistic collaborations with these young children, I believe that together we created a third space of possibility. This space explores not only what early childhood art education might look like, but also ways for teachers and students to work together, opportunities to foster interdependence in the classroom, and ideas about asymmetrical collaboration. Additionally, I believe that by engaging in any type of encounters with children where we do not aim or assume to understand or know them, we communicate a sense of trust in their ideas and abilities, as well as in our relationship with each other. These teacher-student connections are grounded in respect and responsibility, and though they may appear unbalanced from the outside, function as examples of ethical work with young children.

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Fighting the Mad King: Play, Art, and Adventure in an Early Childhood Art Studio

Marta Cabral

1 Art Is Real Life: Oren, Tom, and the Mad King

It did not cross my mind to wash the red paint off Oren's cheek when he called me over to the mirror, showing me the "blood" on his face. That mark was a physical trace of his fight with the Mad King, and that fight was an important part of the adventure we were having together. It had been a busy morning of art and play. Oren, Tom, and I had faced challenges and dangers, braving the wild and conquering our way back to school. Oren's "battle injury" was a reminder of that.

Adventures, like art, may happen at unexpected moments. When Oren, Tom, and I hopped and skipped our way from the preschool room to the art studio that morning, we had no sense of what lay ahead. Wearing eye protection for wood shop work, we discovered that our colorful goggles could offer more than defense against flying splinters and nails. They also made it possible to find all sorts of secret passages, doors, and paths that no one had ever known to be there before.

That was what happened as we sat at the studio table with our wood and tools that fateful morning, ready to work. As he put his red goggles on, Oren looked up and spotted a secret passage on the top shelf of the paint cabinet. That cabinet had always been there in our art studio, but it was only on this day that Oren noticed the secret passage, almost invisible, hidden behind its door. With intense determination, he clambered onto a chair to reach up and open this secret, imaginary passage. It was as if a tornado broke out every time he tried to pull it open, a wind so strong that it forced us to keep the cabinet shut for a while so that the danger could pass. Finally Oren and Tom managed to get through. After following the secret passageway, they found a big cardboard box. It turned out to be an elevator that would take them to another secret door. But, alas, this other secret door was shut tightly. They would

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have to open it with scissors. However, the *pretend* scissors weren't working all that well on this very real cardboard box, so Tom reached into the pocket of my smock to get the pair of scissors he knew I usually carried there. "This is real life!" Oren exclaimed. "Real scissors!" They worked their way into the elevator with both the "real-life" and "pretend" scissors.

Engaged as we were in our adventure, we still noticed loud noises coming from the hallway. Really loud noises. We were curious, but the boys were too busy to take a look and wouldn't be interrupted at any cost. Leadership was needed, and Tom stepped up to the job: "We'll take care of this," he said. "You go to the door, Marta. Go see what that noise is." Obediently, I peeked out the door, saw a facilities person working with some kind of power tool, and reported back to the boys. We had a short discussion about drills, blades, and other power tools, as they kept working on the elevator's door with their scissors. Finally, Oren and Tom managed to cut the cardboard elevator doors open. They celebrated their feat with a bit of jumping around. As they looked inside the box-turned-elevator, they found a crumpled piece of paper lying there: a map! *The* map! It was the map that would lead them to a secret place, they decided. With urgency, they climbed into the box, rode the elevator all the way down, and emerged when they arrived at the destination indicated on the map. The boys claimed to have no idea where they were headed, but they knew the map was leading them out of the art studio and along the school hallway, so they followed it. It was not an easy road to travel. They faced several obstacles and opponents, fought the Mad King, crawled under "real life" carts and tables, confronted dangerous monsters, and made it through swamps. Even as they faced such obstacles, Oren reminded us with resolve, "This is not easy, but it will do us good."

As it turned out, the secret path led us all the way back to the preschool room. After a brief visit to the classroom, the boys took the path back and went through all the obstacles again, but this time they did so knowing what they were to face. Back where we started, they got back into the box-turned-elevator and Oren moved over to make room for me, asking me to take a seat next to him. I lay on the floor with them until the elevator brought us once more to the art studio, where we resumed our work. Oren returned to his woodwork, while Tom decided to paint the path they took on the paper of the imaginary map they had followed, talking me through the full course of the adventure:

Tom: "We started right here and went all the way there…"
Oren: "And we found a few monsters on the way!"

Oren got excited about the map and decided to help Tom by painting the "the things we saw on the way." They documented the places and characters they encountered on their journey (as well as some new characters that came up as they painted), and talked me through their adventure in a rich, detailed verbal and visual narrative. Bringing together their knowledge of paint and their experiences on that journey, the boys transformed what had been scrap paper found inside a random cardboard box into a personal and meaningful record of their own adventure. Oren painted the swamp and the Mad King "with all the crazy colors" that he was mixing. Tom painted a big red monster, who, as he explained, grew bigger and bigger every time

he moved his brush. I smiled, listened, and celebrated with them, and also made sure they had all the materials they needed to keep exploring.

When back in the classroom Oren told his friends about our adventure, he used his words and his body to give an account of how he had bravely battled through the perils of that strange land. He also had something else to back him up: the map that he and Tom had painted. The map was important, as an integral component of the experience itself, but also as a memory and testimony of it.

As the boys mixed colors and made marks on the map, inspired by their ongoing experiences, they also created their narrative about those experiences, interpreting their actions, adding detail and developments, and making sense of it all. The mapped land was gradually filled with muddy ponds as the paints began to mix. The textures on the paper turned into toads, which the boys had to push away in order to escape the dangerous mud. Our straight-ahead school hallway became one with the twists and turns of the path through the kingdom of our morning adventures. The red marks got bigger and bigger as Oren moved his brush over the paper. The Mad King became angrier and angrier….

But time goes by—even in art adventures—and very soon we would have to join the other preschoolers for morning meeting. "We are just putting the final touches." Oren reassured me, as he kept working. "The really final, final touches," he added, a few minutes later. "There," he finally declared, "it's done." As we cleaned up our brushes and tools, we chatted about our morning.

Oren: "This was a big adventure today!"
Marta: "It was! Thank you for taking me with you on this adventure."
Oren: "Our pleasure, Marta!"

Back in the classroom, Oren called me over to "please, quickly" come to the bathroom, where he was looking in the mirror while washing his hands. He had noticed something on his face, a red mark. "There is a little bit of blood here, from my fight with the king. But that's okay, Marta, I'm okay," he reassured me. It could be argued that the red mark was just a bit of paint, but such reasoning wasn't anywhere in our thoughts. Blood from Oren's fight with the king was the only plausible explanation we could think of. I agreed, and made sure that the wound was not too bad, and that Oren was ready to join the preschoolers for meeting. He would have a lot to share with his friends that morning. And so would I.

2 Stepping Back and Engaging as Part of the Adventure

We know from existing research and theory related to the artistic development of young children (Burton, 1980; Smith, Fucigna, Kennedy, & Lord, 1993; Zurmuehlen, 1990) that mark making and stories are often connected. As our motions repeat—becoming more intentional—we begin to gain ownership over our marks. As children grow in experience, they may start noticing some motions and marks differently, perhaps naming them as they make them happen, before intentionally representing

objects and ideas. However, more than using materials to *tell* stories and *express* ideas, I believe we use materials to *create* those stories and ideas, to *think.* More than a means to communicate, materials and play allow us to contemplate, create, and develop those ideas. This can be interpreted in many of the stories I live everyday with the infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in the early childhood center where I teach. It is a small, play-based center in a university setting in New York City, and we explore many different materials in our small art studio, the classrooms, the university's art gallery, and sometimes other studios around campus.

Early in the school year I work mostly in the classrooms. However, in time, as the children and I get to know each other, we enjoy working in other spaces as well. No one is "required" to work in the studio, and invitations to join me there are often playful ones. This is aligned with the school's general emergent and play-based curriculum, in which respect for each child and their timing, ideas, and interests are key.

In the art studio, the children are invited to engage in dialogue with different matters, listening and responding to the materials in open-ended explorations. With materials, words, or motions, it's about the making, not what is made. Even the concept of an *art studio* is not always understood in a straightforward manner, as we often work in the classroom, the gallery, the park, the hallways, or other places that better suit the interests of the day. The youngest children and I engage with materials in their infant classroom, whereas the older children often ask to join me in spaces other than their own classroom, where we work in smaller groups and have additional materials available. The art studio is where we explore materials and possibilities - which differs depending on the physical location that we do it in.

Some days our explorations exist mostly within the boundaries of the time that we share in the studio. The children go back to their classrooms stating that they are "done" with their experiences (and potentially, their artworks) for the time being. Sometimes, though, they return to them at a later date and re-think, re-experience, and re-live them. Frequently though, materials, narratives, and explorations linger for days, weeks, even months, experiments bubbling "with questions that ebbed and flowed and [are] tangled" (Kind, 2013, p. 430) with our daily lives. Very often these long term experiences relate to materials that the children were curious about, and that we embraced not as "immutable, passive, or lifeless" (p. 434), but as "participants in our projects with relevant roles in initiating particular encounters and intra-actions" (p. 434).

Glass and 3D designing and printing were examples of this. When I had some of my own glass work exhibited in a faculty exhibition in our on-campus gallery, I took the children up to visit the gallery, as I often do. In that moment, and in the following days, several children asked questions about my glass works: What it was like to work with that material? How was it possible to change its shape without breaking it? Was it smooth? And many other queries, too. I tried my best to answer the children's questions, but soon we had reached the point where my words were not enough. What I was *telling* them about working with glass was not enough – they wanted to know what it *felt* like. As a result of this experience and the interest it sparked, a yearlong encounter with glass began – and glass made its way to our studio as a permanent offering for our young artists.

Questions also led us to our first 3D designing and printing explorations. "I don't know much about Makerbots," I said, responding to the preschooler who had asked what he was seeing on a video that was playing in the art gallery. "But my friend Sean does – should we go talk to him?" We went to visit Sean – my colleague who ran the Graduate School's new media studio – and as we played with objects on the screen and paid close attention to how they came to a physical shape, the children who visited the media studio became more and more interested in the material. As they shared their enthusiasm with others, 3D designing and printing turned into a semester long exploration (Cabral & Justice, 2016). This kind of "liberating" collaboration (Wilson, 2007, p. 19) in which children and adults can explore and learn together, means that we all have a part to play in suggesting and selecting materials – just as we do in working with them.

It is also not unusual for us to delve into materials that I bring to the children – materials new to the studio that I offer as a means to see if they spark an interest. Although the children most often decide themselves what materials they want to explore on any given day, this is not always the case. In fact, on many occasions I am the one who suggests materials and tools, defining what will be available on certain days. This often happens at the beginning of the school year, when even the older children are less aware of the material possibilities that exist.

I also suggest new materials that the children are unlikely to be familiar with, especially in school contexts. If, for example, paper pulp, photography, or augmented reality were never used in the studio, I need to start by offering the materials myself. This ensures that the children know what the materials are so that they can then ask for them in the future. I make these offerings when there are specific materials that I think will benefit certain children, or may help them to respond to conversations that we've had, or observations and interpretations that we have made together.

Even in child-centered and emergent ways of being in the classroom, Kindler's (1995) consideration of good and appropriate adult input is worth keeping in mind. The key here is ensuring that input is indeed *good* and *appropriate*. Given time and materials, many children will often spontaneously engage in explorations that will naturally help them develop artistically (Gardner, 1982; Lowenfeld, 1952), and this natural exploration should be cherished and encouraged. However, Kindler (1995) posits, "the mere availability of materials in [the] early childhood classroom is not a sufficient condition for the enhancement of artistic growth" (p. 14) as suggested by the minor and sporadic use given to unnatended art centers in the classrooms she studied. As she reports, in these classrooms, consistent engagement with art materials happened mostly on occasions where the teacher (or a parent) was physically present, interacting with the materials themselves.

This points to the importance of context and the need to create physical and emotional spaces where children feel encouraged, socially, to explore *if*, *when*, and *how* they want to. It brings us to the importance of context and relationship, and the need for teacher intervention as a primary contributor to the creation of an environment that invites, justifies, and endorses healthy forms of artistic engagement.

There are certainly rules and understandings that have to be followed. For example, safety is always at the forefront of my concerns. That said, each child should

make their own decisions about the ins and outs of their entanglements with materials and the products they may eventually create. Materials themselves set rules learned by experience: when two colors mix together, a new color appears; glue makes stuff sticky; clay changes with water, and so on. But if "whatever value drawing [or, here, art making] has for children is bound to the context in which it takes place, and as the context shifts so does the value" (Pearson, 2001, p. 358). As such, the context will also be a determinant in inviting the sort of experiences we find appropriate to offer our students.

So what is appropriate adult input? In different ways, scholars (e.g. Burton (1980), Kindler (1995), Kind (2013), and Wilson (2007)) suggest that teacher action should not be about providing guidelines and directions as to how and what to do, but rather encouraging exploration and decision-making. Not by fully stepping aside and leaving children to their own devices, but by embracing exploration and actively engaging in artistic entanglements with materials themselves. I think of it as "three broad movements of engagement: *offering*, *listening and considering*, and *responding*" (Cabral, 2016, p. 223).

Offering refers to the means by which we make something (e.g., materials, ideas, etc.) available, sometimes by suggesting and scaffolding, other times by stepping back for a moment and letting children discover what it is they want to pursue, what problems they want to create and solve, and the "wonderful ideas" (Duckworth, 2006) that will get to matter. Offering leads to careful consideration, sometimes in dialogue, other times in quiet mutterings. It is not a passive listening, and often – when the child or children in question so desires – it can be based in many forms.

Offering, listening, and considering, and responding necessarily include allowing for rejection. They include leaving room for every child to say "no" to what's being suggested and to go in a different direction instead – even if that means choosing different media, or choosing not to participate altogether.

I'm thinking, for example, of the first day Costin joined me in the art studio. It was already mid-fall and Costin had not tried his hand at art materials outside of the toddler room, so I decided to try to interest him in a visit – offering him a new possibility. We played in the classroom for a while, driving cars and trains over carpets and chairs, zooming by easels and tables. At some point, I drove my car over a large piece of paper on the easel, and Costin followed with his train. As I picked up a brush to put some paint on the paper that I could then go over again with my car, Costin got ahead of me. Picking up his own brush, he moved his arm in wide circular motions that left bright marks on the paper. As he painted, he added words to his movement. "Train going round and round!," he said, marks continuing to emerge on the paper. As Costin picked up his train again, I suggested that we drive to the art studio. "Yeah!" He agreed, excitedly, his car speeding up to follow mine to the hallway. We stayed in the art studio a little longer, playing with our vehicles on the table and on the floor, painting and chatting our way through the morning.

As much as I wanted Costin to join me in the studio as a way of making him aware of that space as something available to him, his visit only happened because he agreed to it – otherwise he would have stayed in the classroom. Even his

engagement with paints was his choice, although certainly suggested by me in what I saw was a good way to spark his interest. Costin was in charge of his decisions. His choices and interests led his explorations, even if motivated by my suggestions and arrangements of spaces and opportunities.

After this day, Costin interacted with me often. He would come to me with trains, cars, and other toys, and he joined me in the studio to play with paint, clay, and other materials a few times. But this first morning in the studio seemed to have made a special impression on Costin, as suggested by his reaction when he was shown his painting again, months later. As we selected artworks to show in our annual art exhibition, I pulled out the paintings Costin had worked on so far, and spread them on the floor for him. Costin took a quick look and ran to his train painting, pointing at it and moving his arm in wide circular motions that pulled his whole body with it.

“Train going round and round!,” he exclaimed again. Costin telling me that the train was going round and round suggests that he was recalling his experience of making the painting, triggered by looking at the painting itself. The marks he left on the paper served as a physical memory of a playful situation in which he used art materials to engage in a shared narrative with his teacher. That object was the one he valued the most among all other paintings, the one he wanted to show his loved ones in the gallery where his work would be exhibited.

The art exhibition Costin was selecting work for is an important event in our school year. As children show their work in an on-campus public gallery, they share experiences with the community and with each other, in a formal but familiar and comfortable environment. This annual art exhibition plays an important role in providing the children with a formal opportunity to re-engage with their artworks, especially as they go through their portfolios to select what they want to display. This show is open to the public for about 3 weeks each year, just like most of the other exhibitions in this gallery that the children and I visit often, year-round. We take the elevator from our center and go to the gallery in small groups to engage with and discuss sculptures, paintings, digital art, prints, or whatever is being exhibited. By the time they are 5 years old, most of the children have engaged with more art than many of the adults I know.

Visiting the art gallery is an important practice during our school days. Looking at other artists’ work is an important way to create awareness about choices and possibilities in art making. We encounter ourselves in dialogue with artworks and learn to imagine and discuss different practices and processes. As we do so, we talk about the choices that different artists have made in their artworks, and wonder about their materials, entanglements, troubles, joys, interactions, and relationships. It is not that an adult in the gallery – or me as the teacher – is *telling* the children about meaning or interpretation, stories, or techniques. On the contrary, we are creating those meanings together (Burnham & Kai-Kee, 2011), meanings that are individual to each of us and will keep changing over time, in relation to different circumstances and across different contexts. Meanings that come in more ways than words, and that exist in the movement of our bodies, in our interactions with the spaces, and in the marks, objects, and motions that these interactions inspire us to make.

Adult input is not a matter of controlling the situation and telling others what to do and how to work. It is also not about completely removing oneself from the situation either. On the contrary, the act of giving space is an active process. It means providing space for questioning and wonder, where a responsible and responsive adult can support without governing children's every move. Stepping back is not a passive action, but a conscious and active way of being "a teacher in the midst of the experience of [our] own learning self in the making" (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 175). This means more than performing a dialogue in which a pre-determined style of participation is required, and where questions and answers promptly follow each other. Engaging in acts of *deflected and reflected discourse* (Cabral, 2016) means that direct participation (with words, materials, or whatever it may be) is not the only acceptable choice. If answers are not required and an active choice for disengagement is taken as a valid response, adult input also means supporting that choice. In the following sections, I discuss stories of interaction with materials, ideas, and artworks that make me question my role as an educator and the processes and by-products of artistic engagements.

3 "The Lizard Is Hiding": The Adventure of Keeping Track

Over my years as a studio art teacher and a curator, I have often struggled with my own views on the "product-process" battle. How is it that I claim to value process and learning over what comes out of them, but one of the high points of our school year is a show of products? I have been learning to make sense of this, as I come to see meaningful products as representative of meaningful processes, explorations, and learning experiences. I have often seen children relating to their artworks as tokens of their lived experiences, and valuing them as such. There is no battle between product and process if they are both part of an experience that includes the making in itself and the physical result of it – when there is one. The physical product is a *by-product* of the experience.

This encompassing approach to product, and consequential stance on the product-process dynamic, comes out of my own interpretations and practices of observation and documentation. Record-keeping and documentation of what goes on in the classroom (whether that be an art classroom or not) are common and long-standing practices in early childhood education (Katz & Chard, 1996). Different methods and approaches to this have been put into practice and studied, focusing on aspects such as play and storytelling (Paley, 1990), literacy (Genishi & Dyson, 2014), or practices of democracy (Folque, 1999). The Reggio Emilia Approach, for example, puts a strong emphasis on documentation practices as tools for reflection, more than assessment (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999), by focusing "more intensively on children's experience, memories, thoughts, and ideas in the course of their work" (Katz & Chard, 1996, p. 2).

Mouvement de l'École Moderne, for example, in its principles and as adopted in different countries (several of them congregated in the Fédération Internationale des

Mouvements de l'École Moderne established in 1957), places a strong emphasis on children's practices of documentation amongst its materials and strategies to establish cooperative and democratic practices in the classroom, as influenced by Freinet's pedagogical ideas (Freinet, 1937, 1992). This Movement has its roots in the search for a more humanitarian society after the horrors of World War I, in which Freinet himself suffered a serious lung injury. Freinet's pedagogy is based on essential concepts such as work and cooperative learning, in which students learn by making and by working in cooperation. Free writing, one of Freinet's staple methods, is grounded in documentation: from a young age children are encourage to produce their own texts by using a printing press. The children's recountings of whatever matters interest them (such as adventures and misadventures, ponderings, news, etc.) would be shared and discussed in the classroom. In Freinet schools of our day, documentation by both students and teachers helps with the running of the classroom, and is seen, too, as a way for children to develop ownership of classroom dynamics and routines (Cabral, 2006).

My own documentation takes many forms – e.g. typed and handwritten notes, as well as sketches, photos, videos, audio-recordings, objects, gatherings of objects curated as a "constellation of meanings" (Smith, 2012, p. 30). My practice of documentation focuses mostly on my observations of what I interpret going on around me: what I see the children doing and hear them saying; what I say and how I respond; how we move our bodies; how we create our own place in the spaces we share; which spaces we choose to inhabit or not, and how we do that. It also includes observation of which materials we tend to engage with and which ones we tend to leave out of our explorations, plus how and why those tendencies seem to occur.

Resisting the disregard for the physical body that Tobin (2004) diagnoses in many early child education settings, I aim to listen to more than words, giving equal attention to other forms of communication, such as silences, movements, or sounds. Like Fincham (2016) and White (2011), I embrace a notion of voice that encompasses "any sound, gesture, movement, or word" (White, 2011, p. 64) that is noticed and recognized as such. In the context of a "corporeal voice" that Fincham describes as "a performance of the body [that] is a site for interpretation and understanding", as part of a "dialogic social exchange" (Fincham, 2016, p. 89), my documentation involves listening to much more than words and artifacts.

More than focusing on children's artworks, I focus on children's artistic engagement, choices, and practices – which includes more than their physical acts of making. Such documentation necessarily includes children's choices to sit back and observe, or not to participate in artistic activities at all. If "the occurrence and the non-occurrence of drawing [and other artistic media] are equally important for theorizing" (Pearson, 2001, p. 357), they are also necessarily equally important components of a documentation that is focused on children and their practices, as well as their modes of engagement and disengagement. Following Pearson's (2001) ideas on drawing as a social practice, instead of merely attending to the products, statements, and actions that are recognized to be part of those practices and engagements, robust documentation should encompass artistic engagement and its absentia.

Focusing on engagement and non-engagement as equally important, legitimate, and acceptable choices allows me to write and reflect upon moments in which individual children choose not to actively engage with art materials during our time together. This leads me to create my own interpretations of how that happens and what my role is in this process. This is not because every child necessarily needs to play with art, but because it is my job to offer artistic opportunities in adequate ways, for that is how each child can truly have the option to choose to take part in them or not.

We must not overlook the importance of artistic engagement that is not hands-on with materials as an aspect of children's art experiences. A child may decline to touch materials or verbally interact with teachers or peers, yet still have a deep and meaningful engagement with art. In my experience (Cabral, 2006), children who at first choose only to observe may then become very determined and clear as to how exactly they wish to proceed when they are finally ready to physically interact with a specific material.

Irrespective of whether active participation happens, involvement in the activity may exist well beyond the present moment, outlasting hands-on experience. Discussing transitions in early childhood settings, Pacini-Ketchabaw (2012) talks about a boy who, after an artistic experience with charcoal in the art studio space, was reported by his teachers to have faced difficulties in transitioning back to the classroom space and routines. But for this child, she argues, the experience with the material was still *in the present* as opposed to merely a memory that was now behind him (p. 226). The intensity with which this child was still living his charcoal experience, it seems, made it difficult for him to walk with the group and to ignore what he was still experiencing.

This raises important points in the discussion of routines and transition to and from the artmaking moment or space. Appropriate documentation may help educators in "preserv[ing] and pay[ing] attention to those moments in which magic inexplicably happens" (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2012, p. 228) rather than implementing less impactful activities with pre-determined spatial and temporal cutoffs. Such pre-determined activities, by virtue of avoiding intense experiences, facilitate straightforward docile transitions between places, spaces, and routines. If we recognize that "time as an organizational structure does not exist outside of, or regardless, of the child's experience" (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2012, p. 226), we may better understand the need to find strategies that help us think of documentation as a way to help us understand each child's experience better. Turning our gaze to a broader spectrum of moments, entanglements, and instances, we may avoid focusing on self-contained, less permeable activities and object production.

Audrey's painting of a weekend trip—one of her first representational paintings—is another example of how artworks as remnants tied to current/past occurences may help children deal with this continuum of experiences in time as "things that stay become" (Coleman, 2009; cited by Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2012, p. 226). As she selected her tempera easel painting to exhibit in the gallery, Audrey verbalized the exact same thing she had voiced when painting it months earlier, followed by a new statement: "I went camping in the woods with my mommy and

daddy and my brother. I painted the camping with the paints with you." In this instance, Audrey seems to be recalling not only her experiences of the family camping trip, but also her experience of painting them in a playful occasion that we shared in the classroom – indeed *living* these experiences in the moment that she verbalizes them. This recollection allows her to re-live an experience that she states to have enjoyed, but may also give new shape to the idea that experiences can be represented, communicated, made sense of, created, re-thought and *re-lived* with materials.

Maaria, on the other hand, is reminded of her experience not only by what she sees in her artwork, but also by what she does not see. As she shows her collage exhibited in the art gallery, Maaria points to a bottle cap glued top-down on the paper and emphasizes that the lizard drawn on the bottom side of the bottle cap is hiding. Months prior to that, in the morning she created that artwork, Maaria had chosen a pink piece of heavy construction paper to collage on. Her friend Heava, working beside her, was playing with wood. As they looked around in search for additional materials, they headed to the small chest of drawers where small objects such as bottle caps are stored. The small metal objects called their attention, and the girls played with the bottle caps for a while, chatting about the images printed on them—commenting on their colors and shapes, as well as the representations of animals, letters, numbers, and objects that they recognized. Maaria was excited when she found a bottle cap with a green lizard on it, and played with it for quite some time before putting it back, eventually losing track of it. After a while, though, Maaria went back to find her lizard, and spent a significant amount of time looking for it as she picked up different bottle caps and carefully observed the images that they displayed. When she finally found her bottle cap, Maaria decided to put some glue on it and paste it onto her pink paper. Showing it to her friend was the next step, but she could not see it—she was looking at the inside of the bottle cap, the side that was not glued down and had nothing printed on it. Maaria looked puzzled for a moment, as she realized what had happened. "The lizard is hiding," she reasoned, making sense of how she had used her materials and created a narrative for her process. "I made it hide," she explained.

The "Hiding lizard" piece became an important object for Maaria, as her mother later explained, gaining the status of "sleeping toy," one of the special things that Maaria holds dear and likes to have with her as she falls asleep at night. Even though one cannot actually see the lizard, Maaria always refers to the artwork by that name. Over time, the idea of a lizard hiding in that collage became a secret language of sorts, which referred to a knowledge that was shared between Maaria and her friends. In a way, it turned one individual's experience into an element that was now a shared focal point of the group. In this way, this finished artwork seems to represent more than a stand alone product, serving in addition as a reminder of something else, something that is hidden and that is only shared by recalling the process – either by the artist herself or by her friends, who are in the know. In the stories of Oren and Tom, Costin, Audrey, and Maaria, we see how their artwork often supports a recollection of playful interactions with materials – in many ways a record of their artistic experiences.

4 Pablo and His Crayons: On Marks and Making

In the initial process of mark making, agency and consequence are some of the most important learnings. This was the case in Pablo's first interactions with crayons in the infant room. I came to the classroom one morning with large pieces of white cardboard (to lay on the floor) and a few block crayons (pure beeswax and natural coloring crayons shaped as small rectangular blocks that can be safely manipulated by young children). I set the papers down, spread a few crayons around, and smiled.

Soon Pablo came to join me and held up a block, playing with it. He played for a few minutes—manipulating, mouthing, tossing, and holding the blocks while he moved his arms back and forth, as young children often do as they get to know their bodies in space. He also pushed over the small block towers I had stacked, asking for more, time after time. And that was it for the day. We did this a few more times, and at some point Pablo seemed to realize something: the blocks were leaving marks on the paper. Every time a crayon block touched the paper it left a mark there. Not only that, but *he* was making that mark happen. Every time that he tossed a block or ran it across the paper, Pablo recognized that he was the one making that mark happen.

This is a crucial understanding. Like many important things in life, it can be learned playfully and organically, in community-supported, self-led explorations. When Pablo understands that by his actions the crayons leave a mark on the paper, he might soon understand that that same thing happens *every time* he repeats that same action; that crayons in motion, against a surface, make marks, and that to some extent he controls those motions and the marks they create. Thus, he *makes* those motions and *creates* those marks. Making marks on surfaces in "stor[ies] of action" (Zurmuehlen, 1990, p. 1), Pablo might begin to understand that his actions have consequences, and those colorful marks on the white paper will be there to remind him of that.

That semester in the infant room, crayons were not the only art materials Pablo played with. He was also a big fan of watercolor and often chose to work with this material. He seemed to enjoy the feel of the watery paint as he flipped the small containers onto the heavily weighted paper, tapping his hands on the paint-puddles he had created on his paper. When we work with watercolors, my youngest students have available to them the same painting tools that my graduate students use, such as brushes and sponges that are safe, non-toxic, and mouthing-friendly. They also sometimes choose to use toys they like or that they are familiar with, such as small wood or plastic animals, cars, people, or trains. I place these tools on the table and the children reach out for them if they want to.

The children use these tools in different ways as they explore: they chew, manipulate, and squeeze; they tap, swift, and poke; and, at some point, they usually figure out that they can use them to dip in paint and transfer that paint onto their paper. That morning, Pablo made wide arm motions with his paintbrush in hand. And over time, week after week, he seemed to notice what was happening—a different kind of mark would emerge, one that was unlike those he had made when he'd tapped his

hands or rubbed his wet sponge on the paper, or when he drove his train over the wet paint and made his wooden tiger stomp and splash. Even with the same brush he could do different things—moving it around, tapping, sliding, or rolling it. Not only did he begin to understand that motions make marks, but also he began to recognize that *different motions* make *different marks*.

When I work with adults with little painting experience, we spend quite a bit of time playing around with paints, tools, and marks, just like Pablo does. But Pablo seems to find his way through these explorations with little prompting other than the situation I set him up with: a safe, non-restrictive, and open-ended environment where appropriate art materials are available. Here, Pablo plays.

5 Concluding Thoughts

In these stories we can see how an artwork can keep fulfilling this function as children get older, serving not only as the immediate reminder of an action—e.g. I ran my painted hand over the paper and now there's a line there—but also as the memory of an experience of play and art. The product is a *by-product* of the experience and exists as a memory of the experience as much as an object in itself.

All of which brings us back to the adventure of the Mad King. In Tom and Oren's story, the map became part of the adventure itself, the boys re-designing it as they painted what had been a blank piece of packaging paper, now turned into an imaginary map. The colors and marks were re-creating the narrative in a different way, adding detail, and prompting new developments and interpretations. The imaginary map became a "real-life" map, just like the scissors we used to cut the elevator door open. In this case, the mapping of their experience took the shape of an actual map that retold and reinvented the story of our adventures in the land of the Mad King. Our painting adventure became a social practice that created an "artifactual residue" (Pearson, 2001, p. 384) of the experience, shareable with the community. When the painted map was later shown in our art exhibition, this artifactual byproduct became a trigger for new experiences for visitors and the artists themselves – in some cases resulting in more products, others not.

Maaria's hiding lizard developed an individual experience into shared knowledge about a process—the lizard was there because she had glued it on, and we know that because she told us so. Maaria and Heava played with the idea of the lizard hiding on the artwork as they made other objects pretend-interact with it ("Why are you hiding there, lizard? Have some cake!"). When Maaria shared her piece with other children, the understanding that the lizard was indeed hiding there reminded her peers of how glue works, and inspired similar play: children played with bottle caps as characters, often regardless of what image they did or did not have printed on them, face down on their paper, wood, or just placed on the table.

This approach to art is based on experiencing and exploring the world through materials as opposed to a more academic approach based on building skills through repeated instruction. Through play, skills are built through engagement rather than

repetitive drills. Each child will engage with the world differently, so the skills they build and develop will be individualized, different from each other, and not always predictable – just like the artifactual byproducts they may generate.

As an educator I have to listen and observe carefully to try to understand where each child is. This understanding allows me to offer explorations that build on their interests in conjunction with skills they are developing, always basing my offering on materials and experiences as opposed to pre-determined outcomes and products.

Art, like play, can be a way of thinking things through and of making sense of the world and of our roles within it. A way of not only learning different things, but of learning things *differently* (Sullivan, 2014). Sometimes an art experience also results in a physical something—be it an object or a painted line—that stays behind in the physical world as a mark of that experience, an artifactual byproduct, a physical reminder, maybe even a map of that play.

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Sensitive and Supportive Interactions: Tuning into Children's Requests for Help During Art-Making

Rosemary Richards

1 Young Children's Social Connections Through Art

The notion that children's individual self-expression through art is crucial for healthy socio-emotional development (Lowenfeld, 1947; Read, 1943) has influenced early childhood art pedagogy for decades (Blank, 2012), with positive and limiting effects (Richards, 2007). On one hand, children's mark-making has been elevated from mere scribbles to the status of child art with expressive and symbolic qualities that communicate meaning, emotions and imagination, through "symbolic intentions, pictorial concepts, and expressive use of material" (Louis, 2013, p. 1). On the other hand, emphasis on children's individual expression and natural creativity reinforces educational myths that discourage teachers from talking about, evaluating, or interfering with children's art (Eisner, 1973–1974), while the complexity of theory-practice relationships and contradictory messages about the nature of children's art promotes forms of professional paralysis (Kindler, 1996b). This continues to be evident in research documenting early childhood teachers' reluctance to interact with children during art-making, including responding to requests for assistance (Ashton, 2008; Gunn, 2000; Pohio, 2006; Richards, 2005, 2009a; Visser, 2005, 2006).

Sensitive and supportive interactions between young learners and more capable others are important pedagogical features of early childhood curriculums in New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2017) and Australia (Australian Government DEEWR, 2009), which recognize the social nature of learning and the importance of children's learning within families, communities, cultures and places. Social interactions promote cognitive and socio-emotional growth and children experience

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a sense of belonging through their "interdependence with others" as "the basis of relationships in defining identities" (Australian Government DEEWR, 2009, p. 7). Furthermore, socio-cultural perspectives acknowledge that "*learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them*" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 88, italics in original). Indeed, although young children are dependent on those who nurture and care for them, "they are active participants in their own learning within the supportive contexts of family and community" (John-Steiner & Souberman, 1978, p. 132) and as children solve problems, using physical actions and mental perceptions, their thinking is mediated through shared activity and language (Vygotsky, 1986/1934). As such, joint artistic engagements between children and adults, which are instrumental in expanding children's thinking and communicative capacities, can be regarded as valuable rather than detrimental.

In my research with young children I have found Dewey's ideas, as expressed in *Art as Experience* (1934/2005), efficacious in understanding children's art experiences. He believed in "the possibility of all human practice to solve problems and to make the world better" (Jensen, 2002, p. 171), and art functioned as a means of binding communities together, where communities were "determined not so much by its members having identical beliefs as by their having a fundamental care for one another, shared interweaving narratives, common experiences (which may embrace widely different reactions), and a sense of a common fate" (Alexander, 1997, p. 182). Children lived and developed within such communities, and their art could be seen as the "remaking of the material of experience in the act of expression" (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 84), which contributed towards their expression of social, cultural and personal identities. What is more, children's patterns of change and growth over time are acknowledged and supported within supportive communities.

For Dewey "the art of human experience simply cannot be separated from the human experience of art" (Janesick, 2008, p. 478). He regarded the thinking of the artist, where he/she was "controlled in the process of his work by his grasp of the connection between what he[/she] has already done and what he[/she] is to do next", as one of the "most exacting modes of thought" (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 47). He notes,

> Experience in the degree in which it *is* an experience is heightened vitality. Instead of signifying being shut up within one's own private feelings and sensations, it signifies active and alert commerce with the world; at its height it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events. (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 18)

From these perspectives, what differentiates a child's involvement in mere art *activities* from engagement in satisfying art *experiences* is the connection or disconnection between his/her perceptions or thoughts and his/her actions; and the dynamic interactions possible between that child and his/her social, personal, physical and cultural worlds through such art experiences. Thus, weaving together these threads in terms of tuning into children's requests for help during art-making suggests that assistance that aids children to unite their artistic actions with their perceptive

thoughts is likely to promote satisfying art experiences. Moreover, when children experience support that is congruent with their personal and social patterns of change and development over time then these children may not only find art experiences more satisfying but such experiences are likely to heighten their participation within their communities (Dewey, 1934/2005).

1.1 Acknowledging the Challenges

Holistic approaches to early childhood education and research have increasingly acknowledged the multiple ways in which children make meaning through art (for example, Richards, 2014; Sunday, 2012; Wood & Hall, 2011; Wright, 2012), the contexts in which such experiences take place (for example, Anning, 2002; Pinto, Gamannossi, & Cameron, 2011; Visser, 2013), and the relationships children form through their art-making (for example, Ewald, 2007; Hopperstad, 2008; Kindler, 1996a; Plows, 2013; Pohio, 2006; Wilson, 2007). Engaging in sensitive and supportive interactions with young children through their artistic engagements has long interested parents, caregivers, and teachers. Yet even experienced educators, such as those in Ring's (2006a) action research, pondered over the roles they played in supporting children's drawing behaviours, such as the issue of whether or not teachers should draw their "own pictures while [children] are drawing" or "try to influence their drawing" (p. 202). Likewise, Lindsay (2015) notes in case study research with educators in four regional Australian early childhood centres that, of the twelve participants, "some say teachers should engage actively alongside children to model and scaffold skills, while others remain hands off and refuse to model art techniques for fear of corrupting children's natural artistic development" (p. 18). Concerns about the provision of support via visual modelling or influencing children's drawings suggests tensions between modernist notions of individuality, creativity and originality and teaching practices associated with scaffolding and modelling (Richards, 2007; Wilson, 2007). As a tertiary educator and researcher I often field enquiries associated with appropriate adult-child interactions during children's art-making. Researchers and scholars (such as, Bell, 2012; Mulcahey, 2009; Zander, 2003) have provided some insights into how to talk with children about their art. A particularly challenging situation for many teachers is how to respond to specific requests to draw with or for children. When discussing early childhood art education with preservice teachers, some share instances in which teacher-child collaborations are welcomed by more experienced teaching colleagues when applied to general contexts, but problematic when applied to children's art experiences. One preservice teacher, for instance, described how she sensitively interacted with a 3-year-old girl and, in response to her request, drew a flower. This action not only generated criticism from senior teaching staff but the child then became reluctant to create her own drawing. At university, fellow preservice teachers recounted similar experiences and offered suggestions, such as drawing alongside the child while talking her through her own drawing processes. In general, however, the preservice

teachers appeared unsure about the sort of help children wanted or needed and they recognized that responding appropriately to children's request for help during art making was challenging and likely to elicit criticism from senior colleagues. They were not immune to professional paralysis (Kindler, 1996b) as some admitted avoiding such interactions.

These university students were not alone in their mystification, for as Burkitt, Jolley, and Rose (2010) pointed out, "we know little about what help children perceive they are given for their drawing, or indeed what help they would like to receive" (p. 259). Thus, preservice and more experienced educators express some angst associated with engaging with young children in joint drawing experiences. But are such episodes detrimental to children or do they have value; and are these forms of support available in homes but discouraged in educational settings? We will now look to the research to shed light on these issues.

1.2 Children's Joint Drawing Episodes

In survey-based research undertaken with 270 five- to fourteen-year-old British children, 44 teachers and 146 parents, Burkitt et al. (2010) found that 49% of parents of children aged 5–7 engaged in shared drawing experiences daily, and "although shared drawing time decreased for parents of older children," 72% of parents of children aged 11–14 "spent time with their children drawing at least once a week" (p. 264). Additional longitudinal research that focused on seven young research participants with starting ages of 3–6 years (Ring, 2003), confirmed the "key role that significant adults played in children's drawing" in joint involvement episodes where parents and extended family modelled "drawing behaviours on the basis of shared interest and activities" (Anning, 2002, pp. 207–208). Moreover, while parents confidently interacted with their children, early childhood practitioners were generally unsure about fostering or responding to young children's drawings (Anning, 2002).

Finnish research, by Nevanen, Juvonen, and Ruismäki (2014), employed sociocultural research traditions as it examined schools and kindergartens as educational arts environments. Over extended periods of one- to two-and-half-years, the researchers documented teachers' and artists' experiences within arts projects with children aged 3–6 years in kindergarten or with children aged 7–9 years in school. The research acknowledged that "learning is built in social interaction" and that "social interaction creates and builds structures and meanings together, which may exceed the expertise level of the members of the group" (p. 10). Findings revealed that when teachers, artists and children were engaged in meaningful long term art projects, which connected them with the wider communities, then their research aims of "communal art education, sociocultural encouraging and increased well-being" (p. 19) were achieved – children's well-being being seen as their sense of "having (material and other basic needs), loving (family friends and communal

relations) and being (fulfilling one's own needs, experiencing appreciation, feeling of irreplaceability, interesting things to do)" (p. 8).

Positive child-adult interactions through art are also implicated in raising children's wellbeing, self-efficacy and socio-emotional development. Ring (2006b) noted within her study, for instance, that "a mother supporting a playful approach to meaning making led, in relation to drawing, to a child acting unselfconsciously, without fear of criticism" (p. 74), just as "joy and good humour" connected "children and adults as they worked together" in the Finnish arts projects (Nevanen et al., 2014, p. 19). Burkitt et al. (2010) noted that "children whose parents spent longer in shared drawing time with them enjoyed drawing more and had a higher perception of their drawing ability" (p. 264). Saracho (2012), when discussing research around creativity in early childhood education, also pointed out that "teachers can help young children develop their creative thinking abilities with positive interactions and a positive environment" (p. 336). Additional research has documented the ways young children develop "relationships through their art making" (Malin, 2013, p. 14), used their art as gifts (Malin, 2013; Plows, 2013) and exhibited socially and emotionally rewarding interactions through joint and parallel artistic engagements (Brooks, 2005; Ewald, 2007; Malin, 2013; Pohio, 2006; Sunday, 2012; Thompson, 2002, 2009). Dean and Brown's (2008) research also documented ways in which children's and adults' collaborative projects around art could "investigate significant social, cultural and environmental issues" (2008, p. 350). Cross cultural research (in Thailand, Peru, Italy, Canada, the UK, the USA, and Turkey), by Pinto et al. (2011), highlighted the social and cultural ways that young children learned to make meanings through their drawing episodes and the importance of "drawing materials, shared child-adult attention, dyadic asymmetrical relationships, and reciprocal involvements" (p. 428) in children's drawing development. Thus, these studies indicate that, rather than being detrimental, social interactions through art aided children in "remaking of the material of experience in the act of expression" (Dewey, 1934/2005, p. 84) and advanced their expression of social, cultural and personal identities and understandings.

1.3 Social Connections Through Art

Children's social connections through art, which are not limited to adult-child interactions, are instrumental in expanding children's thinking and communicative capacities. Theorized within Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, Sunday's (2012) American research examined how peer mediated drawing episodes provided "intersections of speech, graphic forms, and concepts of play" (p. 1) and, as 4–5-year old children observed and responded verbally and graphically to each other's work, "new ideas and meanings form through spaces of shared knowing" (p. 1). This type of "communal graphic play" (Wilson, 2007, p. 15) allows children to respond to the cues of others as well as their own and "result in 'other than' images – images that were made by a group, not by single individuals" (p. 15). In my own research and

teaching I also conceptualise these practices as being within zones of co-construction – creative spaces or outcomes that form when two or more people make cognitive and creative connections, where they negotiate and expand on new directions that were unknowable before their collaborations.

Research findings also suggest that children sought help from various people during art experiences. For example, in a sample of 270 children, in addition to help from parents and teachers, 24% of children reported help from siblings and cousins, 21% from grandparents and 9% from extended family and family friends (Burkitt et al., 2010). Child-child and child-adult interactions were also documented by Plows (2013) in her New Zealand-based research with five 3-year-old children, which noted the prevalence of children's "keenness to make visual arts in proximity to peers or adults" in both home and early childhood settings (p. 42). While these children often sought social connection, at times children were "so engrossed they weren't having peer conversations about their work" (p. 36). This research aligns with other findings suggesting children benefit from the presence of supportive adults and more capable others in the art-making and play-learning spaces (Flewitt, 2005; Richards, 2009a) as well as periods of more private, uninterrupted art times and spaces (Richards, 2014).

1.4 Forms of Assistance with Art

It is clear, therefore, that joint art episodes were regarded by children and adults within the reported research as central to children's art-making experiences, especially in home settings, and provided children with support during art-making. Other forms of assistance included verbal suggestions, but only 3% of the 270 British children in Burkitt and associates' research (2010) reported receiving verbal suggestions from siblings and cousins, with similar percentages receiving such help from teachers or parents. However, children reported modelling or demonstrations as significant forms of assistance with siblings providing such help in 17% of cases, most often during joint art-making episodes. Teachers reported providing such assistance in 37% of cases and parents in 28%. Interestingly, while children differentiated between modelling/demonstrations and being given directions (children reporting in 20% of cases that teachers gave directions), teachers grouped these together with 41% of the forty-four teachers stating they "set clear expectations through demonstration and instruction" (Burkitt et al., 2010, p. 263). I concur with the child-respondents in differentiating between instructions and demonstration – the first tends to be given immediately prior to or during art-making, and is generally verbal with associated gestures. Demonstrations, on the other hand, offer more complex visual and audial information, are provided during or prior to independent art-making, and act as sources of motivation and provide insights into ways of proceeding.

Seventeen percent of children reported receiving help in the form of technical support, with teachers reporting likewise. When children were asked what additional

help they needed, two responses dominated: 27% reported they did not need further help and 14% requested "more pictures to copy" (Burkitt et al., 2010, p. 265). A young student's request for 'pictures to copy' may also take the form of requests for more capable others to draw images for them, as noted in the earlier discussion.

Qualitative research with young children provides descriptive insights into children's requests for help during art-making, and how these are catered for across various contexts. Reporting on research findings, this chapter now considers ways in which two 5-year-old Australian children, Lee and Jackson, requested or received help with their art-making.

2 Young Children's Art Experiences: Two Case Studies

Lee and Jackson were participants in a longitudinal visual ethnographic study, aimed at extending understandings about the nature of children's art experiences, especially from their perspectives (Richards, 2012). The Australia-based research involved two boys and two girls, aged four- to five-years at the beginning of the research, who each had a digital camera. Over a 10-month period, in their homes and early childhood centre and schools, they photographed their art experiences and talked about their photographs with me as the researcher during regular home-based visits. Like Luttrell (2010, p. 226), I "did not encourage the children to produce a particular kind of image and instead believed there is merit in projects that seek to preserve and understand whatever meanings children might give to their images" as I "listened carefully and systematically" (p. 226) to what they had to share. I also observed in their early childhood centre and schools. Research methodologies associated with narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), in which stories of art experiences were shared and re-shared, and visual ethnography (Pink, 2013), which supported the production and interpretation of visual images, enabled each child's photographs and discussions to generate the research data. Dewey's notions of *Art as Experience* (Dewey, 1934/2005), and Vygotsky's (1978, 1986/1934) sociocultural-historical perspectives were central theoretical frameworks through which to make sense of qualitative data.

Across the research, the four children received help in various guises during their artistic engagements. This help included direct hands-on technical assistance from more capable others, such as parents, older siblings and teachers, and the provision of resources such as art media, art-making spaces and uninterrupted time. The presence of supportive others within these spaces, affirming social interactions and positive emotional support were important, as were the provision of motivating events, child-accessible and manageable materials and stimulating visual resources and environments. The modelling of art-making processes at home, preschool and school also helped the children to engage in satisfying art experiences.

It is not possible in this chapter to discuss all of the ways in which the four young participants experienced art or requested assistance. For brevity, aspects of

Lee's and Jackson's[1] art experiences are featured. These boys were selected as they provided insights to the types of interaction had with parents and with an older sibling.

3 Lee and Jackson

Lee and Jackson were each the youngest child in two-parent families and each had a sister who was 2 years and 3 months older. At the beginning of the research Lee (4-years 11-months) and Jackson (5-years 2-months) attended Markham Community Preschool (MCP), a forty-place early childhood centre with six educators. Five months later the boys attended different State primary schools, which their sisters also attended.

Lee Wong was a first generation Australia-born Chinese boy; his father, who had a PhD, lectured at the local university and his mother, who had a Chinese degree in education, managed the household and looked after the children. In the first phase of the research Lee attended MCP two mornings per week and on the other days he was with his mother. His sister, Penny, attended Bluebrick Primary School.

Jackson was an Australian Caucasian boy who lived in a semi-rural property with his parents and sister. His mother, Sally, had a degree and worked part time as a laboratory technician; his father held a senior position in emergency services. Jackson also attended MCP 3 days a week, and on the other days he was with his mother and/or father at home. His sister, Josie, attended Sandy Bay Primary School.

3.1 Art Experiences at Home

Lee's family spoke English and Mandarin and their home was rich with bicultural artefacts. Family routines included weekday 'learning time' sessions in which Penny did homework and Lee often drew. Drawing was one of Lee's preferred play activities and he had basic art materials, space and time to draw. He drew many imaginative and story-like drawings that featured many characters. The source of inspiration for his characters often came from illustrations in books, his sister's school worksheets, posters, and popular culture. For Lee, his drawings were never just a matter of copying from these sources; instead objects and images within his cultural space were "appropriated and reinterpreted" through his "own art making" (Thompson, 2005, p. 68). He developed understandings about art-making processes by observing his sister or television programs featuring drawing demonstrations. As a Chinese-Australian child he explored his "own identities and memberships within groups" (p. 72) through re-storying Chinese visual narratives to reflect popular play

[1] All names and places are pseudonyms. All research was carried out in accordance with University and State Education Human Ethics approval processes.

themes. His family, for instance, owned a DVD of the Disney-interpreted traditional Chinese story "Mulan". Lee drew scenes from this story and made modifications that he asserted improved the plot. For example, "Chinese dinosaurs" replaced dragons to increase their chances to survive the "big icy water going down." He explained further, "Dinosaurs, they have a long neck. You can see the neck if they go in the water – that's why."

Lee's art-making experiences were valued in his home and his artworks were kept in clear folders, which he had ready access to – sometimes returning to develop his drawings. His parents offered other subtle but important support as they noticed and supported his emerging skills and interests by providing relevant art materials, equipment and visual resources. For instance, when he initially became interested in making his own books, they provided a stapler, and as his interest developed they bought exercise books – which led to Lee rapidly creating multipage story-drawings (Richards, 2010). As noted in other research, children's "non-obligatory artworks of visual culture are almost always directed toward the production of narratives" and explore "big issues of life" (Wilson, 2003, p. 118): Some of Lee's drawings and narratives explored complex notions of racial difference, identity, and friendship (Richards, 2017).

At times Lee requested specific art materials, equipment, or pictures on themes of interest (such as army pictures), and while he often worked independently he occasionally requested help from his mother, sister and father – with his parents primarily providing resources and his sister acting as playmate, audience and co-artist. Specific examples of sibling collaborations are explored later in this chapter, where it becomes clear that their inspirations for artworks drew heavily on "comics, cartoons and other narrative sources," which are "often not classified as 'art'" (Wilson, 2007, p. 7). Having an interested audience for his stories and artworks appeared to a support Lee's art-making and in my researcher's role I regularly interacted with him as he shared his artworks, descriptive narratives and occasional dramatic performances.

In contrast to Lee's limited space in their urban home, Jackson's semi-rural property provided ample outside spaces for exploring and creating. He occasionally drew but appeared particularly interested in construction projects, commonly using wood or cardboard. He also constructed from discarded household materials, such as plastic bottles, cardboard rolls, fabric and coat hangers, and from commercially produced plastic blocks such as Lego®. He appeared responsive to the properties of natural materials and selected supple greenwood for a bow and arrow and a hardwood forked branch for the slingshot. Like Lee, he often returned to earlier projects to develop these and he usually worked on construction projects over several consecutive days or weeks.

During the nine-months of research visits Jackson showed sustained interest in boats and aeroplanes. The provision of a digital camera for personal use during the research also generated an extended interest in creating photographic effects in colour, such as taking close up photographs of his heel to create what he termed "sunset pictures" (for examples see, Richards, 2009b). Like Lee, Jackson requested specific visual resources on topics of interest, and with the help of his mother he

Fig. 1 Jackson seeks technical assistance with bigger constructions; Airport terminal (left); Titanic (right)

selected non-fiction books from the library. His family sometimes engaged with him around his interests. For example, he and his father learnt how to make paper planes, which Jackson later taught to his preschool friends.

Jackson was both persistent and patient in his art making and used appropriate tools and materials to shape and fix materials. For the most part he had specific outcomes in mind when creating three-dimensional artworks and was mindful of his skills and when he needed help. Sometimes he worked alongside his father in their well-equipped work-shed and, as his carpentry skills and interests expanded, he was given a selection of tools, including a hammer and handsaw. He also had supervised access to power drills, work benches, clamps and other equipment as well as materials suitable for shaping and fixing wood, cardboard and other light materials. Thus, access to carpentry tools, materials and know-how were aspects of the home-based help that Jackson received.

He spent many hours in the company of his mother and, of the four participants, he was the most likely to ask his mother to collaborate on art projects. She provided resources, technical assistance, and positive encouragement; she modelled art-making processes and suggested or started projects with him. For example, to help Jackson settle in at preschool, Sally often started a drawing or construction project for him to continue. In some ways, these approaches aligned with Wilson's (2003) notions of a third site of visual cultural pedagogy, as Jackson felt some pull to "complete the assignment, but he also felt at liberty to include a great many features" (p. 121). What made these 'starter' projects so attractive to Jackson was his mother's deep understandings of his interest and skills and his agency in responding to or ignoring these prompts.

When construction projects grew in size or complexity, Jackson requested technical help, but this did not diminish his control over projects. For example, using various empty food containers he constructed an airport terminal and a model of the Titanic (Fig. 1) and when his mother helped him she noted that, "He is the boss of it." His confidence at home extended to directing the actions of his parents, grandparents and me in order to meet his specific requirements.

Fig. 2 Jackson's progressively more complex drawings of boats

At home Jackson also sought specific expert help with drawing from his parents – especially his mother. Depending on his request and the complexity of the drawing, Sally's assistance took several forms. This included, drawing for him, where a drawing was created and he added details; demonstrating drawing sequences that allowed him to recreate his own similar drawing; and partial drawing, which provided a starting point from which Jackson continued.

These types of joint drawing episodes were not uncommon in Jackson's home and over time I saw how they helped him to advance his personal interests and art-making capabilities. For example, the progression of Jackson's boat drawings, featured in Fig. 2, were produced over a 4-month period. They included a "walking boat", which Jackson drew rapidly at preschool (Fig. 2. top left); a drawing of the Titanic, which Sally drew and Jackson added colour and details (Fig. 2. top right); and a jointly-drawn picture of model trawler (Fig. 2. bottom).

Jackson proudly stated, "I drew that," and pointing to their model said, "That is that."

He said he drew it by himself, but Sally indicated that she had drawn the outline of the hull, and he had drawn the rest. While his mother's graphic input provided a graphic starting point for this progression, Jackson clearly felt ownership as he wrote on the drawing, "I drew this myself." The contrast over four months, between his hastily drawn "walking boat" and his observational drawing of the trawler, was significant, and Jackson proudly explained that his trawler drawing was displayed on his teacher's desk at school. These artworks were, to varying degrees, jointly made works as Jackson and his mother collaborated to produce "other than child

Fig. 3 Jackson created large flat and three-dimensional structures at preschool

visual culture and other than adult visual culture" (Wilson, 2003, p. 9). Jackson initiated most of the arts projects, and with his mother responding to his requests, he felt the work to be his own and of personal and social value.

3.2 Art Experiences in the Early Childhood Centre

During the first phase of the research, at their early childhood centre, Lee and Jackson had easy access to familiar and changing art supplies and their teachers assisted children upon request – mainly in terms of technical help, verbal support and explanations. The boys experienced art in this setting that contrasted with their home-based experiences. For Jackson, access to ongoing, large construction projects that included access to hand and power tools was only available at home. Instead, at preschool he favoured working with the large wooden blocks to make flat and three-dimensional structures (Fig. 3).

While the teachers supported and encouraged Jackson's interests, especially in terms of allowing some constructions to occupy large spaces, his home-based experience of being in charge of others who provided technical support, did not translate well to this setting. He got frustrated when friends did not follow his plan, explaining that "They didn't know what to do and messed it up a bit." Although his friends seldom reacted adversely, these types of interactions were not well tolerated by some educators who intervened to limit his "bossy" behaviour.

In sharp contrast to Jackson's out-going and dominant personality amongst his preschool friends, as a bilingual child, Lee seldom played with other children or requested adults' assistance. As he had difficulty expressing himself clearly in English, he was often socially isolated at preschool, but appeared to enjoy drawing. He sometimes sought out an adult with whom to share the narratives of his drawings and, as someone who understood his wider interests and home life, I often filled this role. His teachers and parents, who were a little concerned by his solitary nature, noted that he was most likely to initiate conversations with adults when drawing. However, in order to act on his requests, the teachers needed to be patient, attentive and responsive – conditions that were difficult to achieve with a bilingual child in the busy early childhood centre.

Although Lee showed interest in new or novel art activities at MCP, he often hovered on the edges, observing rather than physically participating. However, children can be attracted to activities within close proximity to adults (Plows, 2013; Richards, 2009a) and teacher-facilitated art activities attracted Lee, as he quietly joined in several sessions including making road signs and Christmas cards. In these cases, with an adult present, the provision of graphic examples (such as ready-made Christmas cards or road signs) and teacher demonstrations mimicked the support he received at home. In Lee's case demonstrations provided visual information about ways of proceeding that for him were more easily understood than verbal English instructions. These teacher-facilitated art experiences were clearly in Lee's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) as he independently developed more complex ideas and techniques, and at home acted as expert artist by guiding me to draw a Christmas card.

3.3 Art Experiences as Co-constructions

Lee's progressive development of drawing skills through careful observation, copying drawings and then developing his own themes revealed how he used the work of artists, illustrators and popular culture to help him to co-construct new understandings about ways of drawing and idea development. Likewise, Jackson benefited from the sensitive support and collaborations with family members, who allowed him to exercise a good degree of autonomy in his work, and was provided him with relevant art materials, objects and books.

I deliberately use the concept 'co-construction' here, rather than adhering strictly to the concept of 'scaffolding', as I believe the former notion applies with more validity to the way Lee and Jackson developed their drawings, art-making skills and ideas through interactions with the visual culture (of book illustrations, cards, maps, posters, and the like) and with people. The term scaffolding is often used in relation to Vygotsky's theory of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is described as "the distance between the actual developmental levels determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Scaffolding is understood by some theorists as "a support system for children's efforts that is sensitively tuned to their needs" (Berk & Winsler, 1995, p. 20) and, when related specifically to interactions between children and teachers, has often implied that teachers have particular outcomes in mind. However, a child can make sense of and expand on knowledge and experience in ways other than through interactions with more capable people. Furthermore, the language that children use to generate new understandings is not always verbal. In Lee's and Jackson's situations, the languages they worked with were visual and kinaesthetic, and the dialogues they had were with people and with visual images and artefacts within popular culture. For example, although few people provided Lee with specific guidance on how to read maps or design cards, his keen interest in drawing,

and his regular discussion about his art, were part of his co-constructed understandings and his ongoing artistic development. Likewise, Jackson actively sought out support that aligned with the outcomes *he* envisioned, which were more successfully achieved at home than in the preschool setting. There was also time, space and social support at home that allowed each boy to interact with their emerging artworks over numerous occasions and with increasing complexity. It could also be said that they developed to the level where they could have 'conversations' with their artworks, other visual images and artefacts at metacognitive and intrapersonal levels (Brooks, 2006) and that their progressively complex ideas in construction and drawings suggested a transformation of thinking that was "indicative of an intrapersonal dialogue or internal revisualization" (Brooks, 2002, p. 227). The concept of scaffolding seems inadequate when considering that a child's "more capable peer" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86) may be a non-human peer (the Christmas cards, road signs, maps, model boat and other graphic examples) and that the more capable peer in some adult-child interactions is the child. Somewhere in these co-constructions, as adults tune into children's requests for help during art-making, are spaces for children's sensitive and supported interactions with people, places and things.

3.4 Art Experiences at School

The following year, Jackson and Lee attended their local primary schools. Lee was in a class of 16 students and Jackson was one of 21 students. Lee's teacher, Sonia, was an experienced teacher and assistant principal who claimed to lack artistic confidence. On the other hand, Jackson's teacher, Vanessa, who was a more recent teacher graduate, was confident with teaching art skills and processes and incorporated many art-related activities across various curriculum areas and in regular planned art lessons. The classroom had numerous art-like projects that the children returned to and developed throughout the week. Jackson appeared comfortable with these approaches, as they mirrored his own patterns at home – that is ongoing access to projects, ready access to art materials and some adult modelling of art-making processes.

Early in the school year I observed a planned art lesson based around colour blending and patterning onto a pre-drawn picture of a cat on a mat. During this and other art lessons Vanessa modelled art-making processes, such as blending colours with pastels and dyes, and using appropriate arts terminology. She produced three models at the same time, emphasising that each student would interpret the task in their own way. She roamed the room, interacting with the students during their art-making and encouraging them to follow the demonstrated processes while developing their own range of colour blends, textures and patterns. At one stage Jackson appeared uncomfortable as he covered his drawing with his hands. His peers, who acted as compliance enforcers of teacher-led instructions, commented that he had progressed further than what was demonstrated. However, his discomfort dissipated somewhat when Vanessa roamed the room, providing students with positive

feedback and guidance. When later describing her approach to me, she explained, "This approach is very structured but what I am doing is giving them lots of skills so later on I'll give them pastels and paints. They've had a chance at doing layering of colours so later on they'll have more freedom" (Richards, 2012, p. 275). This proved the case a month later when the children drew portraits of their mothers for Mothers' Day, using their own drawings, which built on and extended the art skills experienced previously. It was my observations that the students were unaware of this long term objective of skill development, and in my opinion Jackson would have benefited from this wider view, as he appeared concerned about 'getting it right' when he followed his teacher's demonstrations.

These types of support and interactions may be familiar to teachers who are confident to teach art processes, and may be typical as "teachers usually decide in what media students will work, the topics of their … drawings, … the skill, …and design problem students will solve and the steps they will follow to achieve solutions" (Wilson, 2003, p. 114). As an artist, researcher and teacher, I saw some benefits and pitfalls with these approaches. In following their teacher's prompts and visual demonstrations the children benefitted from greater familiarity with specific materials and processes as well as personal experimentation with the potential of materials and what *they* could do with the materials. The manner of emotional support and positive verbal persuasion, alongside positive art-making experiences, was vital to developing positive art self-efficacy (Richards, 2009a) and Vanessa was sensitive to the messages she gave about experimentation throughout her demonstrations and during individual interactions. On the other hand, modelling art processes, while failing to actively promote exploration and experimentation could create situations in which children tried (probably unsuccessfully) to emulate the adult's artwork in order to gain praise or comply with perceived expectations. This could diminish children's art self-efficacy (Richards, 2009a).

Co-constructions between teachers and children are not easily achieved in large classrooms but more traditional approaches to scaffolding tasks are possible. The bringing together of pre-drawn outlines and carefully described sequence of events with experimental practices of colour blending and patterning can provide non-threatening places for children to begin their art-making journeys. However, while "educational goals and learning outcomes are posited by those who have power and authority and the flow of information is one-directional" (Wilson, 2003, p. 112), I maintain that Jackson (and I assume his classmates) would have benefited from knowing the short and longer term goals, as expressed by Vanessa. Doing so may have alleviated some of Jackson's discomfort about getting ahead of her instructions and aligned with this own propensity to plan ahead. Discussion with the children may have allowed for some children to create their own images (or at least additional works), instead of basically colouring in one "ket aesthetic" image deemed suitable for children (Thompson, 2005). As Morrow (2005) noted in her research, "children are always in a structural relationship to the adults around them: as a child of their families, as somebody's son or daughter, or a 'school child'" (p. 160) and Jackson experienced pressure from his peers to conform to the perceived agenda. Therefore, would it not be more democratic for a teacher to share his or her larger

vision and allow the children to respond? Their individual or collective power to modify the longer term curriculum goals may be minimal but discussions around learning goals respects children as thinking, active agents in their own learning journeys.

In contrast to Vanessa's confidence in scaffolding art experiences for the children, Lee's teacher Sonia, professed to a lack of artistic confidence and skills. While art education was part of the curriculum, specific teaching strategies for supporting or extending children's artistic capabilities were not evident. I observed one planned art lesson, based on a cross-curriculum focus on the topic of 'Me', which aimed to "discuss form and texture of a famous artist" and to "recreate a famous portrait" (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2006, p. 1). The children, when shown two books about Vincent Van Gogh and several posters of his paintings, were encouraged to make comments. They were told they were also going to make paintings like those of Van Gogh, but after setting up watercolour paints they painted instead on a variety of unrelated personal topics. The teacher did not roam the room and subsequent discussions with Lee revealed that he did not connect the two events. Therefore, in the school context, although exposure to artworks may have been helpful as a source of motivation, this was not the case. Moreover, the assumption upon which national curriculum is based, that teachers "possess predetermined knowledge and art skills that…students should acquire" (Wilson, 2003, p. 112), was not born out in practice in this classroom. What is more, this art lesson focused the children on "developing an understanding of who we are by exploring what we have in common with others and what is unique. How we express ourselves and communicate with others is part of our identity" (NSW DET, 2006, p. 1). This broader theme coincided with some of Lee's big ideas – that of belonging and identity as his self-initiated drawings were replete with these themes. Yet limited knowledge of children's personal areas of inquiry and the lack of discussion with children about the larger themes, meant that children's rich ideas were not tapped into.

Despite Sonia's lack of artistic confidence, her overall pedagogical practices provided some tacit assistance to which Lee (and other children) responded positively. For example, she prompted the young students to cooperatively set up their shared art resources and to clean up when finished, thus providing a sense of agency for independent art-making. She shunned pre-made child-art and commercial worksheets – instead helping the children to make their own versions. For example, in regular numeracy activities in which children matched drawn items with corresponding numbers, she modelled the drawing and counting processes on a whiteboard. The children initially drew similar images, but some progressed to suggesting images for Sonia to draw or created their own. Lee clearly found this modelling helpful as he finished quickly and these drawings appeared in his home-based drawings. Another regular drawing activity involved drawing pictures associated with a current reading book. Lee responded positively to having illustrators' artworks to work from – again recreating such images at home.

Over this school phase of the research, few of Lee's or Jackson's home-based or personal interests permeated into school-based activities. However, in Lee's case,

Fig. 4 Lee and Penny's home-based art exhibition

school activities influenced his home-based art experiences. Indeed, this was evident within 2 weeks of starting school, when he and his sister mounted an extensive home art exhibition with over 80 of their artworks (Fig. 4).

The social interactions required to produce this exhibition were complex as there were drawings that were jointly-created and others that were unique to either child. There was a strong sense of intertextuality as they took turns deciding on topics (based on previous drawings, favourite themes, toys, books and school topics) and they playfully blended notions of school-art with museum-art. For instance, on one drawing Penny wrote, "This is a picture of the ship called "Titanic". We drew it together. Lee's drawing is fantastic! He drew it by coping (sic) the book." All drawings were also exhibited with titles and prices because, "at the art museum they do that," Penny explained.

Wilson (2003) asserts that effective visual arts pedagogy requires teachers to "know as much about his or her students' self-initiated visual cultural production as students' are willing to reveal" (p. 119). For these siblings this exhibition came together as an experience that connected the young artists, their worlds, their audiences and their artworks. It was in the other than 'school art' experiences that they graphically played with ideas and images. From a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978), on intrapersonal levels each child united thought and action (Dewey, 1934/2005) through their personal and joint drawings; on interpersonal levels they provided supportive and critical audiences during art-making and used previous drawings to scaffold future drawings; and at a wider community level,

their parents and I appreciated and responded enthusiastically to *their* interests and artworks. These interrelated aspects provided support and motivations for their art-making experiences.

3.5 Helping Hands for Lee and Jackson

In their homes Lee and Jackson were supported as family members, which at times constituted a community of artists, and they experienced a sense of agency as they gave directions to older family members, had easy access to materials and to ongoing art projects. They had agency in terms of the themes of their artworks, their use of time and spaces. Their art processes were not limited by other activities taking priority (as was likely to happen in educational settings) or the sanctioning of themes or topics deemed appropriate for children.

The types of help they asked for and received at home depended on the roles they performed and the complexity of their art projects. Over the course of the research, they embodied multiple roles including son/brother-as-expert, director, performer, teacher, solo artist, audience and curator. In terms of the forms of help requested, this included technical help, help with starting projects, provision of specific and general art resources, and art-making spaces. They also sought feedback from a supportive audiences and, as such, approval, love and acceptance as they generated their art. In their homes these children engaged in collaborations and co-constructions, in which they were both experts and novices and their collaborations with parents and siblings appeared to have positive effects on artistic development, attitudes, self-efficacy and competencies. Their interests and strengths were well understood by family members, who provided motivational resources and interactions. Lee and Jackson were respected for their competencies and the assistance they received was an easy flow of relevant provisions and sensitive responses to direct and anticipated requests.

Joint art-making sessions at home were empowering experiences for both children, as they received assistance from parents and siblings – in terms of modelling drawing and regular joint-drawing and art-making episodes. There were some disconnections between home and the early childhood centre as the preschool provided less opportunity for these types of assistance, although there was some opportunity to engage independently or with other children, in teacher-facilitated art projects. Both boys responded positively to these forms of assistance, as teachers sat and spoke with children. Teachers provided art materials, technical demonstrations and offered assistance when asked – mostly in the form of verbal prompts and affirming comments. While these sessions provided additional visual resources to motivate children's art-making, there were few opportunities for joint adult-child art-making episodes as teachers did not draw with or for children, and children were generally cast as novice and solo artists. Also teachers, when observing children' activities, often did so with the view of recording that child's learning stories (for inclusion in their progress journal and to inform planning). In other words, the teachers were

physically present while being mentally occupied. Also, there were limited opportunities for more capable children to become experts or teachers of others, as evident from Jackson's thwarted attempts to direct his peers and Lee's difficulty with communicating with others. Likewise, teacher demonstrations tended to be based around basic techniques rather than the types of assistance that Lee and Jackson enjoyed at home, where more capable others demonstrated specific drawing processes while working alongside or with them.

School based assistance varied for the two boys, although in both settings they had access to quality art materials and dedicated time of at least 1 hour per week for art education. While Jackson's teacher was more confident in modelling and talking about art-making processes, and deliberately used these teaching strategies to expand her students' artistic skills, Lee's teacher provided aspects of these types of support across various non-art curriculum areas. In both settings the short or long terms aims of the art lessons were not discussed with the students, and both boys may have experienced more satisfying arts experiences and made more authentic connections with their genuine interests if they had.

3.6 Tuning into Children's Needs for Support

Across the body of research reported in this chapter, including the two case studies, it was apparent that children received help in various forms including direct hands-on technical assistance, modelling of art-making processes, scaffolded support, co-constructions and interested engagement with more capable others. The provision of art-making resources, motivational materials and events, child-accessible art-making spaces, access to ongoing projects, stimulating visual resources and environments, interested informed audiences and some uninterrupted time were also helpful. The presence of supportive others within the art-making spaces, affirming social interactions and positive emotional support were important. It was also evident that teachers and family members reported or were observed assisting children with their art-making, through such things as demonstrations, instructions, and modelling. There were some disconnections between children's home-based arts experiences and those had in educational settings, especially in terms of interpersonal relationships through art, as parents and family members usefully engaged in joint art experiences with young children. This prompts a consideration of the roles educators might take that would see them more actively and sensitively engaged with young children through art and, through dialoguing with children around their art projects, promote closer connections between children's family-based arts education and those had in educational settings. There are also disconnections between those topics and themes children choose to explore through self-initiated art and those deemed suitable in educational settings – and tuning into and encouraging children's authentic interests is likely to support children's art-making and exploration of big ideas. At the core of sensitive and supportive interactions between young children and more capable others, especially in terms of responding to children's

requests for help during art-making, is the clear understanding of a child's motivations, big ideas, interests, strengths and skills – and allowing a child to be in multiple and changing roles of both novice and expert.

Across the research findings patterns emerge of children seeking help in terms of their connection with art-making motivations (for example, pictures to copy, demonstrations to follow, pictures on themes of interest), social connections with others (such as proximity to peers or adults, actively seeking an audience for their art and narratives of art) and timely technical support, including a literal helping hand. Interestingly, these aspects loosely overlay the conceptual framework of art-making which underpins the Australian Creative Arts Syllabus (NSW Board of Studies, 2001) – that is, the relationship between the artist (in this case the child), the world (their motivations and inspirations for making art), their audience (their social connections through art) and the artwork (which includes the actual artworks and the work of making art). Therefore, it may seem that when adults tune into the types of requests children make around their art-making they might also assist children and support this conceptual framework for art-making and artistic development. Thus, we can learn more about effective art pedagogy in the early years by examining the broader contexts in which artful children create and the ways in which they ask and receive help and interact with others through art.

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Children's Play and Art Practices with Agentic Objects

Marleena Mustola

1 Introduction

During the last few decades, as researchers of childhood have become more understanding of the fact that children do have agency, a French philosopher and sociologist of science, Bruno Latour (1991, 1996, 2005), stated that objects too have agency. Objects exist but, according to Latour (2005), they are rarely given a *social* thought, which sometimes—for instance, within social and cultural studies—generates a persistent image of societies operating without the mediation of objects (see also, Olsen, 2010). Indeed, the idea of understanding children's play and artistic activity, for instance, without also considering the role and essence of objects involved, seems profoundly illogical. It is for this reason that this chapter is dedicated to the analysis of agentic objects in the context of children's play and art practices.

As seen in Fig. 1, 6-year-old Joseph[1] stretches out a used piece of gum towards the camera and makes a face. The photo was taken during the break of theatre rehearsal in a Finnish day care center. I took the photo almost 10 years ago as a novice researcher of art education and the social study of childhood. Back then I would have analyzed the photo thinking it through the question, "How is the child's agency present in the photo?" I knew already then that agency is a popular concept within the interdisciplinary area of childhood studies but also controversial in its meaning and usage (e.g. Barnes, 2000; Latour, 2005). Now, as my interest in post-human philosophy and Latour's actor-network theory has arisen, I've become interested in the agency of material as well. What actions does the used gum suggest and make possible for Joseph? How does the "Attack" text, initially crafted by humans,

[1] The names of all children are pseudonyms.

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Fig. 1 Joseph brings forth a used piece of gum during a theatre rehearsal

become a material actant as it appears in the shirt Joseph wears? What role does the camera play in Joseph's behavior?

The agency of different kinds of objects is the focus of this chapter. First, I will briefly introduce the theoretical and philosophical context of my approach. Then I will analyze three kinds of objects: (1) physical objects, (2) digital objects, and (3) transformative and imagined objects. In the analysis I will use photographs from three different sets of research data: data from a children's theatre production in Finland (2008); data from a children's play session with digital dress up and makeover games, also in Finland (2014); and data from a children's movie rehearsal at the Saturday Art School program at Penn State University in State College, Pennsylvania, USA (2015). All children participating in the aforementioned projects were approximately 6 years old, which means that in the Finnish education system they were preschoolers, though in the U.S. they were in kindergarten. I will describe the projects in more detail during the analysis section.

2 Does Matter Matter?

Since the latter part of the twentieth century (i.e. the late 'eighties and early 'nineties), interest in physical objects and matter has increased in many academic disciplines and under different scientific movements and schools of thought. Though diverse, the philosophical landscape dealing with the centrality of objects besides human subjectivity and agency, follows the onto-epistemological, scientific, and bio-technological developments of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Ferrando, 2013). Various posthuman movements aspire to overcome the centrality of the human and to substantiate how "the nonhuman", including materials, cyborgs, and nonhuman animals, are an essential part of the world's intra-activity.[2] Objects, matter, and things are seen as material-discursive in nature (Barad, 2003) and as agents (Latour, 2005) instead of mere representations of extramaterial (Olsen, 2010).

Though posthumanism has been at the forefront in terms of creating discourses that argue for the importance of objects, transhumanism (e.g. Ferrando, 2013), actor-network theory (e.g. Latour, 2005), new materialism (e.g. Coole & Frost, 2010), agential realism (e.g. Barad, 2003), speculative realism (e.g. Shaviro, 2014), object-oriented ontology (e.g. Olsen, 2010), and assemblage theory (e.g. Deleuze & Guattari, 2004) have also been actively involved. Francesca Ferrando (2013) notes that some of these movements could be placed under the umbrella term, "posthuman", while Cary Wolfe (2009) writes about "posthumanism" as an umbrella term itself. In turn, Richard Grusin (2015) uses "the nonhuman turn" as an umbrella term, for according to Grusin, unlike posthuman, the nonhuman turn does not make deceptive claims about progression beyond the human but instead suggests that the human have always coexisted with the nonhuman. Clearly, conceptual consensus in these paradigms is currently lacking, which has the potential to create confusion among researchers.

In this chapter I will concentrate mainly on one theory of the significance of objects: Bruno Latour's actor-network theory (ANT). ANT has many other contributors as well, such as John Law and Michael Callon, but Latour has become the main representative of the theory. It is not clear under which umbrella term this theory should be situated – if any – as it is referred to as one of the main theories of both posthumanism and the nonhuman turn (Grusin, 2015; Wolfe, 2009). Latour (2005) himself describes ANT as critical sociology, stating that it has emerged from the sociology of science and borrowed "the freedom of movement" (p. 55) from narrative theories. ANT arose when some scholars understood that social explanation could not be extended to science or scientific facts. They realized that objects of science could explain the social but not the other way around. Thus, the core idea of ANT is that nonhumans are social actors and participants, as they make

[2] Karen Barad (2003, p. 815) uses the concept of intra-action instead of the usual interaction. The latter "presumes the prior existence of independent entities", while the former stresses that the boundaries and properties of entities become clear through agential intra-actions.

a difference in the course of some other agent's action. The idea of nonhumans as actors becomes clear as one begins to think of hitting a nail with or without a hammer, or walking in the street with or without clothes (Latour, 2005, p. 71).

In the discipline of art education, the use of Latour's theory is rare, and questions concerning posthumanism are almost invisible. In turn, the Aristotelian heritage stays strong: the typical model of creation actualizes as the form is imposed on matter by a subject with a particular design in mind (Jagodzinski & Wallin, 2013). The emphasis is on the creator as an agent. The posthumanist approach emphasizing the agentic feature of objects seems to be missing, but on the other hand, art educators have for a long time drawn attention to objects, matters, and things. At least since the 1930s there have been studies conducted on or organized around common objects within art education, and research on material culture is currently becoming more prevalent (e.g. Blandy & Bolin, 2012; Bolin & Blandy, 2003; Burkhart, 2006; Woywod, 2015). Instead of focusing on the visual sense in place of other sensory receptors, material culture studies seem to fit well with the exploration of our multisensory culture (Bolin & Blandy, 2003). Some art educators, especially those who focus on digital materiality (e.g. Knochel & Patton, 2015), may speak of the agency of material beyond its instrumentality, but they do not situate the discussion in the broader context of current theoretical and philosophical movements.

Interestingly, Latour (2011) himself mixes ANT and art as he analyzes, for example, the artistic, philosophical, and political questions of Tomas Saraceno's (2009) art work, *Galaxies Forming along Filaments, Like Droplets along the Strands of a Spider's Web*. Latour sees Saraceno's art work, a room full of elastic connectors that form networks and spheres, as an unintended metaphor for social theory. Latour (2011) explains how it reveals that multiplying the connections and assembling them closely enough will shift from a network to a sphere: "If you were to avoid the guards' attentive gaze and slightly shake the elastic connectors – strictly forbidden – your action would reverberate quickly through the links and points of the network paths, but much more slowly through the spheres" (p. 3).

ANT has yet to be applied or adapted as a way in which to purely and precisely analyze children's play cultures. For instance, Helene Brembeck (2008) uses Latour's theoretical ideas to demonstrate the social interaction between children and Happy Meal toys in McDonalds in Sweden. Minna Ruckenstein (2010), for her part, analyzes children's interactions with virtual pets in a Finnish day care center. However, neither Brembeck or Ruckenstein use Latourian theory as precisely or profoundly ANT. Instead, they apply some of the central ideas of ANT in their analysis. I too am cautious to state that my analysis would be pure ANT, or that it would follow more precisely Latour's idea of ANT. Similar to Brembeck and Ruckstein, it is my interpretation of Latourian ANT. The analysis will follow ANT in its core ideas: (1) nonhumans are actors beyond natural causality and symbolic meaning, and (2) the aim of the study is to reassemble the social instead of reconstructing it.[3]

[3] See more closely the preconditions of doing ANT research: Latour, 2005, 10–11.

3 Physical Objects

There are several ways to define and categorize objects. The most familiar objects are the physical everyday things that we can explore with our senses, identify easily, and learn by name (Quine, 2013). For example, a door-closer is this kind of object. Jim Johnson (1988) writes about the sociology of a door-closer, discussing in particular the idea of nonhumans as characters. He explains: "Every time you want to know what a nonhuman does, simply imagine what other humans or other nonhumans would have to do were this character not present. This imaginary substitution exactly sizes up the role, or function, of this little figure" (p. 299). Johnson's description may well fit the door-closer or other practical objects, but it also leaves a variety of other objects out, specifically those objects whose essence is more aesthetic than functional. An example of this kind of object is a brooch. Following Johnson's thought it is easy to say that humans and other nonhumans would not have to do anything special if a brooch would not be present, but, as I see it, that does not mean that the brooch lacks function.

There are also complex and messy objects that do not necessarily look like objects and may come in forms that cannot be known within the most obvious versions of common-sense. John Law and Vicky Singleton (2004) give an example of this kind of object as they write about alcoholic liver disease as an object. Objects are socially produced, and alcoholic liver disease can be produced and explained very differently by patient, relative, laboratory assistant, and gastro-enterologist. The point is that the concept of disease means different things to different groups of people (Law & Singleton, 2004.) Most objects can be, then, at least in the context of ANT thinking, both subjects and objects. The human body can be an object of medical knowledge as it is, and at the same time, a private, fleshy subject experiencing pain (Mol & Law, 2004).

I will not go into further detail to comprehend and categorize such objects because the three categories I will use in this chapter are expectedly less messy. I ended up using these specific categories after I had skimmed the visual data I had collected from three different research projects. I noticed that while playing and engaged in art practice children were in interaction with many objects in many ways, but the three categories of objects that were most apparent, at least in these sets of data, were: physical objects, digital objects, and transformed and imagined objects. Though the categories are somewhat helpful in terms of organization they are not the core interest of this chapter. Instead, I want to examine how agentic children and these three kinds of agentic objects interact.

In Fig. 2, Vernon is trying on his costume. Vernon is going to act as an eight-legged worm in a theatre piece that is scripted by the children themselves. All together, 14 Finnish preschoolers were involved in a theatre project that was organized and directed by two art education doctoral students in 2008. First, the children produced a manuscript using a story-crafting method, then rehearsed the play, and in the end performed it for the general public. The children created two different theatre pieces during the 6-week rehearsal period: one was called "Crazyball" and

Fig. 2 Vernon wiggles the antennas of his costume

the other, "Three Million Lions". The idea of the project, which culminated with the public performance, was to make art created by children visible and to give as much space as possible to children's own ideas, thoughts, and expressions.

In the photo, Vernon is wearing a worm colored balaclava and a hairband with two antennas. The antennas were made of coil springs and glistening, ball-shaped pieces of styrofoam. Because of the coil springs, the antennas move easily, creating a somewhat humorous impression. The hairband also lures its wearer to trifle with it. With just a few shakes of a head the wearer can cause a long-lasting and broad movement of the antennas. This is exactly what Vernon has done in Fig. 2. He looks straight at the camera, seriously, while the antennas bounce in different directions. The contrast between the serious child (or worm) and the wiggling antennas is thought-provoking. Helene Brembeck (2008) noticed, while studying Nordic childhoods at McDonald's, that a toy with a coil spring facilitates a certain kind of child subjectivity: an activity-seeking type of child. The coil springs work similarly as they are part of the hairband. They lure a child actively to move her or his body and head in order to wiggle the antennas.

Figure 2 also reveals how the social interaction does not happen between humans only, but also between humans and nonhumans. The hairband with antennas invites Vernon to move it and Vernon replies. The material actant, camera, suggests to Vernon that he should pose and so he does. Vernon invites the invisible actor, the photographer, to take a shot and she does. The photographer chooses to kneel down to Vernon's level so that the camera will have a better perspective. The camera is not

Fig. 3 The girls, dressed as lions, scratch one another

able to focus on the fast moving antennas because light, another nonhuman actant, in the rehearsal space is not sufficient. This is one attempt to describe the network of different actants in the situation in which the photograph was taken.

In Fig. 3, two 6-year-old actors are fighting. The photo is taken from the same costume fitting situation as is the photo of Vernon. The girls in Fig. 3 have just put on their lion costumes and almost immediately have started to scratch one another. The fight is obviously not real, but instead the girls are using their claws in a playful manner. The two crucial objects involved in the interaction are the two lion costumes. As soon as the girls have put them on, the costumes have suggested that the girls could transform into lions. And they have. In his study on fictional encounters in children's costume play, Espen Helgesen (2015) notices that a child's costumed performance can be understood as a socio-technical assemblage composed of the costume, the fictional character the child impersonates, and the body of the child. In Fig. 3, one could similarly analyze the interaction between all these subjects: children, lions, and lion costumes. Costumes seem to be powerful actants in that they help the children immediately to extend their reality by bringing two fictional subjects, lions, into the situation.

4 Digital Objects

Digital objects are somewhat different from physical objects. The difference has been outlined, for instance, in the context of preservation. Janet Delve and David Anderson (2014) state that the challenges in preserving complex digital objects are, briefly put, in their scale and detail. Digital objects such as simulations, visualizations, software art, gaming environments, and virtual worlds are problematic to preserve because of their hybrid nature and the uncertainties around intellectual property rights (Delve & Anderson, 2014). Within media studies the emphasis of 'digital' suggests the uniqueness of objects that are digital. Popular discourses on new media in 1990s created a digital mysticism, highlighting the fact that the emergence of new media marked a shift from the material to the immaterial: new media was seen to exist outside of the known materiality. Currently digital materiality is seen as not immaterial but rather embedded in physical data carriers, incorporated in materiality (van den Boomen, Lammes, Lehmann, Raessens, & Schäfer, 2009).

Too often the focus seems to be on the formal materiality of digital media as 'code', 'software', 'digital', 'virtual', 'hyper', or 'cyber'. Yet, digital media does not exist outside the known materiality, without material constraints and determinants such as material bodies and economics. Also, besides the effects of digital contents, there are material devices which deliver them (Allen-Robertson, 2017; van den Boomen, et al., 2009). James Allen-Robertson (2017) remarks that digital media has an underlying materiality, a material substrate that affects us every day, even though media studies often disregard it.

When speaking of digital objects, there seems to be a separate physical device and the digital object used with it, but everyone who has played digital games knows that there is no clear division between the two (see also Allen-Robertson, 2017). The device has its memory, user interface, and physical essence, all of which play a fundamental part in the gaming experience. In this chapter I speak of the device and the digital game environment as separate spheres to help the reader follow my argument, but I do this with an awareness of their intertwined nature.

In Fig. 4, Zoe is playing a digital makeover game called *Crazy Beard Salon*. Zoe is one of the 13 Finnish preschoolers who participated in 2014 in a project in which they played digital dress up and makeover games with a researcher. There were 27 game applications available, from which the children could choose to play. Children were sometimes playing the games in pairs and other times playing them alone. They were also encouraged to discuss with each other and with the researcher while playing. Among other things, the topics included in these discussion were beauty, fashion, game preferences, and gender issues. Art education, aesthetics, the social study of childhood, and game studies constituted the core for the research framework.

Figure 4 demonstrates how digital objects, in this case a makeover game played with an iPad, may interact with the player. Game design is definitely a significant factor in this process. The digital environment of *Crazy Beard Salon* enables its

Fig. 4 Zoe draws black circles on a digital character

player to perform certain actions while preventing it from performing others. The player can, as Zoe has done in Fig. 4, change the design, length, and color of character's beard and moustache. Zoe has also started to draw big black circles on the character since the game allows it. The majority of digital dress up and makeover games do not permit the player to freely draw while playing, so the game design in this particular game is quite exceptional. Zoe draws with her finger, which is also related to the materiality of digital object. The iPad, as a material device, invites humans to use their fingers instead of a pointing device or keyboard. This actually enables the use of digital technology for audiences previously excluded from these technologies, such as very young children, who do not necessarily understand the connection between a pointing device and the device itself. Since I am writing in the context of posthumanism, it is relevant to add that for the same reason another audience, a nonhuman audience, is increasingly enjoying the use of tablet computers: nonhuman animals (see, for example, Wirman, 2014).

In Fig. 5, Sophie and Haley play a digital dress up game called *Toca Tailor Fairy Tales*. The idea is that the player can sew clothes for the character out of different fabrics. The player can also dress the character up with different masks, hats, and other accessories. In Fig. 5, Sophie and Haley have used a wolf mask, green headwear, and false beard for their digital girl character to wear. Especially the fake beard makes the girls laugh and also to think of the reasons why the wolf in the Little Red Riding Hood wanted to dress as a granny.

Researchers of digital media speak of hybrid products, such as a combination of book-toy-game-web products, which operate by merging virtual and real world activities (Nixon & Hateley, 2013). Based on my research data, children may use digital games as hybrid products even if they are not specifically designed for this purpose; any digital game may be a hybrid when it is used a certain way. After

Fig. 5 The girls laugh because they have dressed a girl character up with a fake beard

playing *Toca Tailor Fairy Tales* for a while in a more common way, Sophie and Haley got a new idea. They wanted to play a guessing game with it. The photo in Fig. 5 was taken just moments before Haley explains to Sophie and the researcher that she wants to replace one of the clothing pieces for a character and that their job will be to guess what has been changed. The materiality of the device, including the lightness and the shape of the tablet, enables Haley to hold it so that no one else can see which piece of clothing she is going to change. This guessing game, invented by Haley, is definitely a form of hybrid play: it combines the digital game with the traditional one. The game also indicates how the device and digital environment, as objects, are essentially inseparable (see also, Allen-Robertson, 2017; van den Boomen, et al., 2009).

5 Imagined Objects

However, not all objects appear in physical form, as some objects are indeed immaterial. This should not be a surprising statement in the context of children's play and art practices, given that play and art making encourage both children and adults to imaginatively explore the worlds beyond the one we physically live in (see, for example, Thompson, 2006). Imagined and transformed objects are widely used in the fields of art education. Leelo Keevallik (2014) has analyzed how dance teachers employ immaterial objects, such as imaginary balls, to visualize subtle tactile and kinesthetic experiences. He noticed that immaterial objects are distinctly temporal and intertwined with actions. When used and maintained collectively, they also have

Fig. 6 The girls practice their superhero skills

to be easily recognizable. Keevallik (2014) points out that the "lack of materiality also implies that the objects do not emerge with specific colours, smells and textures, but are generic representatives of a class, as any ball or hammer" (p. 260).

Within ANT, some scholars speak of the immaterial as conceptual, virtual, and moral objects. There is no clear separation between nonhuman and human, nor between material and immaterial (Fenwick & Edwards, 2012), even though most of the objects analyzed within this theoretical paradigm tend to have a physical form. In some cases, John Law and Vicky Singleton (2004) use the concept of "fluid object", which means that the object flows and may change its physical shape. Certainly, within the multidisciplinary area of childhood studies, immaterial, imagined, and transformed objects hold a significant presence. For example, pretend play exposes children's ability to consider one object simultaneously with the properties it possesses in reality and with those it has in the imagined world (Veneziano, 2002). Media industries also utilize the "naturally" imaginative life stage of childhood as they create ready-made virtual and imaginary spaces for children to consume and explore (Ito, 2008).

The various fantastic worlds of superheroes serve as examples of the imaginary spaces for children and, of course, adults too. In Fig. 6, Paisley, Skye, and Lucy are in the middle of a superhero movie rehearsal. The activity is part of the Pennsylvania State University's Saturday Art School classes, organized every semester by art education students and art education faculty. The photo was taken in spring 2015 while I was spending a research period in Pennsylvania and was allowed to participate in the Saturday School program. For the kindergarten group, the spring of 2015 was

Fig. 7 Paisley threatens Lucy with an invisible sword

dedicated to the theme of superheroes. The classes included various art practices, such as drawing, design, photography, and imaginative play.

In Fig. 6, Paisley is walking by as Skye and Lucy are fighting. The idea of the practice is to freely act as a superhero character in small groups and to exercise a character's superpowers for the forthcoming shooting of a film. Children were also allowed to shoot their practice footage with an iPad. It is Lucy's turn to shoot. However, when Skye, as a superhero, starts to hit Lucy with her fists, Lucy continues shooting but simultaneously uses the iPad as a shield. The iPad then becomes a transformed, hybrid object, a fluid object. It is at the same time a technical device and a piece of armor that protects Lucy from the superhero's attack.

In Fig. 7, the object Paisley is using is totally immaterial. Paisley as a superhero uses an imagined sword as she attacks Lucy, still armored with her hybrid iPad-shield. Even though the sword is immaterial, all three humans involved in the situation–me, Paisley, and Lucy–are well aware of its presence and essence. Because there has been no discussion about it, there might be different views on what kind of sword is in question. It could be a laser sword, a viking sword, or a hunting sword. But all three humans probably have a somewhat similar idea of its size, for instance. The three humans would also agree on a fact that Lucy is holding a shield. The materiality of this fluid object creates some restrictions for the imagination, since the shield seems to have an already determined size. Immaterial objects are more free, but not totally free, since they are often constructed and imagined

socially, in agreement of all the participants. If Lucy would decide to move two steps further towards Paisley, she would re-determine the size of Paisley's immaterial sword.

6 Conclusion

As I am scrolling this text from top to bottom and back again, looking at these digital actants, these photos I have chosen to present in my chapter, it strikes me that they all have one feature in common. It is not the fact that they are all taken by me or taken with the same digital camera; it is not the fact that they present action between humans and nonhumans. It is the fact that they all contain humor. In fact, in all art education projects I have participated in with children, there has been playfulness and humor. What a hilarious object is a used piece of gum, one might state, or an iPad, offering endless opportunities for fun! It may be so, but it may also be, that playfulness is one fundamental feature of childhood and one fundamental feature of quality art education activities. This is a comforting thought when thinking of the scanty material resources offered for education: the objects do not have to always be expensive – sometimes even a used piece of gum or an imagined sword will do.

I started this chapter by analyzing physical objects, then moved into digital objects, and finally ended up with imagined objects. Even though the different kinds of objects did have some category specific features, as I have described in this chapter, children tended to use all kind of objects creatively and with a playful manner. And also, the material actants tended to suggest playful activities for children. The lion costumes invited girls into a pretend cat fight; the character of *Crazy Beard Salon* suggested that Zoe draw messy circles on it; and the iPad lured Lucy to use it as a shield. The immaterial sword, obviously, did not suggest anything, because it did not exist until Paisley imagined it, with the mutual understanding of me and Lucy. This, for me, points out why there is a certain difference between material and immaterial objects, and why it is reasonable to speak about the agency of objects.

The posthuman idea of considering the nonhuman as an essential part of our social world seems like a good fit for the discipline of art education. The value of material objects, such as sculptures and brushes, has traditionally been recognized among art educators. Now the challenge is to shift perspective a bit: still to recognize the value of objects but also, as ANT among some other theoretical and philosophical movements suggests, to become aware of their agentic nature, their ability to participate in the social activity as a part of a network. What does a quality brush suggest for a child? What about a brush that already has green paint on it? A brand new brush compared to an old one with implicit stories marked on it? A brush with a superhero sticker on its handle? Yet again, how about a brush that has used gum glued onto it?

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Digital Aesthetics and Multidimensional Play in Early Childhood

Linda Knight

1 Children's Encounters with Digital Imagery

This chapter considers the impacts and effects of what is popularly labelled the digital age on early childhood learning. I am particularly interested in the ways digital technologies affect and disrupt well-established conceptions of young children's art and play in education contexts, including the expectations of how art and play is produced in kindergarten spaces.

Certainly, contemporary school children inhabit a world that is intensely visual. Due to the ubiquity of digital technologies across the globe and in everyday lives, young children encounter masses of digitally-based, visual imagery that saturates the contemporary world. Much of that imagery is commercially driven, and increasingly, aimed at them: in the USA young children have become the largest target audience for iTunes applications (apps) (Arita, Seo, Chu, & Quek, 2015; Hernandez, 2014). This suggests that those who purchase digital technologies are prioritizing opportunities for young children to encounter and actively participate in those technologies. Consumers are also becoming more selective as over time they have seen how well young children understand and operate apps. Thus demand has exploded to accommodate a very young consumer base who "are demanding more sophisticated, higher-quality education apps as they become accustomed to gaming apps made for adults" (Hernandez, 2014, para. 7). App developers are keen to quickly grasp and supply the opportunities that this uptrend offers; however they see that going through educators is problematic because "educators criticize edtech companies for producing uninspired products that ignore learning science" (Hernandez, 2014, para. 10). Many companies are now bypassing these consultative processes and marketing their apps directly to parents and families in order to "respond more

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quickly to user behavior … [and] experiment with new approaches to learning without having to fight through the institutional inertia of 'this is how it's always been done' or 'that will never work'" (Hernandez, 2014, para. 11). It will be interesting to see how these discordances over the educational credibility of apps aimed at the young child market will play out as demand continues to rise and spreads across global communities and cultures.

The cautionary voices of early investigations into the impacts of media on young children (see for example: Buckingham, 2003; Kinder, 1991; New London Group, 1996) warned about the effects on children of exposure to images that were specifically constructed to directly advertise goods and services and indirectly advertise lifestyles and identities. Families and educators became cautious about exposing children and youth to media that influenced their food choices and body-image and fueled a homogenized view of the world. Contemporary popular imagery is less feared (Hernandez, 2014) but far more slippery because it comes in disguise. More than the obvious motivations of advertisements to sell products and idealized lifestyles, contemporary visually-based products such as apps, children's film, and television might be packaged as educational, harmless, and neutral (and might even seem to promote diversity) yet *something* is being virtually sold to children. An extreme example of this disguised marketing is seen in an app that is used to sell ideologies to children living amongst the Islamic State. The app teaches about letters of the alphabet by using weapons, military vehicles and other similar combat-related words and images (Weiss, 2016).

Many of the products being sold to children today are not physical, material goods. The base motivations of games, apps, films and television programs sell ideologies, desires, and aspirations through the building of virtual friendships, virtual families, worlds, pets, lifestyles, identities, subjectivities, and game-based, goal-oriented accomplishments. The collective term for children's participation in online programs is gaming. For young children virtual disguising comes through gaming which requires children to play through avatar characters; examples include the heavily-pixelated human, monster and animal characters in Minecraft©, the archetypal NPCs (Non Player Characters) which populate Terraria©, the humanistic Sims©, and the hybrid creatures of Animal Jam© and Moshie Monsters©.

The pervasiveness of image-based material and the enthusiastic way children engage with digital imagery through these virtual and disguising layerings, as well as the experiences they have through playing with friends, other toys, pets and so on, suggests how contemporary childhoods are lived through messy, intermingling multiple realities and multiple dimensions of the *imaginary,* the *experienced*, and the *actual*. A common scenario: As a seven-year-old my daughter played with building bricks and miniature animal models, swam, rode her bike, played with her friends, drew with pencils and paper, as well as using a decommissioned mobile phone, a tablet and a laptop to play most of the games listed above. All of her play happened in a disorganized fashion and I'm not sure that she separated her play into different dimensions or realities, even though she encountered them through these different materialities. Such differences were of course muddied due to the marketization of popular online games into soft toys, books, clothing, and the marketization

of popular toy characters, children's television programs into online games and apps, puzzles, and books. As a parent I facilitated her exposure to all these play-things, and I chose things because I felt they were deemed appropriate for her. However, my assessment of appropriateness was contingent upon my perceptions of child-appropriate toys rather than only allowing her to play with things that had high pedagogic or educational credentials. I did not undertake a careful mediation of whether each play item provided her with *real* experiences (as in, unless she was physically engaged in fine-motor or gross-motor movements as she played with physical objects, she was not truly playing). I believed that playing with digital media and virtual gaming was just as bone-fide in building her thinking and physical capabilities as sitting down to a tea party with her friends and her toy dinosaurs.

The short description I provide of my daughter's play is a typical example (in a first world context) of how many children experience digital imagery at home, illustrating perhaps the typical, independent choices that are made in facilitating children's exposure to different types of imagery and play. Such choices can be more complicated in early childhood education contexts that are regulated by policies and curriculum requirements[1] as well as the collective beliefs and expectations of attending families.

A kindergarten classroom is often where a child first encounters formal care and education. Kindergarten playrooms, classrooms and outdoor areas have a particular identity: filled with equipment, items and decor that is carefully organized and constructed with reference to governing age-appropriate schema and criteria seen to enhance and optimize a child's learning potential and socialization skills (see Figs. 1 and 2).

A search for images of early learning spaces will pull up rows of snapshots that are almost identical in their organization, with bright color schemes and furniture arranged in such a way to create zones for specific types of play: reading, sand-play, puzzles, painting and more. Wall space is often used as a pedagogic strategy to deliver the curriculum through posters, images and written text. The overall effect is bedazzling: a curation of brightly-colored miniature furniture, toys and surfaces that resemble a cross between a home, playground and toy shop. The rooms take on this spatial conventionality because the choice of what furniture and resources to include is directed by the expectations of parents, education departments, policy makers, teachers, accreditors, and wider society about what a kindergarten room should look like. The education suppliers that kindergartens use respond to these expectations and provide specific examples of equipment and furniture; the result is that kindergarten classrooms take on a uniformity and sameness. The lack of variety in

[1] Early childhood education is referred to here in the Australian context and represents accredited full day-care centres for children aged 0–5 years, as well as the elementary school classrooms dedicated to children attending their first year of formal schooling. In Australia this first school year is variously named kindergarten (kindy) or preschool (prep), depending on the State or Territory. All Australian schools will eventually drop the terms kindy and prep and adopt the term foundation, to reflect the language of the national Australian Curriculum.

Fig. 1 Kindergarten room (*Image credit:* http://www.thelearningexpresspreschool.com/img/early_preschool_room_2.jpg)

equipment and furniture is not due to a lack of invention by educators, however, but directed by the specific goals embedded in curriculum and framework documents. Essentially, with the standardizing of policy and curriculum has come a standardization of the learning space and everything in it. Furthermore, with convention can come exclusion; certain toys, objects, images deemed inappropriate are not included in these formulaic room curations. Although it is outside the purposes of this chapter to critique the problems associated with concepts of appropriateness and how what gets included and what remains outside the door, can, and often does, set up homogenizing images of childhood (Giugni, 2012), families and the world, this conventionality is important to discuss in relation to how digital technologies enter the space.

So far I have briefly discussed commonplace incidences of play for the contemporary young child, and I have described fairly typical early education contexts. The chapter will now examine children's digital play more closely, and will focus on specific aspects of that digital play: digital aesthetics, and the multidimensional nature of digital play due to the construction of digital devices.[2] I will refer to data gathered during a small research project to present evidence-based discussion on

[2] In this chapter aesthetics refers to the affective and sensational in art, and multidimensionalities refers to the combination of the physical, digital object coupled with the virtual spaces created by programs and apps seen on-screen.

Fig. 2 Kindergarten room (*Image credit:* http://btckstorage.blob.core.windows.net/site2203/DSC_1948.JPG)

digital aesthetics and multidimensional play in order to ignite critical thinking about the ways expectations and valorizations emerge around young children's arts and play practices, particularly in education contexts. I bring a poststructural theoretical orientation to my discussions on aesthetics and multidimensionality, and I pay particular attention to new materialist thinking in these conceptualizations.

2 iPads in Kindergartens Project

In 2013 I was part of a small research project that equipped three kindergartens in the area of Greater Brisbane, Australia, each with ten iPads and an iBook computer. The project tested the use of iPads by children aged between 2 and 4 years, and looked specifically at their literacy and creative arts learning on the devices (Dezuanni, Dooley, Gattenhof, & Knight, 2015). The project ran over 1 year, and went in three cycles. In each cycle the kindergarten educators implemented learning activities and also free play with the iPads. Families were also able to take the iPads home for short periods of time to use them. At the end of each cycle we interviewed the educators, families and children about their use and experiences with the iPads.

The project had different interests around the adoption of the iPads by the participants, the main focus being on the development of young children's literacy and creativity practices in formal and home spaces. As is usual with a research team, we

were curious about the outcomes of our project and had no particular agenda to push about putting the devices in the hands of very young children, so we were surprised by the significant interest in the project by major mainstream media outlets in Australia. During interviews we were under pressure to declare a negative moral position on the use of digital devices by the young, and we were regularly probed by interviewers for evidence of the young participants preferring the iPads over playing with toys or other children in the kindergartens. We became aware of the powerful emotions that the public has around introducing digital media such as iPads to the very young and how these emotions seem to circulate around the ethics of exposure (Saslow, 2012), the cognitive impacts on development commonly regarded as naturally occurring (Chang, Rakowsky, & Frost, 2013), social impact (Ward, 2013) and the perceived threat to certain types of play (Weber, 2013).

Clearly, mainstream thinking about play and learning are challenged by the presence of digital technologies in young children's lives. So how is it that digital technologies have managed to pervade early childhood education spaces?

In terms of the iPad, Apple's success has depended upon high-quality marketing and clever brand styling that invokes consumer desire to own Apple devices. Apple initially pitched the iPad at adults as a useful piece of tech gadgetry that filled a perceived space other Apple devices left open. This clever, innovative pitch was extremely fruitful for Apple, producing sales estimated at around 200 million iPads as of June 2014 (Costello, 2014).

The physicality of the iPad, made from "strong, beautiful materials like aluminum and glass" (Sahoo, 2012, p. 39), plus its particular size and weight is what Apple foregrounds in its marketing strategy as a point of difference to other technology devices such as the smartphones and computers the public uses in their daily lives.

It is likely that Apple also foresaw how popular the iPad would be with families. Early on the company featured children/families in their marketing of iPads, simultaneously creating and supplying a burgeoning consumer desire for all family members to be tech-savvy. This is particularly evident in Apple's launch advertisement for one of the later iPad models which features a regular pencil laying on various types of tables to hide the presence of the iPad air, making "an implied signification that the iPad is a device designed for learning by bright young minds" (Knight & Dooley, 2015, p. 47).

The crucial success of the iPad concept and its subsequent marketing was to create an object that was both extremely sophisticated *and* extremely simple to handle and operate. I believe the key aspect that brought it into the hands of young children and then kindergartens and schools was the potent combination of two things: the similar shape and size of the iPad to traditional learning tools (the slate, the book, the notepad) which differentiates it from a computer and gives it different signifying associations; and that it is operated by fingers rather than a keyboard (Hernandez, 2014). This mix of high-tech capacity and low-tech operation allowed the iPad to breach the well-protected wall of the kindergarten room.

So, although the systems of reporting and accrediting that are in place in contemporary kindergartens can, among other things, force the regulation of spaces, equipment, pedagogies, behaviors, and productions, putting iPads in kindergartens subverts the equipment and aesthetic conventions of the kindergarten room. As an

example, the iPads in our small project presented an unanticipated challenge to the habits of surveillance over what children learn and how they learn, and how available that learning is to the adults and education system around them. We regularly observed that children quickly deleted many of their files and photographs they produced on the iPads, much to the alarm and frustration of the kindergarten educators. Digital technologies are tricky then, because children have much more control over their work, and their work is far less visible to an educator than physical objects made with paper, paints, bricks, toys and cardboard.

Nevertheless, and despite these subversions, digital tablet technologies have made it into the kindergarten. Though my chapter departs from the focus of our previous research project into children's uses of iPads, it revisits the data produced during that project to more closely observe the visual material the children created to think about the aesthetics of those digital images, and about multidimensional play. I believe it is important to make observations about digital aesthetics and multidimensional play not only because children now make digital images, but because the technology contained in tablets offer ways of working that are quite different from the technologies of paper, paints and pencils.

It is important too, to develop ways of thinking about children's digitally-produced art so that educators, parents and others can shift from being passive, ill-informed consumers/providers of digital technologies, or passive observers of the art being produced, and instead find ways to actively use digital technologies that support high-quality learning in their kindergartens and homes.

This chapter will use some examples of digital art produced by young children as prompts for discussing aesthetics, and the importance of considering the multidimensionality of digital works. I must assert from the outset however, that this is not a technocratic chapter with tips and steps for making digital art with young children, and neither will the chapter advocate for classifying such work for the purposes of assessment. It will instead provide a critical and theorized engagement with young children's digital art through the concepts of aesthetics and multidimensionality.

3 Multidimensionalities and Aesthetics in the Kindergarten

Kindergartens appear uniformly similar; however the regulations that govern them are schizophrenic, slippery and hard to challenge. Regulations are dualistic; they exert control through the implementation of accreditation checks and measures, which uphold very specific visions of early childhood education, whilst appearing to preserve the kindergarten room as a special space for children; the child's *own place*. Dominant early childhood pedagogical approaches, such as the Reggio Emilia approach (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 2011), the Steiner education movement (Childs, 1991), Montessori schooling (Lillard, 1996; Montessori, 1982), and the unschooling approach (Griffith, 2010), form additional, influential sedimentary layers around this regulated/sanctified/slippery/contradictory kindergarten image. Nevertheless, kindergartens are not monolithic, as disruptions, movements and encounters are constantly occurring.

The architectures of the kindergartens in Figs. 1 and 2 illustrate a sanctified space that is heavily regulated and officiated, despite the constant movements and encounters occurring there. Movements and encounters operate on different scales, temporalities and durations, and exude from different materialities; these form the routines and activities that occur daily in early childhood sites (Nxumalo, Pacini-Ketchabaw, & Rowan, 2011; Taylor, Blaise, & Giugni, 2013). Although our small research project ignited an emotional media reaction, introducing iPads into kindergartens was not a violent disruption of an otherwise static, mono-dimensional environment. The iPads were merely a more noticeable presence in this ever-changing cluster of movements and encounters between many different things that were constantly coming and going.

Elizabeth Grosz (2009) declares how, in art, "The plane of composition can be understood as a composite field of all art works, all genres, all types of art, the totality of all the various forms of artistic production, that which is indirectly addressed and transformed through each work of art" (p. 84). Similarly, the kindergarten space forms part of the composite field of the pedagogic exchange, which is indirectly addressed and transformed through each early childhood education event (that is, each moment). Kindergarten sites are pulsing, complex and fluid clusters of happenings that work across dimensionalities and chronologies. Kindergartens are sites with indeterminate *edges*[3] that are constantly constituting and constituted by pasts, futures and presences across "a relational field, where micropolitics occur" (Blaise, 2013, p. 189). Different beliefs, practices and enactments that come to be understood collectively as *early childhood education and care* come into contact, sometimes discordantly. Kindergarten sites, despite the uniformity of their design are multidimensional conduits or spark points of these messy micropolitical movement encounters. Bringing iPads into such a space to encourage very young children to use them freely is one open example of this.

It is possible that the extraordinary public reaction to taking digital technologies into kindergartens is due, in part, to the complex affects that surround the iPad as a material object. These affects seem to intensify when iPads are given to young children, to use without direct instruction and without time constraints. In this chapter I will focus on two of these intense affects: multidimensionalities and digital aesthetics as a way of critically theorizing on digital art and play. In doing so I make the case that digitally-based creating is not so different from the more familiar ways play and art occurs in the kindergarten room. Although digital technologies do appear to trouble hierarchies of appropriateness of carefully protected and carefully curated processes and materials (such as cardboard boxes, building bricks, paintbrushes, sculpting dough and more), the work produced by the young children during the iPad project demonstrated that children do learn about aspects such as dimensions and aesthetics as effectively as they do when using traditional materials.

[3] Although a kindergarten is usually a built structure such as a classroom or a center, the activities, people, staff, equipment come and go in and out, thus the edges of a kindergarten are not absolute but are permeable.

A focus on the ways multidimensionality and digital aesthetics are foregrounded in digital arts can advocate for the educative benefits of using digital media with young children, and begin as well to soothe some of the apprehensions around the consequences of *messing with* the well-established, well-tested programming and pedagogic habits that have directed young children's art and play experiences for such a long time. Dimensionality and aesthetics are important in the development of children's conceptual and perceptual skills. Bringing digital technologies into the kindergarten space might seem to taint the sanctity of the child's own kindergarten room, even though kindergartens are not designed and curated by children, but are always mediated and controlled.

3.1 Multidimensionalities

The iPad is a solid object with design specifications that make it highly recognizable. It is also a multidimensional object, with space beneath/within/elsewhere because it *contains* the virtual spaces of the drive, storage areas in apps, cloud-based storage space as well as becoming spaces: the spaces that begin in chaos and are transferred to the iPad as photographic images, virtual environments in games, and the created images in art-based apps. The virtual spaces of things, places, events, and their transferences across domains and dimensions are encountered via a specific view space, as movements on a static surface, through animations, shifts, and alterations ignited by the touch of a finger on a sheet of glass. These multidimensionalities are constantly becoming without beginning or end, continuous and productive, producing, becoming without need of human action (multidimensional spaces continue to *move*, even when the iPad is set to off). These are perpetuating and perpetual, multiple dimensionalities that are reliant on as well as independent from human control.

iPads and tablets are computers, and though they respond to touch they also operate through a form of legislated imagination (Deleuze, 2004, p. 57), a digital, binary coding that translates across activities and that offers creative possibilities, but within the bounds of the coding parameters. Codings are produced by the pressured touch of skin on glass. What is possible stems from this exchange between the touch of skin, the glass surface, and the coding patterns, not unlike the parameters set by the dimensions of the sheet of paper, the crayon, the building brick. Grosz (2009) states, "The common ground for all the arts is the rhythmic, durational, universe of invisible, inaudible forces, whose order can only be chaotic" (p. 89). Art occurs through translations, beyond the material, no matter what that material is, because the material is always bound by its own eventual parameters. In digital media, art emerges from touch to binary coding, to image, occurring through a series of effecting, mediating translations and layerings that are simultaneously material and multidimensional.

How might this be thought about in relation to the art young children create with paper, pencils and paint? Grosz (2009) hints at a way of thinking about this when

she declares that art "forces do not reveal themselves to lived bodies except through the processes of composition …they are fundamentally unlivable" (p. 89). Paint, paper and pencils are no more alive than the iPad because pencils, paper, paints, and clay, for example, each have mediating, restrictive possibilities, as does an iPad. Paper, crayons, paints, and clay have just come to be accepted through various early childhood art discourses through valorizations that declare them *age-appropriate* and unrestricted, educational, somehow neutral or raw. This view is seen in instructional early childhood education texts which commonly partner best practice, high-quality play, and the nurturing of creativity with particular equipment, including "intelligent materials …that invite questions, curiosity and experimentation" (Krechevsky, 2001, p. 252), and "high-quality art materials …that real artists use" (Bruehl, 2011, p. 21). Collectively, the instructional texts that early childhood educators encounter through their studies and professional career set up norms about what equipment will best aid children's learning in particular ways, and at particular stages of their development.

By contrast, and ironically (due to popular, negative beliefs about children and technology), digital technologies can break free of their physical dimensions due to their rhizomatic connectivity with imaginations, programmers, and power sources that keep them running and that keep apps lively, maintain coding activity, and that ensure updates download and more. Boundaries between the edges of the device are broken down so that worlds within, around, and across, merge and blur. The iPad object becomes bodiless because its contents are not exactly contained within its physical dimensions. Edges between the iPad object and the bodies that use it disappear as device and body travel and build around/through/with/of them. And because "the arts share, not a common past but a shared future …to capture the force of time, opening up sensation to the future" (Grosz, 2009, p. 89) the valorizations around early childhood arts that sanction the permissions for inclusion of certain materials in the kindergarten should be extended to include digital devices as an additional material that can come to life through the plane of composition. The iPad offers aids to learning as much as the paints, easels, and clay that are often present.

3.2 Aesthetics

Aesthetics is hard to articulate, classify or simplify because the affective drive to create and respond to art "comes not from a uniquely human sensibility, not from reason, recognition, intelligence, nor from man's higher accomplishments, but from something excessive, unpredictable, lowly and animal" (Grosz, 2009, p. 82). Grosz points out that the intense affects and urges that result in art production also produce intensities, sensations and affects that go on to prompt further art production "composed of blocks of materiality-sensation" that "monumentalize …only sensations" (Grosz, 2009, p. 84). Intensities and affects, rather than classified elements, are the ways aesthetics are cyclically formulated and reformulated, formulate and reformulate. The making of art is driven by a desire to make something pleasing, and the

pleasure presents a feeling to make further art, and this drives a desire to make something pleasing, and so on. This chapter works with Grosz's notion of art and aesthetics as monumentalized clusters of materials, sensations and affects and how these emerge in art made by young children with digital technologies. Conceiving art not as an object but *through* sensation–"not sensations of a subject, but sensation in itself, sensation as eternal, as monument" (Grosz, 2009, p. 84)–presents an aesthetics free from a narrow practice of looking and its tethering to categorization, emotion and traditional conceptions of beauty. Aesthetics through sensation "is not representation, sign, symbol, but force, energy, rhythm" (Grosz, 2009, p. 85) brought about through art no matter what the materials, or the age of the artist. A sensation(al) aesthetics hones in on the positive tensions that occur as thoughts, movements and materials meet, this shifts right away from a schema-driven, developmental understanding of why and how young children make, read, and appraise, their art.

This chapter does not attempt to establish an aesthetic canon for young children's digital art making but considers instead how digital technologies formulate and reformulate affects and sensations, and how that gets noticed rather than the capacity of the technological object itself. "Every art form has a significant part to play; nevertheless, aesthetics percolates each form of the visual arts …arts are the characteristic ways in which aesthetic experiences …shall be fostered" (Stavridi, 2015, p. 2275). The physical dimensions and sanitized glass surface of digital tablets might seem to mediate or restrict the sensations children experience when making art with physical materials, but this is if art making is thought about through the particular determinations of physically handling and wielding a paintbrush, paper, clay, tape, scissors etc. established by dominant, mainstream early childhood art theories. There is something curious about digital art making because it has to go through a series of translations determined by the parameters of the programing, and the role of binary coding in making *touch* turn into something else. Grosz's notion of aesthetics as monumentalized clusters of materials, sensations and affects is still taking place in the making of art on a tablet. They might be unfamiliar clusterings of ideas, decisions, constructions, mark-making usually seen in early childhood art and play because beyond the tablet no physical materials are used, but the images shown in our small project clearly showed evidence of affective and sensational decisions and responses.

4 Digital Art and Play

The three kindergarten sites that participated in the iPads project were open to experimenting with the effects and impacts the iPads would have on children's play habits, art-making habits, and their own programming and pedagogic habits. The specifics of that project are reported elsewhere (Dezuanni et al., 2015) and deal with our focus on children's literacy and creativity development. The children in this project experimented with a range of apps as well as the standard iPad features and created many pieces of work, which we spoke about in particular ways at the

conclusion of that project. The data generated by the project continues to provide excellent opportunity to think about the ways digital technologies are taken up in early childhood education contexts, or conversely, why they might be resisted. In what follows, I use some of the data from this small project to theorize about children's interactions with digital technologies, and to consider how digital aesthetics and multidimensional play became part of the daily routine of these children as they worked with iPads.

I have suggested that early childhood sites are not fixed but that they are instead shifting, multi-dimensional clusters, and that art and play are part of these movements no matter the type of materials being used. I have taken a closer examination of these movements by focusing on concepts of multidimensionality and aesthetics, and how in particular digital technologies might offer ways of thinking about multidimensionality and aesthetics that disrupt conventionalized beliefs and practices about art and play in early childhood.

Throughout this chapter I have resisted using standard or Modernist conceptions of aesthetics that hone in on the "awareness of line, form, design and their dynamics" (Stavridi, 2015, p. 2275); elemental terms that work on a premise of the art as a separate object to be dissected and tethered to fixed interpretations and representations, and the young child as a certain type of drawer, painter, constructor, etc. I provide examples of four art works produced by children during the iPad study. Instead, my commentary on the children's works will consider aesthetics and multidimensionalities, not as resident in work-as-separated object but through the wider clusters of sensations, affects, rhythms and forces that they are part of. For that reason the images will not be discussed separately as this would attempt to establish them as objects separated from the mass of things that were occurring as they were being created (Figs. 3, 4, 5, and 6).

The examples illustrate the multidimensionalities that occur when hands, binary coding, app parameters, camera lenses, interiors and exteriors, objects, effects, and the materials of an iPad collide in various agglomerative arrangements. These are not held in the image frame but share in the wider event that the image is part of. Other types of imagery such as paintings, drawings, and the scratched-marks made in the dirt with a stick also work this way, emerging from different and differing clusterings of affect, materiality, temporality, physicality and sensation. Differences and valorizations attached to particular practices are less marked when art making and play are thought of as emerging through multidimensional acts, thoughts, movements and encounterings already occurring in the kindergarten.

The aesthetics of these images are sensational, vibrant, productive. Aesthetics are reformulated and reformulating as taps, swipes, clicks, reflections, and programing result in effects and sensational formulations in intense loops and repetitions. Things can happen quickly. Likewise, they can be rejected without a second thought.

Many adults remain reticent about making digital media freely available to very young children while they are attending kindergarten. In addition to the reasons discussed in this chapter are concerns about negative effects on a child's posture, eyesight, socialization skills and the motor skills needed to correctly grip a pencil for writing (Starke, 2013). Such fears are less about the specifics of young children

Fig. 3 Collections of contrasts, taken from a low angle

Fig. 4 Digitally drawing onto the photograph of a painting created on the reverse side of building plans, saved as an image

Fig. 5 Collections of shapes clustered together

using a tablet computer and more about the conflicted feelings educators might be having about whether to introduce digital technologies or resist the change. Digital technologies are complex objects of desire. Educators can feel uncertain of where it all might lead and what might eventuate when young children are able to access technologies, even though many children already have this access in their homes.

The images that appear in popular media that feature young children sitting hunched and solitary in front of a computer were not enacted in our small project. Children came and went from the iPad table. They shared, collaborated and helped each other to solve problems and understand instructions. None of the children were readers so they had learnt to use apps by trial and repetition. We saw children treat the iPads carefully when they took them outside to take photographs, and we witnessed how they quickly figured out how to hold their hand in a particular pose so that only their finger touched the glass surface, showing how the particularities of digital technologies impart responsive human technologies.

The digital arts examples included here serve to enrich straightforward, emblematic notions of the arts and play that are produced in kindergarten spaces. The examples were chosen because they show the ways children, through operating the iPads through

Fig. 6 Different pressures and finger movements to explore line effects and colors

flicks, swipes and presses with their fingers and hands desired to make something pleasing, and that this desire prompted further experimentation with the devices. Their active persistence in learning how to use the iPad functions to create their artworks challenges perspectives of appropriateness around young children's art and play.

The iPads did not dominate the children's art and play: we did not see children turn away from making art with low-tech materials. The images demonstrate how children found ways to work with digital media as well as more commonplace materials in ways that did not centralize either process. The iPads added to the art and play equipment available, but in ways that somewhat disrupted regular and regulated artmaking, pedagogy, documentation, corporeal activity and interactions. Rather than this difference raise suspicion, however, as more children are exposed to digital technologies in their homes, kindergartens have an important opportunity to help children use digital technologies in stimulating ways in their art and play.

5 Conclusions and Impact

The presence of digital technologies such as tablet devices in kindergarten rooms adds different multidimensionalities to play, as the capabilities of apps and programs can enhance what children can do with other resources available in the learning space (Geist, 2014). Introducing digital technologies for art and play learning requires active pedagogical strategies and a philosophical shift away from historic

notions of early childhood arts education that are fixed to developmental understanding of children's art practices, what the art experience should provide to children and how art connects to the world before those complex and multidimensional visual aspects can be brought in to the kindergarten.

Observations of children's use of drawing and writing on iPads made during the small study described here have generated new theorizations of young children's use of digital technology and the actions, reactions, and desires of very young children as they create their digitally-generated productions, as well as the activity/conceptual legislations the iPad instigates through its materiality. What has emerged through the drawing and writing work produced by children, and the feedback provided by parents, educators and children is that a child's drawing and writing skills are not tied to particular material objects or procedures. Different assemblages of objects, including paper, pencils, iPads, fingers, glass, and binary coding collectively and complimentarily nurture the gross and fine motor skills needed for writing and drawing development. Our observations of children using their index fingers adeptly across the glass screen showed how children develop their fine and gross motor skills for all kinds of purposes: this is particularly needed for children living in a digital age.

The arrival of digital technologies in the kindergarten space calls for shifts in conventionalized concepts about early childhood arts practices, materialities, and aesthetics (Sakr, Connelly, & Wild, 2016; Stavridi, 2015) and expansive thinking about the operative modes of digital devices. Using adult-targeted art making apps instead of those designed specifically for young children, for example, will help mitigate against children performing mundane, formulaic, template-based tasks instead of creating their own compositions and images. The paper-based artifacts and scripts that young children produce have large amounts of sentiment attached to them. However, this isn't really connected to the value of the work but more so to a sentimentality brought about by signs that include jumbled up letters, misspelt words, innocent statements, and also line drawings, brightly colored paintings, and so on. These valorizations might suggest that paper-based work is more beneficial (in terms of its educational value) to a child than a digital image. Perhaps one reason for the negativity around iPads has to do with conventional notions of authenticity and the *real-ness* of learning processes young children ought to experience and navigate. The children's use of iPads prompts thinking about the norms and conventions around children's development and growth, as well as the process of becoming school-ready (Lynch & Redpath, 2012) in early childhood education and care. And further still, the ways in which the expectations that educators, parents and carergivers have about drawing and writing milestones are often informed and shaped by systemic theories and policies intended to *streamline* and *conventionalize* children's development in art and play.

Young children's digital art and play productions can make highly relevant connections to their visually saturated life; however this will be missed without critical and theorized thinking about the content of the task, the development by educators of a philosophical stance on the arts in early childhood, and critical pedagogic practices. Arts and play can provide opportunities for educators and even young children

to critique the social, commercial, the mundane, the conventional. And that also presents occasions to discuss, engage and produce responses that are complex, multidimensional, and creative. Without critique, theorizing and engagement, conventional conceptualizations of arts education persist as do the curricular and pedagogic governances which affect it. Digital technologies can be a confounding and contradictory early childhood resource; they are clearly able to offer activities that children are very motivated to work on, and they are increasingly owned by families, meaning children access them at home. However because of their multidimensionality it isn't always clear how digital technologies such as iPads perform many of the legislations of policy and curriculum beyond technology education (Sakr et al., 2016, p. 129). Despite their attraction as futuristic and *cutting-edge,* they can be allocated for very specific curriculum tasks, or used merely as sources for entertainment.

I don't advocate for educators micro-managing how young children play and create art on digital technologies; however it is important that educators acknowledge that digital technologies provide young children with particular opportunities for playmaking and for art making that complement other materials commonly found in a kindergarten. Closer observation of children's digital play and art making by educators may help to shrink material distinctions between digital tablets as *technological equipment*, and dress-ups, building blocks, easels as *normal early childhood equipment*.

This is an exciting time for early childhood play and art making, and how young children's learning might be aided by digital technologies. It may seem that studio-based approaches such as painting, clay, construction, etc., are under threat by the arrival of digital technologies (Stavridi, 2015); however our small study showed no evidence of this. My aim with this chapter has not been to argue the virtues of any particular art practice over another, but instead to critically and theoretically examine the aesthetics and dimensionalities of digital art produced by the very young and to consider more closely how these aesthetics and dimensionalities contribute to the learning and activity of the kindergarten space.

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Beyond Screen Time: Aesthetics of Digital Playscapes for Young Children

Marissa McClure

1 Eat Your Heart Out, Rembrandt! Framing 'Screen Time'

In January 2016, a twitpic from 2014 resurfaced (Molloy, 2016). It featured a group of young people on a school trip in front of Rembrandt's 1642 painting *The Night Watch*. The most well-known piece in the *Rijksmuseum* apparently fails to elicit a glance from the young people whose faces are completely focused on the smart phones in front of them. The photo generated a flurry of re-tweets (RT) in both its original time and 2 years later on Twitter. One 2016 user wrote, "No wonder this photo #Rembrandt's #NightWatch has gone viral. It's a perfect metaphor for our age RT." Another user, citing the first tweet responded, "@___ @___ Beautiful version! The "distracted" society. No wonder we're in the shape we're in now. Teach Your Children!" Others rallied, "What a sad picture of today's society!" and "Eat your heart out, Rembrandt!" A few more generous users speculated, "I like to think that their [SIC] researching it," or "They could be researching an artist" (as cited in Molloy, 2016).

When the picture was first posted on Facebook in 2014 it was shared 9500 times and was reposted on Twitter, Tumblr, and Reddit. The photographer who created the image was not a part of the school visit and was surprised by its viral spread. A translator who was a part of the school group posted the response, "fyi: the kids used the iphones as part of the tour of the museum. Special app" and shared a separate photo of the students sitting attentively in front of another Rembrandt that explained, "The interpretation of the photo was just wrong. I tried to correct it" (Molloy, 2016).

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The photograph itself, its misinterpretation, and its resurgence as a 'zombie thread' that has resurrected itself long after its originate incarnation illustrate several noticeable ways in which the contemporary media panic surrounding children, screen time, and digital technology is nurtured and spreads.

The image, like others that depict children's apparent addiction to technology and its complement, social media, follows a common trope. In this case, it is the 'diet' metaphor. This juxtaposes 'good' or 'healthy' choices with 'bad' or 'unhealthy' choices. The overwrought message is that children lack the capacity to choose what is good for them because they have no self-control. Adults must do that lest children run wild binging on screen time – the cultural equivalent of the sugary candies that Thompson (2006) has called the 'ket aesthetic.' As they are with junk food and candy, the decks against technology are stacked. There is no nutrition in digital technology. It must be consumed in moderation or abstained from completely.

Children—and their serious caregivers and educators—can then completely avoid putting themselves in dangers that range from premature vision loss due to the intoxicating glow of an iPhone screen to exposure to sexual predators insidiously posing as virtual playmates. These fears portray digital technology as an autonomous menace that works beyond societal mores, like a drug causing dependence with its first use. The threat that lurks behind screens is just like the non-nutritive filler from which junk food is made. It not only ruins young people's minds by altering their brain functions but also exposes them to a vast array of opportunistic predators waiting to pounce. Children are wholly exposed through social media, and 'screen time,' like any delicious contraband, must be carefully monitored.

The fears surrounding screen time have led to its policing, at home and through institutions that serve children. Following the diet metaphor, The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that families monitor their children's screen servings. Although they revised their "no screen time" policy in 2015 and have continued to add nuance throughout 2016, their statement explains that "excessive" media use can lead to "school difficulties, sleep and eating disorders, and obesity." They continue, "the Internet and cell phones can provide platforms for risky behaviors" and suggest that parents create "screen free" zones at home and limit children's screen use to less than 2 hours per day. Children who are under 2 years old should have no screen time because "A child's brain develops rapidly during these first years, and young children learn best by interacting with people, not screens." They conclude that, "It is important for kids to spend time on outdoor play, reading, hobbies, and using their imaginations in free play" (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2015).

The AAP does not mention that children could possibly use digital technologies as new media to engage in free play *with* their imaginations or even outside. They do not question why technology appears to be so compelling and so magnetic for young people (and adults). They do not wonder whether or not children might be able to interact with people *through* screens. These are the questions that I would like to explore within this chapter. Much current research about children's use of digital technologies begins with the premise that technology use is antithetical to the prosocial development that adults seek for children. This research is conducted by media scholars and theorists and cognitive scientists. Their perspectives do not consider the

aesthetic potentials of digital technology because they are not seeing it as an artistic media. Likewise, while many contemporary early childhood art educators work from post-developmental perspectives that emphasize children's process with art media and materials, play, and 'loose parts,' digital technologies have not necessarily been included. More traditional art educational research has emphasized the functions of digital technologies as instructional tools. In some of this work, digital technologies have been studied in comparison with traditional art materials—for example, drawing with an iPad—but not within the context of their own merit as new media. As I will illustrate in this chapter, simply equating digital technologies with traditional media does not reveal the richness or aesthetic potentials of young children's engagement with new media. Likewise, an underlying message in much of this research assumes that digital technology is appealing but ultimately less fulfilling than traditional media. It is my belief that the researchers' assumptions about children and childhood as well as art underlie these assertions. They are biased toward digital technology from the start, and wary of its influence upon children.

In contrast, I propose that children do, in fact, *play* with technology as it functions as new media. They use imagination, intellect, and care. They play with others via their shared participation in digital playscapes. And furthermore, there are opportunities for the adults in their lives to thoughtfully engage with them through new media. This supposition assumes that adults are responsive to the young children around them, and that they do not wish for them to be harmed. It affords families and educators the same capabilities as the competent child in their care.

The media panic that surrounds the hazards of screen time shares elements with panics of the past. Those have been dated in recorded history to at least the advent of the printing press in the sixteenth century, and have been further traced to Socrates' speculation that the technology of writing would create "forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories" (Bell, 2010). Of recent note is the panic over children's television in the 1980s and '90s that culminated in 1997s "Pokémon Panic" (CNN, 1997). It links general media panics to the particular fears about children and childhood that they engender. These are, in turn, linked to changing ideas about children and childhood in contemporary societies. In particular, they reflect the fear that children are vulnerable and in need of protection, and that children represent nature as opposed to culture. Following this logic, adults need to shield children from the intoxicating influence of digital technology. This is incredibly difficult to do as digital technology abounds in the contemporary cultures that surround many late modern children in the Minority World (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006). Further, as the media panic assumes, digital technology works directly to re-wire brains and nervous systems of children so they are inherently always at risk when they encounter a screen. The only escape is in nature, away from screens. In the face of such intense anxiety, it may be impossible to see that digital technology and nature might work in complementary ways for young children, for example.

In the Pokémon panic, reports speculated that an episode of the popular show sickened thousands of Japanese children by exposing them to a series of flashing lights. Public hysteria ensued, and TV Tokyo posted a warning on past and future episodes. While this is a dramatic example, what was more widespread was an

uneasy feeling that children were passive, sedentary, and mindless viewers of the screens in front of them and that screens could directly affect their minds without mediation. Henry Jenkins explored a variation of this idea in both a 1988 essay, "Going Bonkers! Children, Play, and Pee Wee", and in a 2010 blog post, "Going Bonkers! Revisited." The original essay had detailed what he'd seen when hosting a viewing party of *Pee Wee's Playhouse* for his 5-year-old son's friends. As Jenkins explained, "At the party, your kindergarten classmate watched and commented on episodes, made up stories, drew pictures, and played games around the Pee-Wee characters, though as you noted, they were often 'going bonkers' and not totally focused on the series" (2010, para 1). In other words, the children did not 'play the script,' nor did the screen work on them without their awareness. In fact, they were not passive receivers at all, but rather using the show for imaginative play and to produce their own shared meanings within a collaborative, social playscape.

My findings in my work as an artist, teacher, and researcher with young children who are using digital technologies echo some of Jenkins' conclusions. I have found that geographically, linguistically, and culturally diverse groups of young children incorporate digital technologies into the life and play worlds that surround them. Being inspired by the screen, in contrast, is as common as other researchers of children's voluntary and self-initiated art-making and art play have found over the past 40 years (e.g., Ivashkevich, 2009; Schulte, 2011; Thompson & Bales, 1991; Thompson, 1995, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2009; Wilson & Wilson, 2010; Wilson, 1966, 1974, 1976, 2004, 2005, 2007). I have found that the shared pleasures that young children seek in these activities are persistently social – a challenge to the commonsense panic that 'screen time' is both antisocial and gravely isolationist. New media, then, provides another opportunity amidst a wide array of imaginative, generative possibilities. For example, in a recent 3-year project with preschool children and digital cameras and Flip video cameras, I routinely saw the camera not only being used for its intended purposes but also as a prop for extended and continued play.

As I have shared, my goal within this chapter is to move beyond the limiting concept of 'screen time' when we, as artists, educators, scholars, and family members discuss young children's engagement with technology. Rather, I propose that our discussions begin with the idea that young children can and are deeply engaging with many forms of technology and mobile media (Bond, 2014) in many of the same ways in which they have employed the cultural phenomena that have surrounded them in earlier eras. This is not to say that there may not be dangers – both those that have been assessed and those that will emerge – in the ways in which we are engulfed by digital technologies in late modern times. But along with risk, and with danger, there exists potential and possibility. Following this, I begin here to describe and to map some of the aesthetics of the digital playspaces in which I have seen the young children with whom I have worked deeply, joyfully, affectively, and intellectually engaged.

2 Digital Technologies and New Media Art

The framing of digital technologies that can be used for art making as new media is central to my proposal within this chapter. When presented in a thoughtful, supported, child-sensitive and responsive way, digital technologies and new media become just one of many mediators available for young children to explore as they make, question, and share meaning within their worlds. Following this, offering a young child the opportunity to investigate and to record their world(s) with a mobile phone camera might not be so very different from offering the same child a crayon and a blank piece of construction paper.

In order to frame digital technologies as new media in this way, I am looking at both the group of adults who tend to approach the new (and old) in novel ways as children do – contemporary artists – *and* at the ways in which children make voluntary art. If we adopt artists as our role models for how new media might be used in innovative and experiential ways, a world of aesthetic possibilities for young children grows. Likewise, if we consider the ways in which children create voluntary art through play with both new and traditional media, our views about the dangers of technology might begin to shift.

In the context of children's voluntary art-making, we have found since the latter half of the twentieth century that children's making moves within the cultures that surround them (e.g., Thompson, 2003, 2006). If digital media is available to them, it becomes fair for their use and incorporation in the remixing process of culture and meaning-making (McClure, 2010, 2011). At this same time, we have seen continued worry about children's appropriation of 'adult' cultures into their shared meanings. The same impulse to segregate children from the process of culture underpins generalized anxiety about digital technology. This is tied directly to a view of children as innocent and in need of protection. In contrast, contemporary scholars of children's voluntary art-making like Thompson have adopted the construction of childhood proposed by James, Jenks, and Prout (1998) and their successors (Qvortrup, Corsaro, & Honig, 2009) working in the multi-disciplinary field of childhood studies. They present children as social agents and rights-bearing citizens in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). They assert that childhood is a socially constructed space that children inhabit, produce, and reproduce. Following this, we might conjecture that we could learn something different about children through the ways in which they use digital technologies as opposed to or in conjuction with traditional art media.

It is equally essential to my proposal to contrast new media with educational technologies. Some current research and practice of using digital technologies within classrooms seeks to replace or complement instructional strategies already in long-term use. For example, drawing on an iPad with 'drawing' apps has been juxtaposed in studies with drawing with markers or crayons (media with which young children tend to be exceedingly familiar in educational settings). I believe this is a false dichotomy. Simply trying to replicate what already exists does not highlight the unique expressive properties of digital media, nor does using apps for their intended

purposes. Of course children might perform in what appear to be less sophisticated ways the very first time they utilize a media. This view does not offer young children the necessary investment of opportunity and time to play with the media and to explore its properties. We know this to be a crucial first step in the introduction of any media pedagogically – why skip it with new media? At worst, we may be assuming an acquaintance that is not there, especially with the very real existence of the 'digital divide.' While I would consider this making use of instructional technologies (much like iPad apps designed specifically for educators might mimic worksheets or coloring books) I do not consider it to be using new media for children's voluntary art making. In this way, when educators offer digital technologies to replace traditional art media, they are doing so within the framework of a teacher-directed experience. Even within the context of 'free' drawing this is true for both the ways in which iPads are presented, and the ways in which the children's drawings are assessed as images rather than on the context, milieu, and process of their creation.

Within the landscape of digital technology, access to art making and to cultural production has been deepened and broadened. Most of us with the access to do so create and consume digital content through mobile media on a daily basis. This could be as simple as sharing a photograph publically or privately through a social media application like *Instagram*. In so doing, we are making aesthetic choices, experimenting with media, and sharing our content either as part of a new or ongoing dialogue. The use of tags and hashtags allows us to refine how we might see our visual production as a part of an ongoing conversation, as a reference to an existing media, or as a part of an aesthetic landscape. This is apparent in the recent #NightWatch panic. Without irony, users exploited the potentials of the very mobile media conventions that they were criticizing to hone the spread of their ideas. They assumed that their ideas would be spread, and that their meanings would be shared because they were based in common-sense assumptions about childhood, digital technologies, and 'high culture' not on the actual lived experiences of the children and responsible adults who they were critiquing.

Because of the ubiquity with which digital technologies and social media are embedded within contemporary life, we need not look solely to artists from the museum realm for reference to the aesthetic potentials of the digital playspace. Artists and cultural producers exist throughout the many overlapping digital spaces in which children play and created shared meanings. For example, YouTuber, Lego Jang, posts short video pieces via his channel JANGBRiCKS that detail his MOCs, or 'make your own creations.' MOCs are essentially hacks of various Lego sets and characters. These Lego-user creations have social currency within a shared aesthetic playspace (Hanes & Weisman, 2011). With over 600,000 subscribers Lego Jang is popular with both young children and adults. For example, 5-year-old PB regularly used his father's iPhone to view Jang's MOC episodes in order to inspire his own creations (McClure & Sweeny, 2015). These creations often travelled with him to his preschool classroom or to friends' homes where they were enveloped in the shared playscapes of his social circles. Participation in this shared culture hinged upon the children not only recognizing the meanings of Lego MOCs through but also the aesthetic recognition of the possibilities available within the creations. This shared aes-

thetic playscape exists in both digital and analog realms, with multiple points of entry and levels of participation. This is one of the unique aesthetic potentials of the digital playscape, and an example of the ways in which children use digital technologies as new media in order to mediate their cultural worlds. In addition, this example reveals the inter-generational potentials available in a shared digital playscape. Because adults often share their hardware with children to provide this access, the experience inherently exists in the collaborative space in-between adults and children. This is the space that Wilson (e.g., 1974, 1976, 2007) has described for decades—a site in-between adults' cultural interests and children's cultural interests. Building upon this, we know that adults and children both participate in Lego-making and Lego world sharing (Hanes & Weisman, 2011). So, adults and children are already collaborating aesthetically in this shared playscape and digital technologies both enhance and reveal this potential. Further, the playscape can exist within close knit physical communities and within more broadly spread virtual communities that eclipse geography, language, and some of the more localized aspects of culture.

The free source 'sandbox' game Minecraft has traditional console as well as mobile 'pocket' platforms for smartphones. It has been so popular with children that an educational version of the game will launch later this year. As a 'sandbox' game, Minecraft has no specific goals for the player to accomplish, although it can be played in different modes that allow users to accomplish different tasks. Another sandbox game, The Sims, which has mobile FreePlay versions, is a favorite smartphone app for children. A virtual dollhouse, it allows users to role play and to play imaginatively as they work with narratives similar to what we would find in most imaginative play centers for young children.

With the example of Minecraft, young children are often engaged across multiple mobile media platforms. They may play Minecraft on their own and in shared worlds and plazas with friends as they view others' builds on YouTube and create fan art with more traditional media like Creeper plushies. Another young boy with whom I worked was so inspired by Minecraft fan art that he began to learn to draft patterns and to sew by hand. In this web of shared social participation, young children become deeply embedded within rich, meaningful cultures shared by young children and adults alike. What is of special note is the intergenerational component of such cultures. I believe this collaborative nature to be one of the unique aesthetic potentials of new media art for young children.

The aesthetic communities, then, bridge multiple gaps – those of generation, time, language, culture, as well as those between the world of everyday art and the realm of museum and contemporary art. A collective has been established, for example, that creates custom Minecraft builds for a variety of purposes. In 2013, a Swedish architecture firm held an open competition for participants to use Minecraft in order to speculate what Stockholm might look like in the year 2023. The current emphasis in contemporary art on time-based duration and the fourth dimension is paralleled in the ways in which young children use digital photography, video, and mobile media in aesthetic forms of play.

3 Aesthetic Potentials of New Media Art and Play for Young Children

As shared above, one of the most powerful potentials of new media art and play for young children is the space it opens for the nurturing of intergenerational, international, collaborative relationships. Scholars of children's art (e.g., Wilson, 2007) have discussed the collaborative possibilities between adults and young people for nearly a decade. This collaboration, too, is the basis of negotiated curriculum in many early childhood pedagogical settings and many shared playscapes in homes and neighborhoods. This collaboration between adults and young children almost always already exists when we consider young children's access to new media. Most very young children do not have their own devices (although many new toys are being created to mimic adult devices), and are not able to download their own programs to the devices (such as apps). So, adults are voluntarily offering what young children can use (this can be more finely tuned with parental settings on iPhones or Netflix, for example).

This multi-generational element to children's new media use provides audience and visibility along a broader sphere as well. Young children now have viewers and participants for their work that they might not have initially encountered. While this exposure can have dangers (as might any public discourse), it serves the dual purpose of legitimizing children as makers of art and culture beyond the traditional reach of the family teacher night or school exhibition. We routinely see not only children's voluntary artwork being shared through social and mobile media but also the circulation of adults' and children's visual collaborations. What was once confined to the home or to the school is now part of a larger visual and aesthetic landscape and diversifies the ways in which we see young children as makers within our shared visual cultures. Recent, well-known examples of these collaborations include the short film *Caine's Arcade* (2011), the web and television series *Axe Cop* (2009-present), the student film *The Scared is scared* (2011), and the collaboration between illustrator Myla Hendricks and her 4-year-old daughter Mica (2016). The latter's whimsical illustrations started with a blog post, became an Instagram sensation, and are now a facebook page as well as a series of hardcover books.

When a playscape is no longer limited by its physicality, the players can share and engage with one another in novel ways. I see this each time my toddler son uses FaceTime to play with his grandparents who live in other cities. The childhood games of Peek-A-Boo and Hide and Seek take on new aesthetic and affective dimensions when they occur in two homes simultaneously. One needs only to recall Wilson's drawings of "Where are Waldo's Severed Limbs?" (Wilson & Wilson, 2010) to imagine how art media, both new and traditional, could be incorporated into the possibilities of a technology such as FaceTime. In an even more refined position statement in October 2016, the AAP noted the potentials of video calling technology for even the youngest children. They acknowledged the reality that in contemporary society, many young children do not live in physical proximity to their grandparents, for example. So, they may interact with them through technologies like FaceTime. This acknowledgement is a move toward understanding and accepting that digital technologies do allow for young children to build,

nurture, and maintain some of the familial relationships that may be most meaningful for them. This movement, while very practical, will undoubtedly yield aesthetic potentials because it is a step toward legitimizing rather than demonizing young children's use of digital technologies. This legitimization opens possibilities for adults to carefully observe and to understand how children interact with digital technologies and the meanings that are present in these interactions.

In addition, because physicality is altered within digitally mediated playscapes, participation may be increased beyond traditional boundaries – those of language or ability and disability. Adaptive technologies (ATs) can be seamlessly integrated into new media in ways that enrich the aesthetic potentials of new media and alter the ways in which the landscapes of difference are traditionally confined. Autism advocate Carly Fleishman does not communicate verbally but by using a computer to type. The short video piece that she created, "Carly's Café," illustrates some of her daily experiences as a teen with autism. Uploaded to YouTube in 2012, the video piece now has almost 3 million views. Her YouTube channel, created in collaboration with her father, has 14,000 subscribers.

4 Conclusions and Future Possibilities

> There's a difference between the environment that you are able to build based on a preconceived image of the child and the environment that you can build that is based on the child you see in front of you — the relationship you build with the child, the games you play. (Malaguzzi, 1994, p. 3)

These examples represent a selection of the aesthetic potentials of new media as well as a mapping of several digital playscapes in which young children participate as makers of art, media, and culture. In moving beyond screen time in our discussions of young children's use of new media, I would like to suggest that we, concurrently, move beyond the idea of playing the script as we have done with children's voluntary use of previous media forms. When we free children from the confines of the apps intended for their use and open ourselves to observe without judgment the ways in which they are actually engaged with new media, a richness appears that is only paralleled by the ways in which young people have been deeply engaged with the worlds that surround them for centuries. As Brent Wilson wrote nearly a half century ago, "once one learns to look at tatty little drawings done in ball point on lined paper, a whole world of excitement unfolds" (1974, p.3). The spirit of his sentiment must equally apply to those little corners of YouTube or Instagram or other forms of mobile media where young people – often with the help of caring adults – upload their creations as participants in a social, digital, aesthetic playscape.

It seems uniquely exciting that we are living at such a time when these possibilities for young children exist. It would be a shame to squander them to our fears and anxieties. Rather, following the advice of pedagogues like Loris Malaguzzi (1994), I propose that we look to young children themselves to provide the guidance that we seek in incorporating the lush potentials of new media within our lives and lived curricula.

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Circumspection in Early Childhood Classrooms: Ontological Forays into Questioning, Being, and Making

Heather Kaplan

1 Introduction

In today's educational arena of testing and assessment, curriculums that invest time in exploration, in asking questions, and that take time to work through a problem are viewed as inefficient and, therefore, undesirable. Within the prevalent educational model, the idea that education is a process of moving and working within and against larger questions is replaced by an epistemological model which upholds the idea that things don't work unless they're easily representable (and assessable). Problematic fits and spurts where things don't work on the first try, or are messy, of a different or larger scale, difficult to manage, partially broken, not neatly packaged, or not easily answered are not viewed as worthwhile educational pursuits. Yet we know that education is a process, one fraught with questions and engendered through questioning.

This chapter will look to the ontological work of German existential philosopher Martin Heidegger and to the larger philosophic disposition of asking questions in order to posit the possibility of an education and art education based in the messiness of inquiry and a multiplicity engendered by the connection between knowing and being. Understandings based in praxis and ontology are discussed within and against a prescient, representational mode of schooled knowledge in order to explore and inquire into the intersections of being, knowing, and making. This exploration begins with the ultimate question that sets in motion an ongoing act of inquiry, the question of what it is to be. From that question derives the related question, what is my purpose? or, what am I to be? While this may seem an extreme position to begin with, it is exactly this primordial question and act of inquiry that grounds this unique kind of knowing, one based in the question of being and a comportment, engagement,

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or entailment with the world, objects, and others. So in order to get at the question of being (What is it to be?) we will begin by looking at Heidegger's understanding of the being who wrestles with the question of its being or has an understanding of existence, Dasein.

In asking questions rather than reproducing answers, each Dasein or being whose concern is his/her being is able to examine and determine his/her own ultimate sense of purpose within a culture or a world. Heidegger refers to this understanding of time-based, relational being as Dasein's futuring. Purposive futuring means that each Dasein is both praxically absorbed in the world and directed temporally away from that absorption in a world toward a future in which the question of how to be in that world is asked. Ultimately, the processes of materially and praxically coping with a world, and asking and pursuing questions of being, can be seen in the explorative open-ended materiality of children's engagement with artmaking. Using art observations from two early childhood classrooms in a Midwestern city, this chapter explores how an early childhood art education based in questioning and materiality offers a different kind of knowledge from traditional notions of schooled knowledge, one based in knowing and in being.

2 Ontology and Epistemology: Being and the Mind

Nathan You know this guy, right?
Caleb Jackson Pollock.
Nathan The drip painter. He let his mind go blank and his hand go where it wanted—not deliberate, not random, someplace in-between. They called it automatic art. Let's make this like Star Trek, Ok? … Engage intellect! … I'm Kirk. You head the warp drive… Engage intellect! … What if Pollock had reversed the challenge? What if instead of making art without thinking, he said, "I can't paint anything unless I know exactly why I'm doing it." What would happen?
Caleb He never would have made a single mark.
Nathan You see, he never would have made a single mark…the challenge is not to act automatically. It's to find an action that is not automatic, from painting, to breathing, to talking, to fucking, to falling in love. (Macdonald, Reich, & Garland, 2015)

This exchange is part of Universal Pictures International's science fiction thriller movie, *Ex Machina*. To set the stage, Caleb, a low-level computer programmer, has been told that he has won a sweepstakes at his job. He works for an internet giant, reminiscent of the multinational conglomerate Google™. As reward for being the selected winner, Caleb is flown to a remote location, an ultra-modern compound/research facility, home of the company's founder, Nathan. There, he meets Nathan for the first time along with his revolutionarily life-like creation, Ava, who is an AI (artificial intelligence). After touring the facility and showing off his latest "tech",

Ava, Nathan explains that he has asked Caleb to the facility in order to administer the Turing test to her.

Computer developer, Alan Turing, invented the Turing test as a way to understand thinking in computers. Nathan constructs a similar test, but this test goes beyond whether a machine can think and asks whether a robot can think and act in such a way that it could pass for a human. Nathan's test moves outside of the epistemological problem of "how does a human think" to an ontological problem, where the mind must act, interact, and intra-act within a world and with other beings that are aware of their existence and the existence of others.

In *Ex Machina*, the problem that Nathan poses with regards to Jackson Pollock's action[1] painting is a praxical problem of epistemology and ontology (and one of activity and intra-activity). When he claims that Pollock would be unable to paint if he had to consciously plan the painting before he made it, he is not only commenting on the nature of art; he is making a statement about human interaction with the world.

Heideggerian scholar Taylor Carmen (2013) discusses this very issue as the major problem holding back artificial intelligence (as represented by Ava in the film): a problem of replicating or representing a world. Ultimately, the contention between Descartes's epistemological conception of the mind as truth and Heidegger's relational ontology of a pre-existing world stands in the middle of this problem. Here, how the mind relates to existence is foundational to the difference between these conceptions of knowing. According to another Heideggerian philosopher Hubert Dreyfus's (2007) understanding of Descartes, the mind is autonomous to the world; we are what Descartes terms "res cogitans" or "self-sufficent thinking subjects" (podcast, retrieved from iTunes U, October 2015). All that can or need be is thought; "cogito ergo sum", I think therefore I am (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 3). For Heidegger, even the thinking mind is bound in a world which it must always think from within and from which all future understandings of self, knowledge, and existence is projected from. Heidegger's understanding of existence, Dasein, is bound to the world, or etymologically has the quality of being (*sein*) there (*da*) in the world (Bolt, 2011, p. 17). Incidentally, Heidegger also refers to the being which understands or perceives its own existence as Dasein. Carmen (2013) identifies the challenges of effectively programming AI to be an ontological problem based on the difference between a thinking mind and the circumspective knowledge of a being in a world. Because programming operates from a Cartesian model of a contained, fore thinking mind and it is impossible to exhaustively think, program, or produce/reproduce a world within a mind, it is impossible to create an entity that can appropriately act within all possible worlds.

[1] Nathan refers to this painting as automatic and without thought instead of the accepted art historical term for Pollock's paintings, action paintings. This is an exaggeration of Pollock's process—certainly there was thinking in conjunction with action, just not extensive pre-planning. This exaggeration seems to be done in order to highlight the epistemological difference between action and thought.

In the movie, for Ava to escape (as is her goal) she had to construct a world (a world built on deceit and emotional and psychological manipulation) in order to create a door to walk through. It was not simply a matter of use and action or what Heidegger (1962) terms "circumspectively 'calculative' manipulating and using" (p. 135) (*zuhandenheit*, or availableness for use) as it is for Dasein, who is comported to a door and does not need to think or plan a door in order to leave a room; rather, the door in its materiality calls to Dasein and Dasein simply exits. At the same time, the door in its categorical, mindful understanding (occurrentness or *vorhandenheit*) as a thing withdraws from us.

Ava's complete consciousness or mindfulness does not lead to action, but rather to inaction. As Dasein, we do not need to think of the door and all its possibilities before we enter it: there is a door that calls to us as a threshold and a world to which we respond. We do not need to know the qualities of or the "that of the door" (that it is made of oak, that is red, that I want to paint it black, that it belongs to Mr. Jagger) in order to know what a door is in circumspective or praxical understanding; rather we need knowhow or an understanding of how to use a door. For Heidegger, a being who is in the world and for which existence is its concern has circumspection[2] (*'umsicht'*), or a special kind of sight or understanding based in a world. Dreyfus (1991) explains, "Heidegger calls the user's grasp of his environment in his everyday way of getting around 'circumspection'. He describes…this everyday activity as a kind of 'sight' which does not involve deliberate thematic awareness" (p. 66). The specific Heideggerian passage that Dreyfus is referring to reads:

> The equipmental nexus of things, for example, the nexus of things as they surround us here, stands in view, but not for the contemplator as they were sitting here in order to describe the things… The view in which the equipmental nexus stands at first, completely unobtrusively and unthought, is the view and sight of practical circumspection. "Unthought" means that it is not thematically apprehended for deliberate thinking about things; instead, in circumspection, we find our bearings in regard to them…When we enter here through the door, we do not apprehend the seats, and the same holds for the doorknob. Nevertheless, they are there in this peculiar way: we go by them circumspectively, avoid them circumspectively… and the like. (Heidegger, 1982, p. 163)

When Heidegger refers to a "sight of practical circumspection," he is referring to Dasein's praxical (praxis-based) existence or an existence that cannot be distinguished from the world, culture, environment, and "equipmental nexus of things". For him this understanding or way of knowing is one ultimately based in use and in the circumstances and conditions of one's (Dasein's) existence. Dreyfus (1991) describes this as an "understanding [that] is not in our minds, but in Dasein—the skillful ways we are accustomed to comport ourselves" and an "involvement in a transparent background of coping skills" (p. 75).

These notions of activity, circumspection, and comportment are all at work in children's playful material explorations. Like Jackson Pollock, who acts, interacts,

[2] For additional reading on the concept of circumspection, see Dreyfus (1991), Carmen (2013), and Bolt (2011).

and intra-acts (Barad, 2007) with the process and the materials of his making, so too do children during playful artmaking. As such, playful artmaking does not require the mindful step-by-step planning, control, and rationality that schooling assumes necessary for learning. Schooled conceptions of learning assume that to educate a child means first and foremost to educate a mind. Like Cartesian conceptions of substantive ontology this view dismisses the child's background, world, and equipmental totality from which s/he always already is. The child is considered an inactive tabula rasa, or blank slate to be written and constituted entirely by thought. This conception of controlled, inactive fore thinking misses the generative activity and agency of being a **maker**. Here a maker is active and agentic in two different senses. The first sense is that of making as useful awareness and comportment to a world that one can know through one's "craft" or engagement and artful deftness with and proclivity toward materials. The second is the sense of the making of one's own for-the-sake-of-which (purposive futuring) through the lived activity and intra-activity of a being that has an awareness of its being.

3 Children as Makers

When children are considered makers like Jackson Pollock this means that children are makers in the sense that they possess two distinct conceptions of agency. The first is an intra-active sense of agency derived both by a Heideggerian conception of the circumspective understanding based in the praxical engagement and immersion in world; and from feminist theorist Karen Barad's conception of dispersed agency where agency is enacted among an assemblage of human and non-human actors. Here, making produces both the maker and the work in the sense that they are both made by the practices and process of their playful, material engagement within a world. Here, children are made as much as they are makers. This is something that as artists we know all too well: we know that the practice and the process of bringing a work into being is just as much a process of the work and the world (Heidegger, 2002). When children push, pull, flatten, pound, roll, and pinch a piece of clay, the clay works the child as much as the child works the clay. As much as the work is belabored, formed, and finessed, it too creates, constitutes, and breathes the child into being. The process is truly co-constitutive; works, children, and art are made together. It is relational; as we make art so we are also made. The process and the materials, matter, discourse, and concepts that we are engaged with shape us as much as we shape them.

The second conception of agency means that children are makers in the sense that they make and project a future understanding or a sense of their own for-the-sake-of which. By this I mean that children are beings whose understanding of their existence is marked by the temporality of a world both in the historical and future sense. Unlike a blank slate they are always already marked or made by the world and their future understandings and possibilities are marked and made within and against the world. At the core of this purposive futuring remains the question of

existence or what it is to be within a world. Each child (Dasein) is a capable participant in a world or culture and as much as another Dasein s/he is comported to the world and to the question of his or her own existence.

4 Is it Art? Is it Education?

In late July, as my time at the childcare center where I conducted the on-site research for this paper as a visiting artist and art teacher came to an end, a seemingly innocent question popped into my head. Looking around at the shady, tree-lined play area with its free-standing play structure, worn-away mulch tricycle track, sand pit, fenced-in vegetable garden, and partially-covered patio with sprinkler and the PVC pipes that I supplied for our artmaking activity, I wondered how one could unequivocally identify what was going on as unequivocal artmaking. Because we combined the weekly artmaking activity with one of the two weekly "water day" activities and we were working on the playground, distinctions between play and artmaking were necessarily blurred.

Because our materials were not exclusively art materials and our process was collaborative, intermittent, and yielded no distinct product, this exploration seemed to depart the most from traditionally accepted and identifiable notions of artmaking. I told myself it was art because it was sculpture, architecture, and installation art; but I was certain that it was more fluid than those categories implied. At times it looked like play, at other times it looked like water management or engineering, and it most certainly looked like an exercise in introductory plumbing. Just as this activity brought up questions of artmaking, the questions of artmaking brought up questions of education, such as: Are we making art? What would an activity like this look like to someone like Avery, the new assistant teacher in the second classroom I was observing, or to the students in my "Art Education for Elementary School Teachers" class? Would they identify it as artmaking if I, in my status as artist/art specialist, were not claiming it as such? Would they identify it as educational? What makes it possible to identify these activities as artmaking or, rather, what makes me able to see and define them this way? These questions were generated within the subfield of early childhood art education but they ultimately address the larger field of art education and educational policy and ask for an understanding of ontology and epistemology.

This onslaught of questions came about in part because of my budding relationship with the new assistant teacher in A4 and in part because of the difficulties and challenges of implementing the exploration. The new assistant teacher is a team player and overall she seems to like and to be supportive of the arts. However based on her years of experience working at another local child care center she has a different perspective on what constitutes art and what constitutes educational practice. My accounting for her perspective and perspectives like hers, combined with snags in the activity, caused me to question the artistic and educational value of these activities. That is not to say that there were not successes; as a fairly open-ended

activity there were bright spots. But my hope for the project was for it to have a greater number of children acutely involved in the activity; barring that, I had hoped for a deeper quality of interaction: longer sustaining play and more involved exploration with the materials.

Initially, the materials garnered mass interest, but it was not sustainable. This seemed to be due to some of the challenges we experienced during the activity—colder than normal early morning temperatures kept us from consecutive weekly explorations, with weeks of time elapsing between each exploration. This interrupted the acquisition of foundational skills and understandings that would be built upon later and delayed deftness with the materials. Too, I needlessly complicated the exploration by purchasing too wide a variety of sizes of pipe, confounding the children and hampering the fluidity of the building process. Despite these setbacks, I learned a lot about the process. But I had hoped that the children would learn and engage more. Overall, there were small pockets of engagement, but my vision for the activity had been of a grander, more involved, sustaining, and sculptural or installation-sized scale.

Upon considering others' perspectives of these challenges and outcomes, I began to question the activity. If the children weren't doing what I had hoped they would do, what *were* they doing? What *were* they getting out of it? As I examined the mixture of multi-colored and plain white pipes strewn across the water-saturated concrete and the tangle of hoses originating from the dual splitter at the wall spigot, ending in a sprinkler on one end and an open hose with an exploring and take-charge kind of young boy on the other, I asked myself if this was even art. Even though children were using creative problem-solving skills in order to build pipe systems to move and redistribute the water, and together they were discovering new properties of and possibilities for fluid dynamics, what was there to identify this as art and not something else? Surely, artmaking isn't the only space and discipline for exploration and problem solving; science, engineering, computer science, and math, to name a few, hold potential for explorative and problem solving activities. Beyond that, the exploration itself was fitful and periodic. Sustained activity was interrupted or discontinued in favor of other pursuits and disjointed activities. Just when the materials seemed to gather interest and exploration, the activity dispersed so that half-drenched children could run through the sprinkler and re-aggregate someplace else, on a tricycle or on the monkey bars. Short bursts of activity dissolved sustained exploration into other forms of related play or unrelated activity, making it difficult to centralize the activity as strictly artmaking.

In a more concentrated moment of activity, Otto, a jovial boy with dimples and a devilish smile, joined me to work on building with pipes in what could best be described as parallel play. Both aware of each other but not directly engaged, we worked side-by-side constructing our own PVC pipe structures. Otto's idea, though constructed parallel to mine, was more elegant and contained; he was using the smaller-diameter pipes to construct a neater, more manageable shape than I had. After watching me build a sprawling, clunky, irregular, and somewhat flat structure out of the large 2″ and 3″ PVC pipes and couplers, another boy, Caden, wandered over and asked repeatedly, "What is this? What is this?" Seemingly satisfied with

my answer, "I'm not sure, what do you think it is?", he picked up the idea where I left off. After this exchange, I ceded my creation to allow Caden to take over. Meanwhile, Otto continued his parallel work next to Caden. Caden worked through the pipes, unhinging and recoupling the pipes to fit his idea, scavenging, picking apart, and building off of the structure I had left behind as a guide to which pipe couplings and adaptors fit on and connected to which pipes. As he worked through his idea, some of his friends joined him. As the boys aggregated together and the play gathered interest, Otto's play moved from parallel to collaborative. A third boy and often-present member of the rough and tumble group of friends, Bernard, added the hose, and together Otto, Caden and Bernard worked to manage the waterway, with Teddy (another regular in the group) watching with one eye while pursuing his interests with the other. As the boys worked, their activity gathered a world of exchange and exploration that drew other interested children near, a world built around relationships—those found in the materials, pipes and water, and in the camaraderie among young boys. While surely a threshold of activity where other sparks of interest had burned quickly and then gone out or transferred their energies elsewhere, this sustained activity appeared important socially and educationally. But it really was not discernable as art.

It definitely didn't look much like the familiar products of school art, and it wasn't being made out of familiar art materials. The materials we used were ordinary materials found in everyday activity and included tap water, PVC pipes and connectors, and a rather commonplace garden hose, materials uncommon in the traditional school art scene. In the best circumstances, school art materials consist of student grade artist materials such as drawing pencils, pastels or oil pastels, thick drawing paper, paint, and clay. More commonly, school art materials consist of construction paper, toilet paper tubes, feathers, white school glue, pipe cleaners, and yarn, to name a few from a long list of readily-available and often uninspired or unexamined materials. Often, these materials are accompanied by step-by-step instruction on how to create a singular, uniform outcome, or "craft".[3] Garden hoses, PVC pipes and connectors, and large amounts of water are not typical school art materials. Unfamiliar, foreign, and mismatched with their original, everyday purpose, they push the boundary of what it is to be an art material. These materials are neither easily replicable nor often used for representation. More than the professional grade materials mentioned earlier, these "boundary materials" are like the materials and processes used by contemporary artists to explore, invent, and push the boundaries of conventional disciplines and practices. These materials and processes are affective and rhizomatic (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987)—not easily

[3] The term craft here implies an outcome rather than a process. Where craft implies a facility and know-how or an expertise with materials and processes, children's craft activities are often divorced from this larger craft arena to mean a predetermined outcome resulting from following strict step-by-step directions or controlled activity. Often it does not allow for or imply an artful and expert mastery of materials or process, nor does it apply to a larger cultural tradition beyond of that of schooled childhood.

contained or predicted and often messy—and push or explode into a sculptural, lived scale creating new forms of culture and new knowledge of what art is.

A hallmark of school art is the identification, naming, and categorization of children's schooled production in terms of the rigid processes of creation and (more often) products that are created. School art is overwhelmingly defined or identified by the types of things that are made or produced and through employment of entrenched processes (Efland, 1976; Wilson, 1974). For example, a child's production might be considered art because it is made out of traditional materials such as paint or clay, or because it was made using artistic processes such as painting or drawing. This act of categorization is based on an epistemological system of logical types (Russell, 1908) where the question, "What is art?" is superfluous. Within this type-based system, one might conclude that a child's production is a painting because paint was used or because it is made out of paint, and paintings are art, therefore said production is art; the question of "What is art or artmaking?" is never asked because it is always already answered by a representational system. This categorization of art and artmaking is based on a representational, discipline-based (subject-centered), and therefore fracturing, epistemology. Left unquestioned, the unexamined, and uncomplicated, discrete disciplines of education including the discipline of art education neatly preserve the epistemic, systemic, static apparatus of governance that produces recognizable, representable subjects, discernable disciplines of thought, and perpetuates the compartmentalization of knowledge (Foucault, 1970, 1995).

Surely our production was art because I was the visiting/volunteer art specialist and it was an activity that I had facilitated. Therefore, we must be making art and, consequently, the work done and subsequent products must be art. This thinking and rationale find precedence in the art historical practice of attribution and in the work of surrealist artist Marcel Duchamp and his ready-mades: his groundbreaking twentieth century work which consisted of making art by presenting and re-presenting everyday objects in an art context. In Duchamp's most infamous work, *Fountain* (1917), he upended traditional notions of art and artmaking by merely signing a urinal as an artist and by shifting the item's position from the stark profanity of the urinal's everyday context, with all its reference to leakage and containment/utility, to the exalted space of art and artists. Using this logic, the underlying and fundamental credentials and authority I required to claim that what we were doing was indeed artmaking rested in the naming, representation, and categorization of myself as the art specialist and artist (and, in this case, art education graduate student and researcher). Often, the subject-centered rationale that art is made by artists (and by art specialists) because they possess a special kind or category of being[4] is reason

[4] The notion that artists possess a special kind of being that is categorically different from other being is what Heidegger (1962) refers to as an ontic understanding of being, or one based in epistemological categories. It serves to differentiate or categorize being, but may not ultimately answer or address the difference between being and beings. This category often is verified in name only. It is not until we question or examine being itself that we are engaging what Heidegger (1962) refers to as ontology.

enough to assume that art is being made. This categorical understanding of being is one in which the categorical "being" of being an artist is only verified by the naming and claiming of oneself as an artist (Stein, 2004). Once I was identifiable as a category of being, ontological questions of my being and the being of my productions were not asked.

When Amy, the lead teacher in the second early childhood classroom, introduced me to Avery, her new assistant teacher, Avery disclosed that she believed that what we were doing was a service to the children and that children benefitted from having opportunities to make art, even before she saw the artmaking activities. Avery was amiable as Amy and I continued with the explorative artmaking activities. However, her later confessions revealed the extent to which she was working to adjust to this new situation and to incorporate her previous experiential knowledge within a different paradigm. She warmly mentioned her unfamiliarity, if not slight discomfort, with the messiness of the explorative activities that we supported the children in. She cited a considerable difference between the two schools' cultures, implying that messy, risky activities and explorations were generally outside of her previous school's culture and the larger culture served by the school. She also indicated that these activities were outside of her experience, expertise, and epistemological model. Nonetheless, her friendly approach and willingness to jump in, to ask questions, and to work alongside Amy and me revealed her resolve to make it part of her repertoire. She seemed to be thoughtfully asking me, "Is this art? Is this education?"

The questions, "Is this art?", "Is this artmaking?", and "Is this education?" are all smaller questions that circle back to philosophical questions concerning being and knowing which include: "What is art?", "What is artmaking?", and "What is education?" These are questions about the constitution, agency, and being of subjects and objects, experiences, processes, products, assemblages, events, and of playful artmaking. Ultimately, this line of questioning asks for an understanding of existence, an understanding of what it is to be in one way or another, and leads to the philosophical act of examining existence itself. Questions of one's own being and larger questions of being (and becoming) essential to education and the open-ended exploration of complex, agentic materials allow a space to ask such questions. Through an explorative assemblage[5] of artmaking children and teachers may ask questions of the material and of being and becoming.

A basic understanding of Heidegger's relational ontology is helpful in understanding why a curriculum and pedagogy that asks the questions is this art? and is this education? is deeply connected to primordial drives to know and be. So when Avery asks just such questions she is in fact asking what it is to know and what it is to be a teacher or a student in this world and culture. Heidegger's exploration of

[5] Macgregor Wise (2005) defines assemblage as the collection of heterogeneous elements that produce an affect. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1987) state, "We will call an assemblage every constellation of singularities and traits deducted from the flow—selected, organized, stratified—in such a way as to converge (consistently) artificially and naturally; an assemblage in this sense, is a veritable invention" (as cited in Macgregor Wise, 2005, p. 78)

being and existence ultimately leads to an understanding of how existence is relational rather than epistemological. Heidegger's notions of absorbed coping, circumspection, Dasein, being-in, and familiarity all explain a relationship of the mind or the thinking subject to the world. This is an important distinction between French philosopher, mathematician, and scientist René Descartes's epistemology[6] and Heidegger's ontology. Where ontology is a relationship with the world, not one where the mind controls, comes before, or exists without the world as in Descartes' rationalist conception of an autonomous mind, rather, it is one in which the subject is unable to think, be, or exist without a world. This conception acknowledges being's interdependency; thus we, Dasein, are always in a relation (with a world or with others in the world). This is a relation to an a priori world and a relation to the others and culture that make up that world.

Heidegger frames his notion of existence as one based in relationality (to material beings, to other beings–other Dasein–and to a world). This begins when he focuses his efforts on understanding and examining existence by looking closely at "the being for which existence is its concern" (Dreyfus, 2007, podcast) or what Heidegger termed Dasein. He does this because he believes that those concerned with existence will have an understanding and relationship with it. They will be literally constituted in relation to their understanding of their own existence and will therefore have an understanding of existence. Bolt (2011) explains, "Heidegger wants us to understand a very specific aspect of our existence, our being-right-there, being grounded in a place in which we live and from which we move in the world. While a Cartesian subject can go on thinking without a body or a place to think from, Heidegger's subject Dasein is always 'there' in the world… The world is not an object separate from the Dasein but something we are born into and live in relation to" (p. 18). Heideggerian scholar William Blattner (2006) explains:

> Our fundamental experience of the world is one of familiarity. We do not normally experience ourselves as subjects standing over against an object, but rather as at home in world we already understand. We act in a world in which we are immersed. We are not just absorbed in the world, but our sense of identity, of who we are, cannot be disentangled from the world around us. We are what matters to us in our living; we are implicated in the world. (p. 12)

Given the Dasein's familiarity or position of "being right there," we can see how these existential questions of what it is to be (educated or artistic) are based in a material, relational understanding. Thus teachers, who, together with children, follow curious lines of flight, pose and explore questions and interrogate materials and are uncovering what it is to know and what it is to learn.

[6] Epistemological conceptions of existence stem from the rationalist philosopher Rene Descartes and are the basis for science's rational positivist tradition prevalent today. Descartes, who posited that in order to know truth we must suspend sensation and belief, also posited the dictum, "Cogito ergo sum: I think, therefore I am", a notion that privileged and separated the mind from the body, the world, and from others.

5 What Is Education?: Epistemology to Ontology

Traditional notions of education are concerned with representation and replication of knowledge into discrete, determinate "knowable" packets of knowledge. Here, learning becomes what early childhood researcher Liselott Olsson (2009) describes as "a question of transmission and reproductive imitation" (p. 7). In this view of education, knowledge is distributed in discrete, fixed, or categorical facts and learning follows the banking model of education (Friere, 2000). The banking model posits learning as the act of depositing facts into an inert, empty space; it is built upon a rational Cartesian epistemology in which the only knowable and verifiable reality is encompassed by the dictum, "I think therefore I am". Traditional schooled views of young children and early childhood education stem from this Cartesian model: children are believed to be innocent blank slates who have yet to be corrupted by an adult world they are developmentally different from. Here, the function of education is to effect change upon a child's life through the thinking mind. Children are compared to objects and effectively objectified as blank slates and empty vessels, as well as denied acknowledgement of their being: that they exist in a world and have a background in or understanding of the world from whence they come. Through denial of their background and their epistemological objectification they are denied ontological status as Dasein, beings that are right there in the world, and the agency of this kind of being, an agency that derives from a relational position to other Dasein and the world.

Looking to an education in process and based in ontology and relationality, reconceptualized approaches to early childhood education push past traditional notions of the child and of education to have more concern with being, agency, relationships, and a provisional understanding of knowledge. Education, from this perspective, is a broadening of ideas about how people, children and adults alike, come to know. This begins with a re-examination of traditional notions of knowledge.

Heidegger (1962) writes against this traditional notion of an isolated thinking mind or transcendental pure state of a rational, objective mind. His concept of Dasein unveils the relational character of the subject to a world. This is furthered in his indictment of the world picture. Heidegger's conception of the world picture looks at knowledge and knowing as systemic and paradigmatic.[7] His critique of Descartes addresses the modern conception of knowing as an epistemological system of representation and, in its stead, suggests a phenomenological ontology. Artist, aesthetician, and Heideggerian scholar, Barbara Bolt (2011), explains Heidegger's critique of the Modern (and limited) conception of research and knowing through the notion of a world picture:

> Heidegger makes it clear that when he talks of a 'world picture' he does not mean a picture, in the sense of a copy of the world…'representation' is neither used in its everyday multiplicity of uses nor in the sense of presenting an image, but rather as a regime or system of

[7] To learn more about Heidegger's explanation of the world picture, see Heidegger (1977, p. 130).

> organizing the world, by which the world is reduced to a norm or a model…It was Descartes, according to Heidegger, who inaugurated the new paradigm of representation and reduced the world to a picture. This picture is not a mimetic image, but rather a mathematical model or prototype from which a picture can be built. A prototype, model or schema establishes what the world could be like. *It implies the formulation of a concept before an actualization*: that the 'thing' is thought before it is brought into being. (2011, p. 62, emphasis added)

At the same time that the epistemological world picture limits knowledge, it effectively limits being through this conception of knowledge. Here the problem with a world picture is the concept of *Gestell,* or enframing, that according to Bolt (2011) is:

> The ordering that reduces entities—both human and non-human to *bestand* or standing-reserve…a schema where objects are ordered and reduced to their readiness for use by human beings. Things in the world exist 'out there', ready to be collected, quantified and calculated so that humans may use them in their quest to master the world. (p. 75)

In this idea, Heidegger seems to caution that enframing is a certain way of acting, thinking, or knowing that delimits the possibilities of being and strips a being of its being, such that the subjectivity and being of another Dasein appears as an entity or object for use. We might think of this sort of thinking as the kind of thinking that Plato's (2010) *Allegory of the Cave* cautions against: presumptions, surfaces, and depthlessness. According to Bolt (2011):

> Enframement, like the picture frame, defines what is to be seen as part of the picture. Anything outside of the frame has no legitimate meaning. Thus enframing sets the parameters of how we see and understand the world we live in. We are unable to see the world in any other way. (p. 75)

Where Descartes has a schematic, systematic, enframed conception of knowledge, Heidegger calls for a different kind of knowing, one that is embedded within ontology and is discernable through phenomenology rather than objective detached observation. Where Descartes has an epistemology of enframed representation, Heidegger calls for a notion of understanding that involves both a lived functional understanding and an understanding of the different modes of being of distinct entities. This lived, functional aspect is referred to as concernful dealing, or what Dreyfus (2007) calls "absorbed everyday coping" (podcast, retrieved from iTunes U, October 2015) within a world (a primordial dealing or praxis) or familiarity. In absorbed everyday coping, Heidegger is looking for the most basic everyday activity that Dasein has in a world. Dasein mustn't think "door" in order to open a door; he/she circumspectively and simply turns the knob and exits.

Where traditional knowledge is representative, reproducible, and centralized, reconceptualized notions of knowing and learning are emergent, embodied, and negotiated within a relation, and are therefore not fixed. It is precisely this opening up of knowing that makes the endeavor to educate an ontological problem. Where once knowing and knowledge might have been an epistemological problem of how the mind comes to know, now the question, "What is education?" is complicated by discussions of the question, "What is knowing?" itself.

6 Relational Ontologies of Early Childhood Practice

Relational and ontological possibilities of knowing are, now more than ever, the purview of early childhood education, art education, and education in general. Questions such as what is (or what constitutes) knowledge or knowing, what is art, and what is education, are questions that educators must ask as traditional epistemologies are reconceptualized and knowledge is dispersed, decentered, and decentralized. (Barthes, 1982; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

Early childhood education's movement away from traditional representative notions of knowledge, learning, learners, and children as fixed, predictable, and reproducible, toward constructivist and child-centered philosophies of knowledge that the Italian Municipal Schools of Reggio Emilia have received, and also to political movements, such as England's re-examination of its policy on child services.

In his re-examination of the British Childcare System which includes early childhood education, childhood studies theorist Peter Moss (2007) claims England's predominant early childhood discourse of need is not only based on an irreconcilable deficit model but is systemic and problematic—it purports a devastating business model of education, where economic ends and outcomes are used to define learning and are placed before children and their education:

> [It] draws heavily on a few disciplinary perspectives, notably child development and economics. It privileges instrumental rationality and technical practice, its prime questions being 'what are the outcomes?' and 'what works?' In doing so it sets up a *binary opposition between process and outcome*. It is inscribed with certain values and assumptions, for example certainty and linear progress, objectivity and universality. It understands the child as a knowledge reproducer and a redemptive agent, who can be the means of resolving many societal problems if only the correct technologies are applied at the right time ('early intervention'), and early childhood services as enclosures for the delivery of these technologies. (p. 230, emphasis added)

Childhood studies theorists, Peter Moss and Pat Peterie (2002), propose an apposite politic, one of children's spaces rather than children's services, where children are viewed as "rich" rather than "in-need". In this conception, children are "social and inter-dependent," as well as:

> citizens, members of a social group, agents in their own lives (although not free agents, the constraints of society, the duties of citizenship all come into play for children as for adults), and as co-constructors of knowledge, identity and culture, constantly making meaning of their lives and the world in which they live. (Moss & Peterie, 2002, p. 101)

Likewise, Reggio Emilia's holistic image of a child who is a strong, capable, and agentic subject informs their philosophy and approach to education. According to Reggio Emilia scholars Hall et al. (2010), Carla Rinaldi, former director of Reggio Emilia of municipal early childcare program, envisions the Reggio child as a child who is:

> so engaged in developing a relationship with the world and intent on experiencing the world that he develops a complex system of abilities, learning strategies, and ways of organizing relationships. A child who is fully able to create personal maps for his own social, cognitive, affective, and symbolic orientation. (p. 38)

This view of children as capable manifests in project work where teachers disperse curricular control and offer educational time and resources in order to embark on open-ended pursuits of the intellectual interests of the children. What is also notable about this view is that the child is situated in a world, and as such is considered to be part of the larger community, to possess the culture of childhood, and is expected to learn through praxical engagement in the world and environment. Both Reggio Emilia's investment in a capable "image of the child" and Moss and Peterie's (2002) notion of "rich" children who are not "needy" or "in need" of service but rather are contributing voices and in-flux members of a society have repositioned understandings of education away from fixed representational epistemology to a relational and ontological understanding of education. These models posit an education that is less concerned with creating reproducible, predictable, containable, categorical, and ultimately governable subjects to one where knowing is a process and power is a relationship distributed between subjects who can co-construct being and knowing.

Reggio's concern for the voice of the child and practice of following the child's educational interests mark an epistemological shift, one away from the centralized knowledge found in readers, curriculums, and policy, managed, regulated, and made profitable through standardized testing. This shift is towards knowledges marked by multiplicity, emergence, possibility, process, interpretation and relationality. This is a shift away from knowledge as defined by a centralized, adult-determined, deficit-based and developmentally prescriptive curriculum which relies on transmission and imitation to perpetuate a system of reproduction, and towards educational practices that redefine curriculum and subjects as in-process, evolving, relational, and part of culture and a world. It is a shift from an epistemological model of a world that is reproducible within the mind to a relational and ontological paradigm where existence and being is in part defined by an understanding of one's own existence in the world as a subject and agent of change and an understanding of the onto-epistemological action of agents, worlds, and other subjects within a relation (or intra-action) (Barad, 2007; Lenz-Taguchi, 2010).

Recent early childhood theorists Olsson (2009) and Hillevi Lenz-Taguchi (2010) have been working within and against the Reggio paradigm to expand and further understand the possibilities that an education based on emerging and relational notions of knowing and being might possess. Like the relational shift in art that art critics Grant Kester (2004) and Nicolas Bourriaud (1998) theorize, the onto-epistemological shift sought by reconceptualized notions of early childhood complicates specular notions of knowledge and subjects with collaborative relationships "based in social, durational, and performative experience" (Springgay, 2011, p. 641). Olsson (2009) explores the possibilities of an evolving, moving education that is concerned with the processes of becoming through movement and experimentation and with "subjectivity and learning as a relational field" (p. 19). Olsson (2009) describes this perspective as involving "not only human subjects, but also the content of knowledge of different subjects as we know it, as well as the entire milieu" and as "a completely relational situation where human subjects as much as the content of learning and the actual process are intertwined and continuously

moving" (p. 20). Like Olsson (2009), Lenz-Taguchi (2010) addresses the possibilities of a relational education, where traditional epistemologies are set aside in favor of onto-epistemological understandings that perpetually posit the question, "Is this education?" Lenz-Taguchi (2010) specifically examines documentation and materials as active agents of pedagogy. Here the possibility of an education in relation not only with living subjects but also one that considers the ways that the agency of matter plays into pedagogy further complicates the possibility of categorical, representative knowledge.

Within this relational understanding of education teachers and students who are engaged in and thus formed in a relationship in the pursuit of asking "what is education?" and "what is art?" will have a special kind of knowing and being, one that Heidegger (1962) distinguishes as the difference between *existential* and *existentielle*. The former is the constitutive concern, or care, of an active agent, while the latter is that of an object or a mere representation. Those who engage with their own questions and concern and care for being and becoming are, in effect, those who "dwell[8]" in, live, and constitute existence.

7 Bobbi's Circumspection: An Educational Foray into Ontology

The following vignette describes how ventures into an education based in ontology might look or be understood. The vignette discloses the interaction between the lead teacher and a group of boys who are working on a mural, an artmaking exploration, that each week involved experimenting with different materials on two large 4′ × 4′ wood panels. When Bobbi, the lead teacher of C2, approaches the boys, they are engaged in playful artmaking that looks different from, unfamiliar as, the work that the other children are engaged in.

Bobbi brings her camera over to the area of the mural where Teddy and Caleb are squatting. For most of the mural exploration, the two boys have been crouching over the floor and squeezing a considerable amount of glue from their white Elmer's school glue bottles into small containers, including cat food cans and the individual compartments of an egg carton. While they are consumed with the viscosity and materiality of glue, almost all the other children are exploring the three-dimensional found materials that Bobbi and I gathered for the exploration. The other children attempt to work in different ways to affix the variety of textures, shapes, and materials to the large mural panels. They work as fastidiously and intently as Teddy and Caleb, but their activity is more in line with what Bobbi and I had imagined they would do with the materials.

[8] "To dwell in" is a Heideggerian reference to the kind of being and knowledge that Dasein possesses. It refers to Dasein's familiarity, absorption, or "being-there" in a world. It is not a spatial understanding but rather indicates a familiarity or care such as in the understandings, "I am accustomed", "I am familiar with", "I look after something" (Heidegger, 1962, p.80)

Where other teachers might quickly halt the boys' activity, claiming concern or fear of many things, including but not limited to not following directions or wasting materials, Bobbi approaches the boys from a different position and asks, "What are you guys doing? What is your idea?" While it certainly wasn't my intention (or Bobbi's) to provide glue for the express purpose of pouring the glue from one container to another, neither Bobbi nor I intervened, chided, or stopped them from their exploration. In fact, as Bobbi approached the boys, her willingness to document their work and her acceptance of their explanation of their exploration seemed to indicate an alternative position, understanding, or appreciation for their work. This position or vantage point seemed more in line with my position as a researcher/educator/participant observer than with traditional representations of teacher, built around specific power and control over curriculum and children's activities. Given Bobbi's position as an educator, what made her approach these children the way that she did? What helped Bobbi identify this activity as an idea rather than what teachers might more typically view as messing around, being destructive, or wasteful, or off topic? Bobbi's line of questioning reveals a shift in epistemology, one similar to the institutional and curricular shift of the municipal early child care centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, where children's interests and explorations drive not only curricular choices but also beget an ontological disposition in education that poses questions rather than provides answers about the being of education and the being of agents and participants (teachers, children and parents) in this education. Bobbi most certainly was aware of Reggio's constructivist approach to young children's education: the childcare center worked to incorporate the constructivist model into the school and Bobbi sought educational opportunities to develop professionally through the university's graduate classes. But it is not enough to be "merely" familiar or conceptually aware of the Reggio way. Bobbi combined her conceptual awareness of the Reggio approach to constructivist learning and appreciation of children's multiple expressive/graphic languages with a more circumspective, material familiarity derived from her praxical experience and the lived culture of her classroom. Bobbi's questions derive from a comfort, a familiarity with questioning and research. They are circumspective in that they come from a lived insight and directedness toward care in her teaching practice and toward children's culture, research, and material/praxical engagement her classroom. Rather than assuming that she knows what counts as early childhood education and early childhood art education, Bobbi suspends her disbelief and assumes that there is a possibility that what the children are already doing is education. Her questioning of the children's activity and making is as much an exploration of what constitutes education in her classroom as it is an questioning of what constitutes children's explorative or investigative praxical research. Ultimately, it is Bobbi's circumspective knowledge, knowledge that is derived from her absorbed coping in the world of the early childhood and early childhood art classroom, that both allows to her to deftly respond to the situation at hand and to approach the children from a relational position of subjectivity and with an ontological openness. In her circumspective approach Bobby creates a door and the children walk through.

8 Conclusion

This chapter seeks an education and an art education where assumptions about what constitutes knowledge are suspended in favor of questions of what it is to be and what it is to know. An education that begins with this position is one that assumes children and teachers to be more than what Heidegger refers to as “mere things” or representations, but allows children to be and to determine their purposive future through an exploration and a circumspective understanding of the questions they pose to the world they are in relation to and which they shape and are shaped by. Children who make art and teachers who engage in this approach to art education are makers not only of works of art, but also makers who are made of and by the world.

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A Playful Event Awaiting Just *a*-Stone's Throw Away

Charles R. Garoian

> 'Time is out of joint': it is off the hinges assigned to it by behaviour in the world, but also by movements in the world. It is no longer time that depends on movement; it is aberrant movement that depends on time. (Gilles Deleuze, 1991, p. 41)

> Rock has no tongue to speak or voice to sing, / mute, heavy matter. Yet as I lift up this/dull secret stone, the weight of it is full / of slower, longer thoughts than mind can have. (Ursula K. Le Guin, 2010, p. 102)

Having arrived home at approximately 4 p.m. after a full day of teaching at the high school, I quickly grabbed my 35 mm single lens reflex Nikon and a sturdy tripod, then walked over to our two-car garage where I had set up a makeshift art studio with a 36″ × 36″ folding card table covered with a clean white bedsheet. After mounting my camera on the tripod, I opened the door to the back yard where I walked along its bamboo thicketed perimeter searching for a stone, any stone about the size of my fist. There, in the back corner near the fence, I found what I was looking for half buried in rubble that I had piled for later trash pick-up.

Returning to the garage-studio, I washed dust and dirt off the stone in the garage sink and after drying it with a towel, I placed it at the center of the white sheet. I adjusted the tripod so that the stone was centered and occupying approximately 25% of what was visible through the viewfinder of my 55 mm lens. Then, I waited.

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For the next several minutes, I studied the scene through the camera's viewfinder, waiting for the stone to do something, anything, to leap into the air perhaps. I had already adjusted the aperture opening and shutter speed to ensure that the stone's furtive movements might be captured on film, even if they appeared blurred. Wanting the dynamic molecular intensity that held the stone in virtual stasis to suddenly actualize a modicum of play, I threw caution to the wind, stayed the course, waiting for something to happen. Given the speed at which light travels ("c" = 3.0 × 108 meters/second) to reach the eye, I was certain that I would witness a degree of the stone's movement regardless of how farfetched. All this suggesting an exploratory, experimental, and improvisational playing, that is a riffing with the circumstances in the garage-studio: the stone, its covering of dust and dirt; its washing with water, and toweling, in the sink; the sheeted table, the 35 mm camera, its 55 mm lens, viewfinder, aperture, shutter speed, and tripod; and the other images, ideas, objects, and materialities rousing, between and among me and them, unanticipated happenings and ways of thinking.

While waiting and pondering the absurdity of my anticipation, Jason, our seven-year old, unexpectedly walked into the garage-studio space. He stood at the edge of the table, glanced at the stone, then the camera, then at me, and asked "What are you doing, dad?" "I'm waiting to take a photograph of the stone when it moves," I responded. He asked, "Why?" then followed up with another question: "How, how is it going to move when stones don't move?" After explaining the physics, the imperceptible, vibrant properties of the stone to assuage his probing, I invited Jason to join me in *waiting for* the *perceptual potentialities* of such an *implausible event* to occur. Ours was a paradoxical waiting that accords with the *weight* of Vladimir and Estragon's *waiting* in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*: an anticipatory act of waiting for something to happen, that, in not happening, overlooks the event of waiting as having happened unwittingly. We were on a line of flight, waiting paradoxically, in suspenseful *anticipation* of an *unanticipated* event or set of events that might occur unwittingly within the garage-studio, and of other ideational encounters where they might potentially take us.

There we were, Jason and I sitting on our chairs and staring at the stone together, taking turns studying its ovoidal presence through the viewfinder, and ready to release the shutter at the hint of any possible movement. Seeing his patience waning after only a few moments of waiting, as any seven-year old's might, I gently asked "It's not moving, is it?" to which he replied "Yes, how long are we going to wait, dad?" "Since the stone is not moving, what might we do to make it move without touching it?" I asked. After carefully surveying the stone's proximity to his body and mine, and to the white sheet, the card table, the camera, tripod, and the other objects and materialities in the garage-studio at large, he lifted that part of the sheet hanging over the table's edge, crooked his head to one side, peered under the table, and in a *flash* shouted: "I have an idea!" Then, without further hesitation, he stood from his chair, got down on the cement floor, and proceeded to crawl under the

table, lay on his back, raise his legs, position his feet upwards, then kick, kicking, he kicked the underneath of the table thrusting the stone laying on the other side upwards and, in doing so, activated Newton's third law of motion: *For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction*.

Might it be that the plane of that granular table top is homologous with the entangled membrane of the *corpus callosum* separating the two contiguous, interdependent hemispheres of the brain, insofar as it resonates indefinite sensations, affects, and movements of thought between the space above it and the space below? Might it be that that plane is where the disparate contingencies in and around the stone were the most consistent and irreducible to one another, and where the creative potentialities of our playing together emerged through immanence? Might it be that Newton's logic of equal and opposite forces, which suggests a virtual entropic intensity, constitutes a dynamic-inertial riffing, between and among forces that actually steadied the stone? Might it be that it was the intensity of our waiting for something to happen in the garage-studio that initiated Jason's riffing *curiosity* about my involvement with the stone, as in "What are you doing, dad?"; his *questioning* the mobility of stones, "Why…How, how is it going to move when stones don't move?"; and, his *forbearance* in spite of what seemed an improbability, "How long are going to wait, dad?" Such musings are as much about the playful movements of *involuntary memory* as they are about the particularities of that enigmatic stone with which Jason and I were playing on that particular afternoon 40 years ago.

"Just *a*-stone's throw away," to which I am referring in the title of this essay, is doubly articulated inasmuch as it alludes to our being with and playing with the stone to initiate an indefinite potential, albeit an improbable movement, between us, and the throw-of-memory that adjoined this writing about playing with *that playful event* in the past as *time-out-of-joint* that philosopher Gilles Deleuze suggests in the first epigraph of this essay. *A*-stone's throw away, also alludes to Jason's uncertainty and questioning, his playing against my insinuation of the stone's potential movement, and against the narrative of this writing through which I speak for him. His inquiry in the garage-studio that day was characteristic of his precocious curiosity that, over the years, has continued to enrich our *father*||*son* relationship. These separate yet contiguous dispositions, Jason's incredulity about the stone's movement, our playing together in the past, and the throw-of-memory that linked my writing about that past in the present, constitute perplexing, paradoxical events that *postpone* and *endure* reactionary conceits and reductive interpretations to allow the immanent potential of waiting to actualize between them. In doing so, our anticipatory act of waiting for such an improbability to happen was not without effect as it emitted for Jason and I, and now in this writing, an aggregate of nuanced happenings of thought and action that might have been in the *mean*time unwittingly overlooked.

Waiting for something to happen in the *mean*time, that is, *in the interim*, is not ontologically fixed according to measured, chronological time (*Chronos*). Philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987) suggest that *mean*time is the time of *Aeon,* "the indefinite time of the event [of waiting], the floating line that knows only speeds and continually divides that which transpires into an already-there that is at the same time not-yet-here, a simultaneous too-late and too early, a something that is both going to happen and has just happened" (p. 262). What Deleuze and Guattari are referring to *is* time-out-of-joint: the indefinite durations, endurances, and mutations that constitute the *becoming-other* of *mean*time as it affirms while repeating fixed temporal measurements in new and different ways. Unlike *evolutionary* time, they contend that the indefinite, disjointed time of *Aeon* is *involutionary*, "in which [ideational] form is constantly being dissolved, freeing times and speeds" (p. 267).

Consider the indefinite time of Jason and my exploratory, experimental, and improvisational waiting as a way of addressing the contingent circumstances that we were experiencing in the garage-studio that afternoon. A waiting during which we were paradoxically "immobile… [but in an] absolute state of movement as well as rest, from which all relative speeds and slownesses spring, and nothing but them" (p. 267). The immobility of waiting for something to happen through exploration, experimentation, and improvisation is when the absolute movement and rest of *mean*time occurs in unanticipated and playful ways. Put differently, the assumption that our waiting constituted an inert, immobile ontology, overlooks the sensations, affects and movements that our bodies were freely experiencing within the contingent circumstances of the garage-studio. It also overlooks the relative utterances that were emerging and crisscrossing between us: "How is it going to move when stones don't move?" "How long are we going to wait, Dad?" "It's not moving, is it?" "Since the stone is not moving, what might we do to make it move without touching it?" "I have an idea!"

Consider also the indefinite, disjointed time of my involuntary memory, like involution, folding the past and present memory of Jason and my experience in the garage-studio and this writing in proximity with one another. Voluntary memory, according to Deleuze (2000), "proceeds from an actual present to a present that has 'been,' to something that was present and is so no longer" (p. 57). Such memory is reminiscent and thus an indirect experience of past events. Its temporal movement is linear insofar as it occurs through a stitching of chronological remembrances to represent a nostalgic pining for the past. Involuntary memory is a direct apprehension of a past event that is sensed and affected by an event in the present. Deleuze writes: "Involuntary memory seems to be based first of all upon the resemblance between two sensations, between two moments… [and as such] it seems that it contains a volume of duration that extends it through two moments at once" (p. 59).

Consider the durational proximity of the following two sensations accordingly: the present impulse to address the focus of this anthology on art and play in the lives and education of young children, and the re-minding of the event with Jason and I playing with the stone in the past. These two moments of involuntary memory, the past and present, contiguous, inseparable, and enveloped with each other. For Deleuze, "the essential thing in involuntary memory is not resemblance, nor even identity, which are merely conditions, but the internalized difference, which becomes immanent" (p. 60). That internalized difference of involuntary memory to which Deleuze is alluding resonates with poet Ursula K. Le Guin's (2010) verse from *A Meditation in the Desert* in the second epigraph of this essay, in which she hints at the immanent potentiality of a stone's *geological weight* and its *geological waiting* as "heavy…dull secret," releasing "slower, longer thoughts than mind can have" (p. 102). There we were, Jason and I, waiting in *mean*time, minding the durational weight of the stone's geological history for the immanent release of its ideational potential.

Such freeing of time from the weight of chronological measurement creates a temporal inconsistency of unformed, *a*-signifying affects that cohere and form the unassimilated *plane of immanence*. Deleuze scholar Claire Colebrook (2002) writes: immanence gives "'consistency' to chaos…to *constantly reopen thinking to the outside* [of foundational knowledge] without allowing a fixed [representational] image of that outside to act as one more foundation" (Emphasis added, p. 77). The temporal consistency of unformed, *a*-signifying affects on the plane of immanence is a radically coherent singularity, which differs from the organizational coherency of chronological interpretations insofar as it "gives rise, brings the imperceptible to perception" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 267). It is the free, floating experimental playing of time against measured time from which the immobile endurance of Jason and I waiting for the stone to move that the ideational potential of movement actualized through immanence: "I have an idea," he said, and proceeded to act, to play it out. Put differently, the immobility of our waiting and delaying reactionary predictions or predeterminations mobilized and put-in-play multiple ideational encounters and alliances with the stone. Hence, our delay of waiting to do something with the stone constituted an experimental doing, a suspended time that allowed for the immanent potential of our engagement with the stone to emerge.

Was our playful waiting a *waste of time*? If not, of what value was it? In describing the use-value of *delay* and its assertive challenge of the exchange-value of the commodity form in artist Marcel Duchamp's unassisted *readymades,* aesthetician John Roberts (2007) writes: "Duchamp…sees 'delay' as constitutive of serious artistic labor and judgement. In this he values the artwork as a source of dissent against art's rapid and instrumental utilization" (p. 37). The artist's readymade *Fountain* (1917) consisted of a porcelain urinal that he purchased from J.L. Mott Iron Works in New York City. After turning the urinal upside down in his studio and signing it with the pseudonym "R. Mutt," he submitted it for the exhibition of the Society of Independent Artists. After being rejected by the Society's acceptance committee on a so-called technicality, the photographer and modern art promotor Alfred Stieglitz photographed it and had it published in the Dadaists' journal *The Blind Man* (1917). Like *Fountain*, Duchamp's other unassisted readymades consisted of ordinary manufactured objects that he modified by tilting or inverting their axes, positioning them adjacent to one another, and out of their familiar contexts. By inflecting the objects' positioning in this way, he shifted the ideational focus of artistic materialism from the commodity production of manual labor to the immanent potentialities and immaterialities of intellectual labor. In describing the artist's turn, toward the intellectual labor of conceptual art, Roberts writes:

> Duchamp's 'delay', in *Fountain*, is essentially a transmutation of the notion of aesthetic delay into a cognitive and conceptual framework whose complexity lies *outside* the temporality of aesthetic judgement. The spectator's attention is not held by the internal relations or surface of the object but by the object's conceptual identity. In this sense *Fountain* is based on an extreme form of 'delay': the artwork that purposefully defies all its audience's expectations, resulting in its disappearance as an object of contemplation, and (hopeful) reappearance at a later point as an object of reflection. (p. 37)

To delay then is not a waste of time, but *to wait* for inflected ideational contingencies to play out and emit indefinitely, indefinite ideational encounters, alliances, and futures that are *outside* the chronological temporality of aesthetic judgement. Such an outside is not to suggest a dualism but a contiguous and contingent relationship in which the immanent time of *Aeon* continually riffs on the historical time of *Chronos*. Therein lies the use-value of waiting in the *mean*time: the undergoing of intellectual labor that delays instrumentalist expectations and utilizations in order for unanticipated and differential ways of thinking and doing to emerge that create futures different from the present. For Jason and I, delaying hasty decisions about what to do with the circumstances to which we had committed ourselves meant remaining open, enduring, and paying close attention, in the *mean*time, to what unexpected futures might unfold between us and that stone. Our commitment and endurance intensified as we immersed ourselves in playing with each other, that stone, and the other contingent materialities of the garage-studio.

As philosopher Rosi Braidotti (2014) suggests, such immersion constitutes an emptying out of the self that suspends and delays a rush to instrumentalist judgements, and that makes way for the futurity of becoming-other, or becoming-stone in the case of Jason and my playing (p. 171). *Becoming-other,* as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) define the concept, is not ontologically fixed or regressive but a transversal intensity crisscrossing "the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*" (p. 25). As such, its reality is ontologically mutable, generous and pluralistic. Jason and I waiting with and becoming-stone does not suggest our pretending to be stone-like or stone-headed, but to be in proximity, "inter-being," and alliance with *that* stone. "Becoming is not an evolution…by descent and filiation" (1987, p. 238). It is instead a symbiosis that brings into play anomalous entities of "totally different scales and kingdoms, with no possible filiation" (1987, p. 238). Hence, to delay and wait for disparate relations to play out between things in the *mean*time is to engage in the indefinite play of *anomaly*, which is a "position or set of positions in relation to a multiplicity" (1987, p. 244). *A*-stone, *a*-dirt, *a*-camera, *a*-tripod, *a*-bamboo thicket, *a*-bedsheet, *a*-table, *a*-garage-studio, *a*-body, another *a*-body: an anomalous multiplicity contiguously conjoined on a plane of consistency as a dynamic assemblage perpetually differentiating in becoming-other.

My use of the indefinite article *"a"* is to suggest the multi-positionality of differentiation as the multi-relationality of *individuation*. I am not referring to the determined uniformity of the subject, the individual self, that identifies, fixes, and isolates identity from the contingent circumstances of the world. Individuation is a trans-relational process in which the *singular of the particular* is always in dynamic proximity with the *singularity of the collective*, or as Deleuze||Guattari describe their process of writing *Anti-Oedipus* (1992) together: "Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd" (1987, p. 3). The collective available to Jason and I in the garage-studio that afternoon was that which was "within range, what was closest as well as farthest away" (p. 3). While it was not about *that* stone, *that* dirt, *that* camera, *that* tripod, *that* bamboo thicket, *that* bedsheet, *that* table, *that* garage-studio, *that of our* bodies, it was not-not about them: each a virtual particle in an irreducible, paradoxical *relation of non-relation* within the singularity of the collective.

Deleuze||Guattari scholar Brian Massumi (2011) refers to such proximal relationality as "the creative playing out of a nonrelation effectively expressing the inexpungeable [sic] difference between the sheer individuality of events of experience" (pp. 20–21). The playing out to which Massumi is referring is the potentiality of experience that was constituted *virtually* from within and without what was closest and farthest away from the *milieu*[1] of the garage-studio. Such virtual relationality within a collective singularity is not connective, it "cannot be said to actually connect to each other…[they] 'come together' only in the sense of being mutually enveloped in a more encompassing event of change-taking-place that expresses their differential in the dynamic form of its own extra-being" (p. 21). The *flash* of Jason's "I've got an idea!" (mentioned previously) was the actualization, the event expression of the virtual relationality encompassing our waiting within the milieu of the garage-studio (p. 20).

Early childhood educator and Deleuze||Guattari scholar Liselott Mariett Olsen (2009) characterizes the multi-relationality of individuation as the indefinite, *a*-personal ontology of the child as "no longer individuals" but always in the process of transformation, becoming-other than a singular self. "Selves cannot account for movements; they are stuck in definition and position" (p. 190). Consider the curiosity of children always asking "why" this, and "why" that: "they are not asking out of ignorance [a lack of foundational knowledge]; they are asking out of order, in movement" (p. 190). Based on their indefinite questioning, Olsson refers to children's "*a*-lives" as *virtuals* holding together on a plane of consistency that we come to recognize only in their actualized, differentiated form. The actualization of Jason's exclamation, "I have an idea!" was not a cessation. Considering the ebb and flow of his encounters and improvised alliances with *a*-rock, *a*-sheet, *a*-table, *a-, a-, a-*… the immanent potentiality of the garage-studio event did not end there. So, yes, movement *did* occur that afternoon 40 years ago, but not of the kind that is based on inattentive assumptions and heedless reactions to the absurd logic of our experiment. Paradoxically, the movement was more than that of the stone's which suggests that it was not about the stone's movement all along: it was about the indefinite, virtual movement of *a*-stone, *a*-child, *a*-father within the *a*-signifying milieu of the garage-studio.

[1] Deleuze and Guattari (1987) characterize "milieu" as the territory of the middle, in-between: a rhizomatic assemblage. "It has neither beginning nor end, but always in a middle (milieu) from which it grows and with it overspills" (p. 21).

An *a*-life, the indefinite movements of our waiting that afternoon, those documented in the inset photographic series, and those of this writing, are here mutually enveloped in a virtual field of consistency. An actualization of involuntary memory, the *a*-signifying segments of the present task of writing, and that past event in the garage-studio, folded and positioned in contiguity with each other to generate thinking not merely in repeating the same of that past, but in repeating it otherwise as a trans-relational multiplicity. It is accordingly, that I now fold and position this writing, my characterization of the garage-studio event adjacent with the series of inset photographs to explore their trans-relational flows, encounters and alliances.

A significant characteristic of the individual photographs, and the series,[2] is their *blurring figuration*. In the first photograph, a stone figure is positioned at rest and adjacent with the white ground of this writing. The lack of a framing edge around the photograph suggests a contiguous threshold between figure and ground that blurs and unsettles dualistic associations. In the second photograph, three contiguous figures are evident: the image of the stone-figure at rest; a precise demarcation; and, the elongated blurring of a truncated body. Moreover, the disjunctive adjacency and threshold between photographs||series also constitute a blurring. As such, they are inflected in two ways: blurred according to their irreducible contiguity; and, according to the blurred elongations recorded by the camera's slow shutter speed.[3] In his characterization of artist Francis Bacon's paintings, Deleuze (2003) identifies two techniques of blurriness: that which occurs through *a*-signification and that which occurs through the scrubbing and smearing figural representation (p. 9).

What Deleuze finds compelling about Bacon's blurring process are the indeterminate effects that render representational figurations in indiscernible ways. Bacon refers to the performativity of blurring as *diagrammatic* insofar as it graphs a *zone of indiscernibility* in which representational images are overcome by *a*-signifying traits that in befuddling sensations evoke perceptual and ideational shockwaves and catastrophes. "The diagram is indeed a chaos, a catastrophe, but is also a gem of order or rhythm. It is a violent chaos in relation to the figurative givens…it unlocks areas of sensation" (pp. 82–83). Like the inflections in the photographs||series mentioned above, Deleuze characterizes diagrammatic performativity as coupling "together two sensations that existed at different levels of the body and that seized each other like two wrestlers, the present sensation and the past sensation, in order to make something appear that was irreducible to either of them, irreducible to the past as well as to the present" (p. 57). In doing so, Deleuze (1990) writes: these "events [of sensation] are actualized in us, *they wait for us* and invite us in" (Emphasis added, p. 148) just as Jason and I were seized by them while waiting in *mean*time for something to happen.

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[2] From this point forward in the writing, the individual photographs and the series in which they are situated will be referred to as "photographs||series."

[3] In the third and fourth photographs in the series, the blurred body's elongation recedes at the demarcation that separates the stone; and, in subsequent photographs five, six, and seven, only the stone's figural, mutational movement is evident.

Consider Deleuze's characterization of the diagrammatic in Bacon's (1953) painting *Study after Velasquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (On-line) in accordance with the photographs||series inset with this writing:

> The diagram [of blurring] must not eat away at the entire [photograph or the series in which they are situated]; it must remain limited in space and time. It must remain operative and controlled. The violent [blurred] methods must not be given free rein, and the necessary catastrophe must not submerge the whole [of any photograph or the series] …. not all the figurative givens have to disappear; and above all, a new figuration, that of the Figure, should emerge from the diagram and make the sensation clear and precise (p. 89).

The diagrammatic inflections to which Deleuze alludes generate tension between that which is visually and conceptually recognizable and that which is indiscernible. In refusing to adjudicate between the visible and invisible, the diagram unsettles the oppositional relationship between sense-perception and cognitive-recognition. It is the freeing of vision of the former from the latter to which critical theorist Jonathan Crary (1992) refers as a "falling away of the rigid structures that have shaped it and constituted its objects" (p. 24). Hence, the blurring, unrestricted inflections of the photographs||series constitute *lucid-ambiguity*—a *discernable-indiscernible* process of indirection from which a nuanced plurality of perceiving and thinking differently is immanent.

The blurring in the photographs||series also accords with the sense and affective affordances of *the movement-image* and *the time-image* in Deleuze's (1986) cinematic theory of montage. "Between the beginning and the end of a film something changes, something has changed. But this whole [of the film] which changes, *this time or duration*, only seems to be capable of being *apprehended indirectly*, in relation to the movement-images which express it" (Emphasis added, p. 29). Movement-images sometimes occur by physically moving the camera or manipulating the camera's shutter speed to create a blurring effect that unsettles and releases movement from an organizing vantage point. However, movement-images more often occur as a disjointed chain of fixed shots that tacitly presupposes a montage. An example of the latter, the photographs||series functions as a montage, the indefinite operations of which release an indirect image *of* time (Deleuze, 1986, p. 29). Paradoxically, it is by the indirection of the movement-image that the durational performativity of time is experienced directly. As Colebrook (2002) contends, Deleuze's concept of the *time-image* is "a presentation of time itself, which forces us to confront the very becoming and dynamism of life (p. 30).

Hence, pertaining to Jason and my anticipatory act of waiting for something to happen in the garage-studio that afternoon, we had plenty of time on our hands. We were not pressed for time. Time did not run out. We were not keeping time, racing against time, or wasting it. We were instead playing with the mutational potentialities in the time warp between *Chronos* and *Aeon,* waiting attentively, in anticipation for something to happen in the garage-studio that afternoon, that in not having happened, happened unwittingly in its own-time: a direct experience of time afforded by the indirect, mutational blurring of the movement-image. We were on a line of flight waiting in *mean*time, during which the *a*-signifying sensations, affects, and movements of *a*-stone, *a*-dirt, *a*-camera, *a*-tripod, *a*-bamboo thicket, *a*-bedsheet,

a-table, other *a*-bodies, within the milieu of the garage-studio released Jason's "I have an idea"! Ours was a playful event awaiting just *a*-stone's throw away, with no beginning or end; that time, is this time, which is the becoming of time through the perpetual differentiation of *mean*time.

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Mothering as a Feminist Aesthetics of Existence

Laura Trafí-Prats

1 Introduction

As an artist, teacher, researcher who combines labor-intensive academic work with mothering, I often interrogate the worth of my existence. I question what I can do by living the social, institutional, personal forces that I live with and through. In the midst of educational reform, standardization, micromanagement, competitiveness, and defunding, I find solace in the zones of proximity, rhythms, spaces, and corporealities of mothering. Like many visual artists and filmmakers have done before (e.g. Liss, 2009), my daughter Ingrid and I use the times, spaces and motifs of the everyday to aesthetically appropriate our existence. These co-initiated, co-invented, co-existential practices bring a sense that life is neither a script, nor a description, but a practice that unfolds in a horizontal plane of immanence.[1] The heterogeneous, emergent, and hybrid qualities of the everyday, which Blanchot (1987) describes as a perpetual becoming, and a resistance toward formalization, forces me to think, live, write Ingrid-I as a continuum, beyond the many polarizations that frame the adult|child binary. Throughout this chapter, I locate the everyday practice of Ingrid-I in the politics of what Braidotti (2006, 2011, 2013) has described with the Greek term for life, *zoe*. *Zoe* is a generative force that operates both as a critique of existential fragmentations and a creative practice "of alternative visions and projects"

[1] For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), thinking is formulated as pure exteriority. It is dedicated to the creation of the new via an experimentation with the real. D&G oppose experimentation to abstraction, and situate thinking on the horizontal plane of the constantly processual, or rather, the plane of immanence. On the plane of immanence there are no subjects or objects, but instead processes of subjectification whereby subjectivity is formed/transformed through machinic assemblages.

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(Braidotti, 2013, p. 54). Zoe fosters an understanding of mothering as an aesthetic, transversal micropolitical project.

As a working mother and full time academic, I critique how neoliberalism pushes me into the discourse of the *professional mother* (McRobbie, 2013). I observe how, in adds, news, and political conventions, mothering is modeled after corporative management. She is a competent planner of the right choices concerning finances, education and the health of her family.[2] I watch and realize that I am not that successful, effortlessly professional-looking Anglo maternal model. I look into my everyday reality and notice that the professional mother is a highly exclusive model of success that, according to McRobbie (2013), is consistently modeled against the working class mother, who is often represented as unbalanced and abject.

I mother through non-family friendly schedules, and through growing workloads and pay freezes caused by the unprecedented and systemic defunding occurring at my university. I mother in dependence of feminized services of care that support me during the after school hours in which many of my classes and meetings are scheduled. I mother in a growing backlash of conservative politics that seek to subject me to normative family values, bodies, and politics of reproduction. My intimate experience of mothering is populated by blogs, social media, and commercials that target me with parenting tips on how to be a professional mother, while at the same time reaffirm me in a narrow definition of motherhood, as female, white, heterosexual, biological, consumerist and individuated (Springgay & Freedman, 2012). I mother resisting how the performance-driven policies of neoliberalism, including those affecting academia, continue segregating mothering to stereotypes of femininity and to a non-productive, non-public sphere of life.

Finally, I mother through the continual challenges of bringing what feminist scholarship on mothering describes as embodied, sensed, dynamic and interconnected forms of knowing in a time when teacher education has been colonized by too many external mandates. I am referring to policy-led reforms such EdTPA,[3] which situate faculty and teacher candidates in tense, almost schizoid negotiations, between policy requirements for a standardized performance-driven approach to the art curriculum, and the philosophical, political and ethical frameworks forming the intellectual field of art education.

[2] The discourse of the professional mother desires for a neoliberal practice of feminism that seeks to render obsolete the work of the 1970s feminist movement and their political push for a sociodemocratic oriented state. As McRobbie (2013) has described, the professional mother is a woman-centered position invented by conservatives to fit mothers in the neoliberal blanket of individualism, the market, job competition, and middle-class values in a time when there is a growing number of single and divorced mothers in risk of welfare dependence.

[3] EdTPA is a performance-based subject-specific test written by Stanford SCALE, and managed by Pearson Education that 40 states have adopted to regulate teaching licensures. For many, EdTPA is seen as an example of top-down policy-led reform that does not reflect the tenets of contemporary art education as an intellectual and professional field. For the last 30 years, scholarship in art education has radically decentered from a developmental individualist approach to art-learning that EdTPA returns to. Art educators have contributed to research and practice that enhances issues of social justice around class, gender, race, sexuality and disability while widening the field towards broader visual, artefactual and digital ecologies.

Too, I mother creatively by challenging the binaries that form me as a mother-teacher-scholar, such as those of adult|child, theory|practice, teacher|student, curriculum|body, public|private. Binaries that subject mothering to the individual, rather than conceiving mothering as a process of becoming-with other bodies, things, and languages—movements that are forming and changing Ingrid-I (Springgay & Freedman, 2012). Ingrid-I mother creatively by operating in the interstitial spaces between and around early childhood, contemporary art, and practices of everyday life (Kind, 2010). In these interstitial spaces, Ingrid-I experience art not as an idealized form of expression that aims to represent the internal worlds of the adult|child, but as a practice of "remaking the world materially and relationally" (Hickey-Moody & Page, 2016, p. 1) that is embedded in the rhythms of rest and mobility, and in the corporealities, spaces, and repertoires of early childhood that both form and transform us, and that are being transformed with and through us.

2 Mothering as a Feminist Aesthetics of Existence

As Springgay (2012) pointed out, drawing on Guattari's (1995) conception of an ethico-aesthetic paradigm, mothering is such that it communicates and affirms an embodied, sensed, processual, and ecological form of knowledge. In the ethico-aesthetic paradigm, subjectivity manifests in terms of an "existential territory on which social, ethical and aesthetic transformations may be negotiated" (Brunner, Nigro & Raunig 2012, p. 38) at levels of intimate experience. This occurs through multiple exchanges between what Guattari (1995) calls *individual-group-machine* (e.g. individuals, groups, and collective equipment such as institutions, media, and technologies of communication and computation), which allow for the creation of new complexes of subjectification. Guattari affirms that "[t]hese complexes actually offer people diverse possibilities for recomposing their existential corporeality, to get out of their repetitive impasses and, in a certain way, to resingularise themselves" (p. 7).

In this respect, the aesthetic assemblage is understood as a processual force that functions to transversally reconnect our bodies to the intense sensorial and affective aspects of experience, which disembodied cognition typically deterritorializes and fragments (Guattari, 1995). The aesthetic assemblage understands the production of subjectivity as a machinic or more-than-human process in which "incorporeal universes of reference" (p. 9), made of non-linguistic asignifying substances, become attached to linguistic enunciations making these function through "a logic of affects rather than a logic of delimited sets" (p. 9).

Guattari (1995) presents this logic of affects as operating through situations where a *partial object* is lifted and autonomized "from the field of [its] dominant significations" (p. 14). Guattari describes this detached fragment as one "that takes possession of the author to engender a certain mode of aesthetic enunciation" (p. 14). This aesthetic enunciation is intense and emergent, detected at the time that it is produced. Because "it is given in the creative moment like an haecceity freed

from discursive time" (p. 17), its aim is to open lines of virtuality[4] to further differentiate subjective production.

Therefore, thinking Ingrid-I in terms of an aesthetics of existence involves an analysis: of the logics of affect in our everyday life; of the fragments that take possession of us in our intimate practices together; of the ways we put these fragments to work detached from their preexisting semiotic frames; and, of the processes of becoming-otherwise through differencing modalities of expression, which according to Guattari (1995), produce *crystalizations of existence* that resingularize and flatten the striated territories of neoliberalism represented by their already-available subjective models for childhood and motherhood.

Guattari's (1995) concept of the aesthetic assemblage as one that "puts emergent subjectivity to work" (p. 19) through existential crystalizations of more than one,[5] suggests continuities with what Liss (2009) has defined as the *feminist maternal*. The feminist maternal refers to the productivity that emerges from affective fields of connection, those fluxes of contamination and intimacy that form maternal embodiment. For contemporary artists, whose work aims to recompose existing and essentialist perceptions of mothering, the feminist maternal functions as a site of critical exploration, in which new territories and modalities of subjectivity become possible.

The contemporary art practices of artists like Mother Art Collective, Mary Kelly, Agnes Vardà, Lenka Clayton, and others; practices that span from the 1960s to the present; conceive the everyday rituals of mothering, not as givens established by the authority of pediatrics, psychology, policy, and media, but rather as a complex space for existential experimentation—as multifaceted processes of becoming-with. The work of the aforementioned contemporary feminist artists, for example, centers often times on the affectual and intimate aspects of mothering, aspects that relate to asignifying systems like rhythms, gestures and repetitions, as well as materialities that stratify mothering as an everyday practice.

Artist Lenka Clayton creates installations with objects that she has taken out of the mouth of her toddler, assembling them in a minimalist order on the basis of shape and color. In a different piece, she videotapes the duration of her son walking away from her side. These are videos of everyday spaces like parks, streets, supermarkets and reflect on the affects that emerge from watching the child distancing from the mother. Another piece presents a collection of felted cutting objects as a measure taken to child-proof her home.[6] The mundane almost irrelevant acts in

[4] Virtuality is an aspect of the real that is opposite to the *actual* or the current state of affairs and properties. The actual|virtual are in mutual relation, defining virtuality as the capacity to bring actualization. Virtuality, then, refers to moments of becoming-otherwise through a non-linear process of being. At the same time, being means becoming or to exist in an infinite plane of being further differentiated. In the terms of virtuality, being is the opposite of fitting in already-available existential models.

[5] In *Chaosmosis*, Guattari (1995) refers to these existential crystalizations of more than one with the examples of artist-work-viewer, and patient-analyst. I extend these examples to the existential crystallization of Ingrid-I and more generically to mother-world-child.

[6] These are the titles and technical information of the three pieces: *63 Objects Taken from my Son's Mouth* (2011–2012), various small objects, size laid out 40″ × 40″ × 1″; *The distance I can be from*

Clayton's projects are examples of lifting specific fragments from discourses concerning what is socially expected in mothering practices around attachment, health and safety, and arranging them in a new way. They redistribute in new modalities, such as art installation and video-art, new substances of expression that conform to a "production *sui generis*" (Guattari, 1995, p. 6), which offers alternative possibilities for de- and re-composing[7] the existential corporeality of mothering. In these de- and re-compositions, mothering is practiced as an outbound, distributed, productive space where goal-oriented procedures (e.g. keep your child safe, form a positive attachment, foster independence) are transformed in the flux of process-oriented aesthetic explorations, spaces that make possible the creative invention of mother-world-child. In Guattari's terms, they count as micropolitical interventions on the dominant discourses of mothering. Guattari describes political transformations at the molecular and intimate level in the following way:

> [C]hanges can take place on a molecular level, microphysical in Foucault's sense, in political activity, in analytic treatment, in establishing an apparatus changing the life of the neighbourhood, the way a school or psychiatric institution functions the synergy of these two processes calls for a departure from structuralist reductionism and a refoundation of the problematic of subjectivity. (Guattari, 1995, p. 21)

As it is the case of mothering, the molecular as a political transformation refers to alternative connections that operate at the intimate, local and singular level, and that comprise relations of more than one. The molecular as a political transformation speaks for a logic of production that is not fully constrained by the subjective models of neoliberalism. This is a logic that allows for a subjectivity that is always in chaotic motion. In the passages that follow, I recreate an event in Ingrid-I's everyday life to theorize mothering through molecular thresholds of bodies and things becoming together in and through different affective happenings.

3 Transductive Movements

Through the last six and half years Ingrid-I have used the everyday as a zone of opposition, intersection, and interconnection to think, transform, and counter-actualize ourselves in and through the conceptualizations, relations and structures that frame us, both at home and in the institutional-corporative spaces that we inhabit (e.g. the school, the media, the university). We have engaged in an ecologically attuned grammar of living, response-able to the expressive motifs, or

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my son (2013), video series, different timings; *All scissors in the house made safer* (2014), scissors, wool roving, dimensions variable. These works can be seen in the artist website: www.lenkaclayton.com. In this same website one can read about Clayton's *Open source artist residency in motherhood*.

[7] In what follows, I will use the expression *de- and re-composition* as a way to express the non-linear movements in the dynamic field of actual|virtual tendencies constituting the production of [mothering] subjectivity.

attractors (Guattari, 1995), which we encounter in our everyday spaces. These existential motifs act upon us, opening new lines of virtuality that make us become-otherwise in co-emergence with things in our neighborhood.

In the following three subsections, I reflect on how Ingrid-I, while out on one of our habitual walks, encountered a number of detached pieces of bark near a monumental maple tree in our former neighborhood, and how this encounter could be interpreted as an event of subjective production where a molecular political transformation takes place.

I complement Guattari's concept of transversality with the concept of transduction (Massumi, 2002; Manning & Massumi, 2014; Simondon, 1992) so to theorize the thresholds of bodies and things becoming together in affective happenings in this specific event. The concept of transduction helps to explain how an event unfolds through encounters between bodies, on how as a result of these encounters elements of one body pass into the other. In these movements the body substance that passed through is transubstantiated into a new modality of expression. In this respect, the concept of transduction subscribes a distributive and proliferating logic of subjective production that crosses time-spaces, technologies, materialities and expressive modalities in processes of mutual becoming with the world.

For instance, in the case of the bark-being-missed, a body can respond to the material appearance of the trace left in the trunk, the touch inside the negative space, the noticing of the white spots of emerging fungi, the localization of few missing pieces in the ground, the piecing of them back in the trunk, the resistance of the pieces to stay back in the trunk because they dried, the falling of the pieces back into the ground, and the repeated efforts of putting them back. A body can also say "Look! There is bark missing." Ingrid performed all of these actions when faced with this event. A transductive analysis is more interested in Ingrid's embodied actions than in Ingrid's linguistic enunciation, because transduction focuses on how non-linguistic substances affect bodies, and how by being affected these bodies materialize differently with the world. A transductive analysis is interested in noticing, for example, that a modality change occurred between the materiality of the texture, shape, spots of the bark-being-missed and Ingrid's embodied actions. A modality of expressive-materiality changed for a modality of expressive-action (e.g. close-intimacy, touch, collecting, piecing, collecting, piecing in iterative movement).

The concept of transductive movement holds important parallels with Guattari's (1995) notion of transversality and the dismantling of the dualism expression|content. Guattari argues that there are "an indefinite number of substances of Expression" (p. 24), that expression cannot be reduced to language, and that different enunciative substances assemble, contaminate, and form enunciative assemblages. These enunciative assemblages can be made of semiotic-linguistic matter, but can also include incorporeal and asignifying forms of expression, as I mentioned earlier. We can see that in the case of the bark-being-missed both modalities of expression, asignifying and linguistic, take place. However, Guattari advocates for the ontological relevance of the asignifying modalities of expression in the production of subjectivity. It is only the incorporeal asignifying forms of expression that are not dependent on a subject-object relation, that are not vulnerable to be reduced to already-available

subjective models. Their non-semiotic status leaves them open to virtual processes of de- and re-composition, which moves Ingrid-I toward new and unforeseen modalities of existence, and creates the possibility of understanding aesthetic existence as a continuous, self-actualizing movement. In the passages that follow, I look into three transductive movements that flow from the bark-being-missed event.

3.1 Transductive Movement #1: Bodies Expressing Missing Bark

When the weather in Wisconsin allowed, Ingrid-I went on daily walks around our neighborhood.[8] Walking with or without a specific purpose, things emerged, bifurcations happened and the streets and spaces acted on us, affecting our patterns of attention, our rhythms and movement through the space, and our accumulated memory of places.

There was a majestic maple tree on Lake Drive, a wavy street that took us to the café, the supermarket, the library, the park, and a place where Ingrid liked to ride her bike and scooter. She often jumped off of her vehicle to climb the large, resurfacing base of the maple tree. Touching the bark, her legs stretching to reach from one side to the other, and pretending to be a statute, she rubbed the bark, hugged the trunk, and wondered about the marks and holes that adorned its surface, and, and, and. Variations and combinations of these expressive acts have been repeated over the course of the last 5 years, since Ingrid-I began walking long distances without the assistance of a stroller.

I have already described how Ingrid's body expressed the bark-being-missed, both linguistically but also in an embodied way. In what follows, though, I want to describe how I too was traversed by this event, and how I used photo-documentation to de- and re-compose myself in relation to it.

During our neighborhood walks I followed Ingrid's rhythms and random detours. I stopped or moved with her. I looked attentively, recognizing her presence and actions. I often took pictures of the practices as they unfolded, with the aim to augment the time to think and journal about them beyond their ephemeral duration. The documentations that I produced help me notice and reflect on how bodies compose with other bodies, what came to be co-generative in these encounters, and what expressive modalities emerged between them. I directed myself toward these encounters with varying degrees of success, seeking to capture reactions in Ingrid's body—her entire body, as well as specific parts that alerted me to emergent gestures, moods, rhythms and hums. The images help me remember the event, but they also assist me in noticing aspects that I did not previously focus my attention on. They make me aware of both the relevance and challenges in communicating cor-

[8] Ingrid-I moved out from our familiar geographies in Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin to continue our life together in Manchester, United Kingdom.

Fig. 1 Ingrid piecing the bark together into the trunk

poreal experiences, especially those made of emotions, gestures, bodily reactions, and senses of duration, in addition to the semiotic matter that constitutes them.

I did not take as many images of the bark-being-missed event, simply because it occurred rather suddenly, as we were walking with the goal in mind to get some lunch at the café nearby. Ingrid jumped off of her bike and toward the tree. After a few seconds, though, I realized that she was investigating the tree, asking questions about what had happened to the bark. At that moment I too began to be attracted by the event and decided to get the camera out. I took images that were close in proximity to Ingrid's body. I became attracted to her care for the tree, to how she orientated her body in intimate ways with the trunk, touching the bark with her full palms, holding the missing pieces up to the empty space in the tree, attempting to piece it back together again (see Fig. 1). As she was getting closer to the tree, I too was getting closer to her-and-the-tree, and as this was happening our three bodies transversally composed in recognition of the presence of the other. One expressive modality of the bark-being-missed was transduced in the movements and intensities in Ingrid's body that I described earlier. A second expressive modality was transduced in the image that I produced, which following Marks (2000), could be described as an *image of attentive recognition*. For Marks, this is an image that reveals in its production, both the perception of what is going on and the tendencies, techniques and orientations that populate it, and that Ingrid-I have mutually built into our history together—into our senses of, movements toward, and repeated acts of image-making in and with the neighborhood. Inspired by Guattari (1995),

Manning and Massumi (2014) describe this as a process of *metamodelization*, in which accumulated techniques assembled in past events, reassemble again under new experimental conditions.

In the iterative temporality of metamodelization, mothering manifests as *emergent attunement*, a relational merging occurring between mother-child-world as we become responsive to the different attractors that the event puts in circulation (Manning & Massumi, 2014). We attune to the shapes, textures, and colors of the neighborhood, and towards the embodied movements of close-intimacy, touch, collecting, piecing, and taking pictures. With this "remaking the world materially and relationally" (Hickey-Moody & Page, 2016, p. 1).

3.2 *Transductive Movement #2: A Sign that Brings Something New into the World*

A woman came out from the nearest house to inquire about what Ingrid-I were doing with the tree. We explained, sharing our concerns about the missing pieces of bark. As we said goodbye Ingrid advised her to put a sign requesting that passersby not peel the bark away from the tree. Later in the day, at home, Ingrid commented that maybe she could make the sign for the tree. Days went by and Ingrid reminded me that she was still thinking about making the sign, and that she needed materials to do so. I brought home to her a discarded piece of wood that I had found in the sculpture shop at Peck School of the Arts, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. My office used to be one level above the sculpture shop. Art education students and I often visited the shop's recycling bins for unwanted pieces of material and used them for art projects conducted in our field experiences in K-12 classrooms.

Ingrid-I designed, wrote, painted, wood-burnt, and applied sealant into the discarded piece of wood, making a sign out of it. Ingrid came up with the message, wrote it with some spelling support, and drew a tree that housed a nest with two eggs, a blue jay resting on one of the branches, and an owl in a hole that was located in the trunk. The tree was crowned by the moon and the sun. These were escorted by Ingrid and her neighbor-friend, Henry, who stood dynamically at its wavy base. Ingrid-I collaborated in the woodburning and sealant application process (see Fig. 2).

In conventional art education practice, what I narrated above might be conceptualized as an art project, in which one step is logically followed by another. However, as I have been arguing throughout this chapter, in a transversal/transductive logic, these *steps* are understood instead as assemblages of enunciation, in which movements of matter, language, and bodies reactivate the potentials of accumulated techniques and knowledge (metamodelization). The event of making a sign expands across modalities. As I argued earlier, in the case of the event of the bark-being-missed, the expressive-material passed into expressive-embodied substances. In the making of the sign, the expressive substances changed again into a new modality defined by the materialities, form, images, language constituting the sign for the tree.

Fig. 2 Woodburning and sealant application process

Why did this specific sign come into being? What new relation with the event did it bring into the world? What did the augmented vitality, in which the damaged tree is presented in the sign, do to the event? Did the sign reduce the many enunciative substances of the event into an all-too human semioticization, where the multiplicity of feeling and expression towards the bark-being-missed disappeared? What new enabling conditions might the sign put into the world? Would it activate modes of reengagement with the tree?

While it is difficult, if not impossible, to answer these questions, they reveal that being/becoming in a transversal/transductive logic involves working in the speculative mode of the what-if. Instead of trying to explain what *is* the meaning and/or function of the sign, the speculative mode of the what-if, understands the sign for the possibility-engendering potential that it has, and the degree to which it comes to drop something new into the world. Even if this something fails, it momentarily disturbs patterns of behavior, adds a possible connection that was not there before, and tells a new story that recreates new feelings towards the world (Haraway, 2016).

3.3 Transductive Movement #3: A New Territory of Relations Emerges

The day after we went to plant the sign (see Fig. 3). Ingrid wanted to check with the woman that she met weeks before, to see if she had approved or disapproved of its presence by the tree. We rang the bell but nobody responded. We planted the sign anyway because the tree was situated not in the private yard of the woman's house but in the public space of the street curb. Three days after, when we were driving back from school, Ingrid asked me to detour and ring the door again. She was afraid that her sign would be removed and dumped, but her sign was still there, and continued being there until we had permanently moved from Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin to our new home in Manchester, United Kingdom, in June 2016.

Fig. 3 Planting the sign

This time, however, the woman opened the door. We learned that her name was Marcia and that she was pleased with the sign, and that she had noticed some people stopping by and talking about it. A conversation followed that traversed across different topics,[9] such as how wonderful it was that Ingrid was attentive to the world that surrounded her, and that she had noticed that the bark had been peeled off, and showed concern about it, too. This evolved into a mutual speculation about whether the over-planned time-space constraints that we live through allow time for adults and children to engage in such outbound, emergent, and improvisational work. This conversation detoured again, toward the subject of how much Marcia enjoyed neighbors who care for others and whether or not people care enough for each other nowadays. She complained of not seeing much of her neighbors walking around and enjoying the neighborhood anymore. Marcia also addressed Ingrid directly, and asked her why she liked her tree so much. Ingrid responded, saying, “I do not know.” Then she continued bouncing around the tree, sitting at its base and playing with the pieces of bark that were still lying on the ground. Then Marcia complemented Ingrid’s actions, saying, “Isn’t it a good tree to jump around and climb? Many children like to play on it.”

Marcia then told me that teaching children to care for things and people makes them “good citizens”, and wondered if education today was doing a good enough job of forming “good citizens”. This statement caught my attention. I was not sure of what Marcia meant by “good citizens”, so I asked her if she considered the pos-

[9] The passages that follow are not a literal transcription of Marcia’s words. They reflect the reconstruction of our conversation that I wrote in the immediate aftermath of the encounter.

sibility that understanding children as good citizens meant honoring and promoting children's cultural initiatives, like the sign that Ingrid had created, even when such initiatives are not anticipated by the adults who oversee them. My question was based on Reggio Emilia's pedagogical idea of the child being an active citizen who is engaged in the community. This opposes a definition of citizenship as a practice of obedience and sees children as socio-historical actors who are immersed in productive cultural activity (Cagliari, Castagnetti, Giudici, Rinaldi, Vecchi, & Moss, 2016). Embedded in Reggio Emilia's definition of the child-citizen, there is an understanding of the child as capable to develop creative strategies, ways to experiment with materials, and to empathically respond to the world (Vecchi, 2010). Did Marcia's comments reflect the sense of good citizen to which the adult listens to and collaborates with, or did she suggest the obedient sense of good citizen, to be governed by adult models and initiatives? Murris (2016) suggests that the idea of the child as a citizen is partly derived from the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child. In this respect, it very well could be a too-human, Western, ethnocentric, and non-productive idea to think the child within an ontology of immanence and subjective production.

Having said all of this, I truly don't know what Marcia meant by children being good citizens, because she did not respond to the question directly but expressed instead, concern that public education was being defunded in the State of Wisconsin, and that children were not given enough opportunities to think outside the box, to be in touch with the world, meet different people and encounter new places, or go to the many parks that the city has to offer. Marcia affirmed that schools kept children inside the classrooms and as a consequence of this, children did not seem to know much of the places where they live. Marcia asked, "How are they going to care, then?" A few weeks after this encounter, Ingrid received a thank you letter from Marcia. It read:

> Dear Ingrid,
>
> Thank you so much for taking care of our precious tree. Your sign is beautiful and so many people stop to look at it, and read it. No more bark is gone, so I think you saved it! Thanks for being so thoughtful. You are a very special person. You are welcome to come and enjoy the tree at any time.
>
> Marcia

On the one hand, Marcia's conversation and letter can be read as an example of how children's plural substances of expression get discarded in favor of definitive meanings that enclose subjectivity: "…you saved it!" (MacLure, 2016). This not only puts under control anything that is excessive and more-than-human coming from Ingrid-I's body, but it incapacitates us to fully understand the entanglement of Ingrid-I's body with/in a more-than-human, more-than-linguistic relation with the tree and the neighborhood (Bennet, 2016). This subdivision of the world into discreet subject-object relations; e.g. Ingrid saved the tree; deprives us from engaging with the world creatively, with a disposition that nothing is fixed, and that everything is multiple (Ingold, 2012).

On the other hand, using the speculative logic of the what if, we can read Marcia's letter not only for how it refers to language as a form of order. But, we can notice as well that it alludes to immanent variations where language is used as a means to be played with—affectively, expressively, and ecologically (MacLure, 2016). Marcia relates that the sign is still in place revealing that the bark-being-missed event continues unfolding in a new territory of relations, "so many people stop to look at it, and read it." Although Marcia seems to imply that the sign changes the behavior of passersby because "No more bark is gone", we cannot know for certain how the sign, as a signifier, is carried by others into their own modes of existence, or if it is carried at all.

We can assume, though, that a new site of situated knowledge where human-thing relations were put in question was enacted through the unfolding event of the bark-being-missed. For some, like Bennet (2016) or Haraway (2016), this already counts as an act of mapping local situations, expressing concern, and advocating for more equitable and entangled worldy relations—this is, alternative existence. The event of the bark-being-missed, the sign that followed, and the accounts offered by Marcia and others, seem to speak of caring connections between people, the tree, and this highly traveled street. Prior to Ingrid-I creating the sign and then dropping it into the world, these connections did not exist. They seem to speak to the possibility of thinking existential relations of children and adults, like the one of mothering in terms of alternative and emergent networks of co-responsibility and co-existence, which help us to see and materialize with the world as otherwise.

4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed mothering both as an ontological process of existence and as an active micropolitical transformation of the neoliberal models of maternalism that think mothers in individualist and highly exclusive ways. This has led me to review the philosophical foundations of an aesthetic production of subjectivity where the adult-child relation functions in a continuum with the world. Thanks to Guattari's (1995) concept of transversality, I have developed this adult-child continuum as connected to a subjective production that is relational, collective, assembled and more-than-human. This production of subjectivity recognizes the attachment of multiple substances of expression to linguistic material and references the power of these substances to open lines of virtuality that further differentiate our processes of becoming-with children, things and the world beyond already available models of subjectivity.

Based on these ideas, I have presented mothering as a feminist aesthetics of existence, where critique and creation function simultaneously as a way to resist the neoliberal governance of motherhood, and consequently of childhood, too. Mothering as a feminist aesthetics of existence operates micropolitically via molecular processes of de- and re-composition, in which collective life can be reinvented through new modalities of expression.

Guattari (1995) affirmed that these types of molecular de- and re-compositions occur in the many microphysical spaces where political activity exists. This can make us consider that the type of aesthetic existence that I have characterized as a mothering process can extend to other alternative geographies of making childhood. Mothering invites us to think through the relations of adult-children—in the classroom and the studio, the playground, and other spaces of the everyday life—in terms of intensities, emergences and mutual attunements. It moves us to consider the potentialities of inhabiting pedagogy, play, and everyday life as an immanent continuum of relations. It puts us to the challenge of aggressively critiquing models of individualization that govern the curriculum, the school, the neighborhood, and the city, which entrap us in a world that is reduced to linguistic expression, fixed with binary relations, exclusive subjective models, and powerful asymmetries.

Something that I couldn't do within the limits of this chapter, but that I would like to do in the future, is to enlarge the scale of thinking and analyzing mothering as a feminist aesthetic of experience. What I mean is that it seems key to investigate and make visible with wider implications, how children and adults construct alternative existential and micropolitical territories through art and everyday life, that get beyond mainstream institutional frameworks. Following what others in childhood studies are already doing (e.g. Kraftl, 2014), there is a potential for progressive art education researchers to develop further inquiry on relations of art, education, and childhood that contribute to alternative geographies of existence. Returning to Braidotti's (2013) politics of critique and creativity, this larger project examines neoliberalism not only in relation to its extreme governance of life and standardizing practices, but also for the alternative territories of education, parenting, and cultures of making that grow out of it –as expressions of excess, resistance, and micropolitical re-engagement with life, not as brute data (*bios*), but as an affirmative creative power (*zoe*).

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The Will-to-Research Children's Drawing

Christopher M. Schulte

While completing my first semester as a doctoral student in Art Education I served as a teaching assistant in our program's Saturday Art School. During this time I was encouraged by my advisor, Tina Thompson, to develop a pilot study. The purpose in doing so was to establish a space in which I could begin to think more carefully about my interests regarding young people and their engagements in art making, specifically drawing. It was also an opportunity to learn about "it" in context (i.e. researching children and their drawing) (Graue & Walsh, 1998, p. xvi) and to open myself to the ways that children's drawing, as Golomb (1992) advised, constitutes more than just a "print-out of the mind" (p. 7). Indeed, children's drawing expressed itself during those early experiences as an itinerantly constructed social world (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998)—a social and cultural milieu that both contributes to the life and work of children, yet, at the same time, is something that children actively contribute to (James & James, 2008; Rogoff, 1995).

In this way, and as a result of my preliminary inquiries, I came to understand children as "symbol weavers" (Dyson, 1986, p. 381) whose material practices emerge from the experience of "weaving with others", including myself. As a result, my inclination was that children's drawing was tightly bound to an impulse for which movement and mutation are ongoing and efficient quests, and that "doing research" (Mitchell & Reid-Walsh, 2002, p. 3), which I came to learn about and continue to re-discover, often depends on my own capacity at a given moment to "take into account what kind of *problem* the children seem *to be closest to*" (Olsson, 2009, p. 17; emphases added). However, I too am active in the construction of these problems, and so attending to what children seem to be closest to is also a matter of noticing *in* research, "what is not itself" (Colebrook, 2002, p. 21).

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To place such matters under consideration was then—and still is—an uneasy act of weighing this and balancing that, of establishing a curiosity for what children are doing, yet, at the same time, remaining open to my own capacities as a researcher to recognize or make sense of this work. Researching children's drawing is, afterall, a process that is forever contaminated by the personal values, strategies, and tastes that we manage to develop—for the child, for drawing, and for the broader experience of research. And though from a personal standpoint I arrived at and recognized this to be of significance early on, in the experience of learning to think and do research, it remains a course of acknowledgement that I sometimes neglect to uphold. In fact, there are times when I genuinely forget to account for myself and for the ways I put my own desiring and interests in relation to those of the child. But there are also times—indeed, many times—when I permit myself a generous degree of latitude to forget, and, on certain occasions, even convince myself that doing so is necessary.

Whether or not this is honestly accidental or the plight of indifference, such instances are integral to and affective moments within the process of thinking and doing research with children. Thus, the early experience of doing a pilot study yielded a variety of instructive lessons about the child and children's drawing, but it was also an experience that compelled me to assemble within myself a deeper instinct toward self-awareness and critique, and to more swiftly question the tendency to "fasten onto the explanations that come most readily" (Thompson, 2013, p. 164), especially those which relate to research—i.e. to Research.

1 Ethical Indecision and Political Choice

The act of doing and learning to do research was not just a search for meaning, an occasion for identifying different matters of importance in children's drawing, but additionally—and perhaps most importantly—an enduring ethical struggle, in which my own individually held obligations and responsibilities were shared and evaluated in context (Harcourt, Perry, & Waller, 2011, p. 3). In this way, thinking and doing research was a matter of highlighting the ethical processes of determining what was right (whatever that might be or entail), and placing under increasing scrutiny the idea that such processes can ever be a "preliminary stage or hurdle to be got out of the way at the beginning" (Hill, 2009, p. 65; see also, Morrow & Richards, 1996). Admittedly, as a doctoral student, I was disillusioned about the difficulties that would accompany the act of thinking and doing research, particularly *with* young children. I was also insensible at times to the ways I acted on my own deeply imbedded ethical positions, without acknowledging how, or even demanding a sense of why (Brydon-Miller, 2009, p. 244).

Slowly though I began to understand and approach the experience of research *with* children as something different, as an endeavor that I was both connected to yet also distanced from. Distanced, not in the sense that I had achieved a degree of neutrality or objectivity as a researcher but rather distanced in the sense that I was

making elective movements to become indifferent to the ways in which research was getting shaped and purposed—historically, collectively, and personally. I had to will myself to foster and hold close the instinct to idle in the anxieties that I was having about what constitutes *good* research, and when doing so remain open to the difficult recognitions that were inclined to arise. I had to will myself "up against thought where it [was] happening, and to expand thought and invent new ways of being-in-relation to" the event of children's drawing (Davies, 2014, p. 44). In this way, I came to recognize that thought, in conjunction with ethics, operates as a powerful "value system" (Brydon-Miller, 2009, p. 244), undergirding my every engagement. And that was enacted through my own individual and shared commitments to "working for the good of others" (p. 244), namely the children whose practices I was endeavoring to bring attention to.

As Rose (1999) suggested, research is a form of "ethico-politics," a kind of "moral field" (Rose, 1999, p. 172), through which the researcher and children passage—questioning, interpreting, and making choices about what is good and necessary, right and wrong, desired and detested, objectionable and acceptable. Additionally, ethico-politics refers to the ways that, as researchers, we elect to fashion an "attitude toward those things that are given to our present experience as if they were timeless, natural, and unquestionable: to stand against the maxims of our time, against the spirit of our age, against the current of received wisdom" (Rose, 1999, p. 20). Insofar as I can tell, this is what Davies means when she suggests that we *put ourselves up against thought where it is happening*. It is a nudge, administered to move us toward recognizing that each and every moment is "a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become" (Britzman, 1991, p. 8). To be nudged is to work against the very tensions that constitute our ethical and epistemological positions, and to recognize the "respect, dignity, and connectedness" that we share with others, and the communities in which we practice (Ellis, 2004, p. 4). To work against... to nudge… to put ourselves up against *it*.

As such, every moment *with* research is an occasion of ethical indecision and political choice (Dahlberg & Moss, 2007, p. 125), a site of *formation* and *transformation*, in which it is and becomes increasingly imperative that we work to account for the attitudes that we bring into the field and that we incorporate into our interpretations about what seems fair, right, and best (Graue and Walsh 1998, p. 56). Gunilla Dahlberg and Peter Moss (2007) refer to this course of exploration as "the search", a process of self-analysis that is always tethered to a sense of compromise, through which it becomes possible to leave room for the "radical otherness and singularity of the Other" (pp. 81, 158). It is in this way that researching children's drawing is a "dissociating relation" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2007, p. 81), an anxious endeavor, in which the researcher must continuously work against the tensions of what is given to their present experience as *timeless*, *natural*, and *unquestionable* and that which emerges as *episodic*, *anomalous*, and *disputable.* The matter of how I came to find and experience these tensions, though, and why I permitted myself—even fooled myself at times—to come to a decision as a result of working through them, was, for me, the very problem that I was always closest to.

To think and live with this problem is to think against *the maxims of our time*, against *the spirit of our age*, and against *the current of received wisdom*, as Rose suggested. But what exactly does all of this entail, and what comes to matter when these things begin to relate to the child, or to drawing? I wonder, too: What were the maxims of my time—those truisms that I had accepted, or that I'd come to embody and that I had learned to use as a directive for encountering children in their drawing, and in research? What were the currents of received wisdom that had come to matter, especially as I learned about *it* in context?

The affordances brought about by engaging in this type of speculative work have become more apparent to me over the last few years. But it is not so much the recognition that such questioning is important that has me writing this chapter. Rather, it is that heavy, unmistakable sense of anxiety that washes over me when I'm faced with the realization that I have failed to do so. For me, such occasions have tended to arise while reviewing and analyzing the qualitative field texts that I've managed to generate as a researcher, particularly video and photographs. This is not to suggest that such occasions only arise after-the-fact, as a post-experience format for reflection. Indeed, such occasions surround us at all times. The issue is that we often desire too much to see them, researching with an un *will* ingness to acknowledge the *it* that we are learning with and about. What tends to become visible then, during these difficult moments of self-recognition, are our own presences as a trickster—that researcher who,

> Remains steadfast in his or her hesitancy to embrace or enact such flexibility, unwilling to desire joyfully (openly, actively, productively), or perhaps desiring too much in a specific direction or in a particular way (anticipatively, predictably, assumedly). It is in these moments that the researcher exercises a mode of flexibility that moves and desires like a trickster: saying one thing yet always doing another. Trickster-desire, as enacted by the researcher, says, "Look at how thoughtful and attentive I am!" "Look at how assured and objective I am being." Yet, at the very same time trickster-desire searches for confirmation, strategically scouring the participatory terrains for those trace elements that will, of course, remind it of itself. (Schulte, 2013, p. 3)

The point here is not to feel guilty but rather to entertain the possibility that such occasions—though difficult, even painful to negotiate—might also serve as possible sites for *exploration* and *transformation*. Indeed, many of the most instructive experiences that I have had as a researcher have surfaced as a result of encountering a brief video clip or photograph that moved me to scrutinize my own difficult visibilities as a researcher, and to ask the type of questions that open the concept of research to become something entirely different.

2 Difficult Visibilities

> You can't see it, can you (see Fig. 1)? Well, at least not any more. That's because some of *it* has been placed out of view, thus thwarting your ability to effectively question the purpose and impact that *it* had in shaping the event that is now only partially visible. Admittedly, I'm the one who removed *it*. And, to be perfectly candid, I did so intentionally as an attempt to

Fig. 1 (left) and 2 (right). Carter and Mr. Chris

> reframe a set of choices that I had made and that I no longer recognized to be *in-step* with the values I now had about children and their drawing. This decision was undertaken as a means to omit the difficult visibilities that had emerged, and that so expressly narrated my relationship to the concept of research, and to the experience of researching.
>
> You see, strategically cut away from this image (see Fig. 2) is a large tri-pod, to which a digital camera was attached, both of which now constitute the very parts of *it* that you are unable to see. It is an image that I have always enjoyed, taken by a colleague who was also observing the preschool classroom on that day. The image was developed with the friendly intention of providing a memento of my first *official* research experience. I must confess though that it has taken me several years to recognize part of this photograph for what it really is, which is an event that is more difficult than I've always storied it to be. Though it is without question a lovely memento and does in many ways reflect what was and appears to be a respectful occasion of dialogue, it is also a complicated personal imaginary for research, which is also heavily demarcated by its' absentia—those conflicted fragments of personal knowing, decision, and interaction that have been so effectively rationalized out of view, obscured from further consideration.

Fortunately, I am someone who is driven to return to my work, to dutifully haunt the ruins of prior thought and the residue of my actions. I suppose this is because to some extent I've accepted the burdensome realty that research is never *a straight shot*, but instead a long meandering promenade, always bent to thwarting my hopes and desires for certainty and projection. This, I think, is the real *problem* of research, its ethico-political crisis, if you will. It is also for this reason that I've come to organize so much of my time and attention in recent years to the act of troubling my own "will-to-method" (Barthes, 1986, p. 318)—i.e. to Research—so that in circling back I can begin to encounter again the very qualities, positions, and principles that previously managed to elude me. My relationship to researching children's drawing is not only a process that drags the old into the new, but also, as Pearce (2010) suggested, is an act of "creative remembrance" (p. 1) that enables me to "connect the unconnected" (p. 3) and to encourage awareness for the relationships, affects, and intensities that "punctuate… [my] individual and social spaces" (p. 3), especially those whch I share with young children.

This is precisely what happened when I encountered this photograph again, in the fall of 2015, several years after it was initially taken and sent to me as a memento. Sitting there, looking at the photograph, I wondered: Why *did* I edit out the tri-pod and camera? Why did I choose to use the tripod in the first place? Why did I place the camera and tripod on the perceived edge of the drawing performance? Though it is true that these questions refer to single decisions that I made as a researcher, which may in fact seem to be minor, insignificant even, they are indeed the type of questions that need to be asked. To ask such questions is to engage in the kind of speculative work that I was describing earlier. It is to begin to give an account of oneself (Butler, 2001), or in my case, to acknowledge the frictions that have surfaced within me, between my once lived and now embodied sense of ethics and responsibility to inquiry *with* children, and to the lurking need to make a choice about what seems right and appropriate—then, and now.

As I was able to attune my speculations in increasingly critical ways, the more I became aware of the fact "that one is, at every turn, not quite the same as what one thinks one is" (Butler, 2001, p. 27), and that what I do as a researcher is often quite different from what I claim to be doing. This enduring conflict became apparent to me as I sat there gazing at the photograph, connecting again—and this time, more clearly—to the obvious struggles that had persisted within me as a researcher (and that still do). My speculative engagement with this photograph, even years later, unmoored the complicated rhythms of doing research with children, thus providing the nudge that I needed to work against my own will-to-Research, especially as a "safeguard against the ineffable" (Manning, 2015, p. 58) in children's drawing.

The question of why I elected to edit out the tri-pod and camera is not about finding an answer or about making it right, even years later, but rather finding my way back into the problem of Research. It is about getting closer to those moments in which different, sometimes-conflicting *permissions*, *formations of trust, and issues of responsibility* are placed in relation to each other, and where it is absolutely vital to sort out and express the ethical conundrums to which these positions and perspectives are attached.

3 The Anxiety of Allegiance

When I first began to think more intensely about the relationship between children's drawing and the experience of doing research, one of the things that struck me was the fact that children's drawing demanded something different, a strategy of attention that was more generous, especially in terms of how *it* became visible to others. Informed by certain aspects of the Reggio Emilia approach, particularly the concept and pedagogical practice of *documentation* (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998), I established a commitment to the use of video and photography as a practice of

research (McClure, 2008) that was adamant in its position that ample consideration be given "not just to oneself and the other but to the intensities of forces working on us and through us" (Davies, 2014, p. 35). In this way, I was approaching documentation as more than just an occasion to make visible the complexity of children's learning, but also as a strategy to *dissociate* the *relations* of "normalization and surveillance" that so effectively "exercise power on and through us" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 109), and that we often use to constitute ourselves as researchers and the decisions that we make in the process of researching.

But what does it mean to suggest that we attend with greater care to the intensities of forces that are working on us and through us? For me, these intensities of forces are directly related to the decision that I made to place the camera on the tripod, and to then use this apparatus of inquiry as the primary vantage onto the event of Carter's drawing. It is not so much the decision itself that is important to recognize, but rather the ethico-political crises that led up to this decision, and that surrounded it, even years later. I made this decision because deep down, informed by an instrumentalist orientation to research (i.e. to Research)—which I had learned to subtly, albeit powerfully embody over the course of my life—I desired to *capture* more readily the event of Carter's drawing. Too, I had come to believe—at least in spirit—that if meaning in children's drawing were to ever be constituted as meaningful, especially in the ways regarded by Research to be important, it must also be verifiable (Reichenbach, 1938, p. 30). My point in sharing this is not to suggest that an instrumentalist orientation is problematic, but rather to illustrate that this orientation—like all orientations to research—bears out a commanding set of forces that work on us, through us, and that to some extent operate as our "epistemological unconscious" (Steinmetz, 2005, p. 44; see also, St. Pierre, 2016, p. 6)—i.e. as a deeply rooted "structure encompassing processes and forms of knowledge that are not [always] accessible to conscious awareness but that are nonetheless capable of patterning conscious thought and manifest practice" (Steinmetz, 2005, p. 44).

Admittedly, it wasn't until I viewed this photograph that I really felt or began to comprehend the significance of Davies' suggestion—that there is a vast, complex network of intense forces that are always working on us and through us. Nor was it until this photograph had effectively put me into a state of critical guesswork that I began to acknowledge the need to work against the "allegiances and attachments" that had already precluded me from seeing the very "alternatives" that I was encountering, that I desired to create, and that at times I already claimed to have created (Pearce, 2010, p. 1). When looking at this photograph, I can't help but feel compelled to establish within myself the readiness to "linger longer at those sites where [I] might otherwise collapse into [my] habitual processes and understandings" of what it means to Research children's drawing (Pearce, 2010, p. 2). The photograph then, as Lenz Taguchi (2010) suggests, is a "performative agent" (p. 64), a locus for ethico-political activity, from which it becomes possible to play with the habitual *and* the otherwise, all at once.

That said, it would be naive to think that we can simply move away from or negate the habitual from our engagements with children's drawing. Rather, we must work to move *with* them, *through* them—slowly, suspiciously, but also creatively. After all, the habitual and the otherwise are connected, and as Pearce suggests:

> Connectivities can help us affect and be affected by others in ways that challenge our performed assumptions and fantasies or at least prevent us from returning with them fully intact. It is to work with a positivity of difference which brings together disparate concepts in a productive energy that enables us to think anew, at least temporarily, in the gaps and spaces in between. (Pearce, 2010, p. 2)

In this way, my commitment to using video and photographic documentation as a method of research, despite the fact that I desired to think against the tendency for research to be about solutions and assumptive tactics, was nonetheless entangled with a yearning to formulate a more *objective* sense of what research could be, and how it ought to proceed. In this way, Research was not only about working with and toward a positivity of difference, as Pearce notes, but also a matter of accounting for and working through the forces that we have within us, and that we too often rely on, use, and unknowingly legitimize to corral the production and flow of difference—to negate it even (as I did in editing out the camera and tripod).

What this photograph produces is an occasion for my own "positivist anxieties" (Prasad, 2005, p. 4) to wash over me, to become a critical site for reflection, that in turn enables me to bear witness to the "certain and easy rules" (Baxter, 2002, p. 43) that have structured within me the will-to-Research. As a consequence of this production I am reminded of the myriad times in my life that my sense of research was shaped by a positivist-inspired worldview, a "doctrine of value neutrality and objectivity" (p. 243). Again, it's not so much that this paradigmatic viewpoint is wrong, or even problematic, as much as it is about the fact that this worldview operates in direct opposition to the sensibilities I have for children and their drawing. What this photograph produces then is an occasion to acknowledge that the experience of researching children's drawing, no matter what our paradigmatic viewpoints happen to be, is an "unapologetic ethical and political engagement" (Brydon-Miller, 2009, p. 243).

This is precisely what comes to mind when I look at this photograph. It gives visibility to the difficulties that both conditioned and accompanied me while researching Carter's drawing. Yet, it has also enabled me to foster a project of speculation around the choices that I made as a researcher, and to direct further intrigue toward the decisional movements that now appear on its glossy surface—as if they are somehow given, timeless, natural, and unquestionable.

But witnessing these visibilities, and the difficulties and dilemmas that surrounded them, makes me wonder: What were the *certain and easy rules* that guided my research with Carter? To what allegiances and paradigmatic viewpoints were these rules attached? And what does any of this have to do with the will-to-Research children's drawing?

4 Positivism: A Desire to Measure Up

Generally speaking, positivism is bolstered quite literally by a faith in science (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which manifests foremost through "an eagerness to measure up to conventional positivist standards" (Prasad, 2005, p. 4). This eagerness to measure up to a particular standard, though—for example, rigor, reliability, objectivity, validity, and absolutism—especially within the context of research, constitutes in one's self a particular degree of distress regarding the "truthfulness" (Deshpande, 1999, p. 258) and "value" (Merriam, 1991) of data, as well as the set of methods used to encounter and curate them. It is in this sense that Prasad uses the term *positivist anxiety*, a conceptual move to aptly characterize the lingering and fretful states that one lives with when contemplating their research, as well as the matter of whether or not it is accurate or impartial enough.

More generally though, positivism is a philosophical system associated with logical positivism, "a straight forward positive science" (Williams, 2005) that was developed in the 1920s and reached international prominence in the 1940s. Though it has since receded into a more robust and differentiated field of philosophical movements (Popkewitz, 1992, p. 11), it is nonetheless present within a wide range of academic disciplines, including art education—specifically, as it relates to the study of children's drawing, where it upholds a rather robust history. Indeed, there is a considerable amount of positivist-inspired research in the field of art education that has managed to build up around the study of children's drawing an impressive record of measurements, predictions, and tendencies. Part of the rationale for doing so is that researchers, whose epistemological stance is acutely aligned with the positivist paradigm,

> Assume that our measurements and quantifications have predictive capabilities so that we can, with confidence, predict how a child will perform in the real world in the future. The logic here is that if we can predict what will happen, we can control it through interventions that will *cause* a change. (St. Pierre, 2016, p. 26)

The emerging popularity of positivism, as a mode of scientific address for children's drawing, began as early as the latter part of the nineteenth century, as many scholars sought to establish a link between the drawings of young people and the psychology of child development (e.g. Barnes, 1893, 1891; Herrick 1894; Lukens, 1896; Maitland, 1895; Perez, 1988; Shin, 1897; Sully, 1907, 1908). However, most of these early investigations generated findings that were justified through descriptive measures rather than mathematics, which serves as the standard language for logical positivism.

This trend, however, took a noticeable turn during the early part of the twentieth century, as the search for a more objective measuring scale became desirable (e.g. Claparéde, 1907; Kerschensteiner, 1905). This positivist-inspired direction facilitated a movement that continued toward securing a more intelligible—i.e. controlled, predictable—sense of children's drawing (e.g. Goodenough 1926a, b; Harris, 1963) and, as a broader goal, children's artistic development (e.g. Lowenfeld, 1947). It is a trend that persisted throughout much of the twentieth century and that

continues to operate today—with continued popularity (e.g. Arden, Trzaskowski, Garfield, & Pomlin, 2014).[1]

However, the promises made by these "explanatory" and "predictive" methods (Davies, 2003, p. 36), which we have come to understand in the field of art education as "natural" and "neutral", carry with them a "language and rhetoric" (Moss, 2014, p. 60) that besets the complexity of children's drawing by narrating its story as a "single identifiable reality", one that is already given and that can be readily "measured and studied" (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 102). In this way, positivism is continually at work, fashioning within us and as part of our practices the presumption that unity can be found, even when there is none (Popkewitz, 1992). But do we actually recognize this? Do we even know to look for it, to think about it, or even to consider that it might be necessary to inquire as to how and why it continues to be present in our work? Or have we so deeply and readily accepted the assumptions of positivism that it now operates as our *epistemological unconscious*?

Contemplating the legacies of positivism isn't really about working to eradicate the many values and tendencies that we have inherited from the positivist research tradition. That we can even manage to ferret out these elusive qualities is, I think, a fool's errand. We can't, because we are always to some extent bringing the old into the new. Rather, contemplating the legacies of positivism is about "being stuck in the present [while] working against the past as we [also] move into [and toward] a politically charged and challenging future" (Denzin & Giardina, 2011, p. 12). In other words, it has to do with working against the past of children's drawing, while at the same time negotiating its present and possible futures. For me, this process hinges on my own capacities at a given moment to assemble an attitude for Research and to direct it toward the *certain and easy rules* that consistently plead their case, as *timeless, natural, and unquestionable* in relationship to children and their drawing.

An attitude such as this matters because, as Deleuze remarks, in dialgogue with Foucault (1977), "Children are submitted to an infantilization which is alien to them" (p. 210). Positivism, particularly the kind of *practice* and *usefulness* it has been granted, especially in relationship to the study of children's drawing, has effectively contributed to this infantilizing process. The most salient example in the field of art education is the irreproachable distinction granted to developmental psychology as our field's principle epistemological modality, which, as James and James (2008) noted:

> [E]merged in the context of the historical development of positivism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This saw the social sciences attempting to emulate the scientific methods of the natural sciences in classifying, ordering, theorising and predicting the behavior of natural phenomena. It also emerged, however, at a point in social history when children had begun to be identified as a separate social category. (p. 46)

[1] See, for example: Hyperallergic (http://hyperallergic.com/145432/study-suggests-childrens-drawings-reveal-how-smart-they-are/) and WNPR (http://wnpr.org/post/what-kids-drawings-say-about-their-future-thinking-skills).

A fundamental outcome of developmental psychology, upon which the field of art education has been founded, is that children and their drawing are the byproducts of scientific knowledge, relegated to a process of subjection that desires only to sanitize their thinking, doing, and being in art. This was especially true of those instances in which children generated works that resisted the clear and easy labels that were set-aside for them. Such dissonant endeavoring, which we now take as a fruitful reminder of the child's existence as an engaged social and cultural actor, was instead normalized as a marked deficiency. As Hogan (2005) points out:

> A certain level of variation was considered normal, but beyond this, individual differences were interpreted as deviance or alternatively as 'outliers' in data sets and were duly ignored. The basis for this was a desire to produce data that were scientifically rigorous, which in the positivist paradigm is equated with objectivity (p. 31; see also, Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

This is especially true of children's drawing, an endeavor that has continued to take as its primary criteria the biomedical designation of *age* and the aesthetic principles associated with *visual realism,* against which the competencies of children and their drawing are interpreted. In this way, children and their drawing are always being told to acquiesce to a way of life and thinking that is not their own, which is a consequence of the fact that "children… [too often] have to leave the interpretation of their own lives [and practices] to another age group, whose interests are potentially (read: usually) at odds with those of themselves" (Qvortrup, et al., 1994, p. 6). When coupled with the "unified, conscious, and rational subject of humanism" (Lather, 2016, p. 1) and then emboldened by the "naturalization of empirical givenness" (p. 5), children and their drawing are bound to a structure of habits, laws, and lack-logics that only ever yearn to declare, "This is who you are (not)."

It is this very composition of rules, which I learned to embody over time, that was revealed to me in this photograph, and that induced an ethical encounter between my own will-to-Research and the new, burgeoning sense of the child and drawing that I had come to recognize and appreciate. The decision to place the camera on a tri-pod and to then situate the camera in a way that was, by me, perceived to be more objective, was a political choice delineated by my own positivist-inspired sense of Research, and the ready-made decision that I had learned to embody as necessary to the experience of research itself. But it isn't just about making a move to locate these tendencies and then working to flush them out of the system of values that underlies our practice as researchers. It's about surrounding a particular tendency with questions and incorporating into its form a problem that demands more, that puts this very system into frenzy.

The use of the camera and tri-pod to create a sense of *objective distance* is far more than just a research tendency that is motivated by a desire to *measure up* against a set of positivist-inspired standards. This sense of *objective distance* reflects too an orientation to the child, which the field of developmental psychology, as a byproduct of the positivist research paradigm, has largely preserved since the 1940s. As Hogan (2005) suggests:

> If there is a core mission in the field of developmental psychology, it is to understand the processes of change, with age, in the psychological functioning of individuals. Most of the field's efforts to understand these processes have targeted the childhood years and a large proportion of the research on children involves documenting children's age-related competencies, with a view to discovering the factors most likely to predict a passage to competency and positive functioning in adulthood… The principal methodologies are experimental, survey and objective testing and although the methods are varied, they largely favour collection of quantifiable data… Critics have argued that 'the child' of research in developmental psychology, as the common use of the definite article suggests, is an object rather than subject of scientific research, in that researchers expect to come to know its essential qualities through rigorous examination of its properties, under controlled circumstances. (pp. 24–25)

This sense of objective distance, as expressed through the inclusion of the tri-pod and its placement, reflects not only my own desire to control the circumstances of my experience in research with Carter's drawing, but also the deeply imbedded allegiances that I have to an "image of the child" (Malaguzzi, 1994) that works subtly and incrementally to position Carter as an *object of my inquiry*, rather than the critical co-participant that he is. Again, the point is not to solve the problem of the decision but to demand more from it, and through the articulation of such demands unmoor the complex ethical dilemmas that have given rise to it.

Admittedly, for me, the decision to use the camera in this way was in part an attempt to construct a more generous form of visibility for Carter's drawing, based in the understanding that drawing is a performance that unfolds in relation to a diverse and continually shifting set of materials, bodies, and agencies. I'd be lying though if I didn't also admit that my decision to use the camera was informed too by a lingering sensibility for Research and its underlying system of values about the researcher, about the researcher-subject relationship, and about the child and children's drawing, all of which I had come to intimately embody in various ways over the course of my life.

5 Positivist Anxiety: A Site for Ethico-Political Negotiation

Perhaps though, like other philosophical movements that we invoke in our work, positivism and its allegiances can be looked at differently, not as a problem, per se, or as a system in need of a good cleansing, but instead as a "practice" that is "useful" (Foucault, 1977, p. 208), even if it is only being *used* as a site for reflection. To renew the sensibilities that we have for positivism is to put ourselves up against positivist thought where it is happening, to temporarily relinquish our own willful efforts to conceal its "local and regional" (Foucault, 1977, p. 208) movements in our practices. Despite the poststructuralist claims that I make in my work, everything that I do is run through the sentiment and feeling of wanting, desiring, even needing

to clearly determine what is best and right. I believe this to be an essential admission as a researcher, as it has the capacity to move us to question the degree to which we can ever "turn the world [of children's drawing] and its happenings into things that can be turned into data" (Denzin, 2013, p. 353).

My goal then, to be more direct, is to cultivate within myself an inclination to unlearn the most immediate versions of positivism that run through my work and relationship to children's drawing—those little urges that I have to think in one direction instead of another—about the child, about drawing, and about research. This is not to suggest that unlearning is simply a process of learning to undo the "attraction" (Prasad, 2005, p. 4) of positivism and its' promises. In fact, the process of unlearning, as Baldacchino (2013) suggests, is not,

> A simple act of rejecting bad habits to learn new virtues, which, when turned once more into bad habits, would need to be replaced by something else. That would be a developmental process of learning that amounts to a process of choosing, selecting, evaluating, rejecting and learning anew. (p. 427)

To unlearn the allegiances that I have to positivism is to "wear [my] tricks on [my] sleeve" (Baldacchino, 2013, p. 427), to establish an awareness for the impulse that I have to pretend that positivism is not always and already operating openly within my work, and to ready myself to engage the very moments and locations in which my versions of positivism are happening. In this sense, to unlearn my own embodied versions of positivism is, as Britzman (2000) and others (Janzen, 2013; Pitt and Britzman 2003) have written, to engage the *difficult knowledge* of living with positivism, and the anxieties that are produced while using it to research children's drawing. Following Derrida (1997), my goal is not to "jettison" positivism by unlearning the place and value of its rules within my work, but rather to reactivate these rules in such a way that it becomes possible to see what "drops through [their] grid" (p. 77).

Rather than simply attempting to find a way out of positivism and the will-to-Research, I prefer to consider the possibilities that might be afforded, if, instead, I were to fashion a new way back in. After all, we can't escape something that is always being implicated in the problematic that we are addressing (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 479). We can work through it though as a means to "disrupt and transgress" the "boundaries, limits, and grids of… normalcy" (p. 479) that this problematic produces. But we must first learn to recognize the mere fact that a boundary, limit, or grid has begun to form, and then as a next step consider what responsibility we have to work with it, to put ourselves up against the very thought of this boundary—to give it a nudge, so to be nudged. For me, this is really the point. Positivism is not *just* a powerful system underlying my will-to-Research, nor is it something that I can ever really turn away from. The question is whether or not I can ever be ready or willing enough to learn about *it* in context.

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Dancing Rainbows, Naughty Rainbows: Reflections on Teaching, Learning and Researching in the Arts with Young Children

Patricia Tarr

1 Introduction

In this chapter I want to both “dance with rainbows” and “dance on the edge of a rainbow” as metaphors through which to examine some of the challenges in teaching, learning and researching in the arts with young children.

> “Mummy, Daddy, Rainbows! Rainbows!” The kitchen has become an island of dancing lights that are creating bright, moving patterns of colour on the floors, cupboards and ceiling. The family joins in the child's delight, tagging, catching and releasing these ephemeral entities. The rainbows play hide and seek with us as they bounce off walls, mysteriously appearing on the floor, vanishing only to reappear on the ceiling and the kitchen table. Then they are gone.
>
> Each morning we wonder, “Will the rainbows come to play today?” In this northeast corner of England in February, their appearance is unpredictable and whimsical; some mornings they tease us with their fleeting presence only to vanish completely. Other mornings they stay and engage us in their flickering dance or suddenly appear, disappear and reappear repeatedly. They become “naughty rainbows” when they settle on her drawings on the kitchen table and stubbornly refuse to move despite repeated attempts to shoo them away, or brush them off the paper. I wonder about this. Why would rainbows not be permitted on her drawing? Might they do something to it? Is she that possessive of it? Is it their unpredictable nature that makes them “naughty”? I don’t know, but it is a new perspective for me to consider.

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> Are these flitting lights related to fairies? I am struck that these immaterial shapes could be one of the origins of fairies. Or could fairies be another way we might label them? What magic would that conjure up? What possibilities might there be? But this is my question not hers. At 34 months, what does she know of rainbows or fairies? We have had a conversation earlier about rainbows and the colours in a rainbow. Later we look up the words to the song "I can sing a rainbow" when she asks for a song about rainbows at bedtime, but this is a superficial connection to the experience of being in the middle of them as they dance and flicker in the kitchen. She has noticed the prisms hanging in each of the three kitchen windows and knows there is some relationship to these and the rainbows. We don't push this knowledge but wonder together about the joy and magic of this phenomenon. As adults we are also caught up in the magic of their appearance. Nor do we outgrow this sense of wonder and magic. Imagine: lights lower, the music begins and couples move gracefully around the ballroom under a crystal ball that sends thousands of flickering lights cascading across the darkness. In May, the rainbows show up at mealtime, alighting on arms, hands and food as we eat. What do rainbows taste like? Do they want to taste our food?

I recently had an opportunity to visit an early learning centre that prided itself on following the early years framework published by the UK government. The interpretation of this framework meant preparing these 3- and 4- year-old children for school. To be sure that the strands of literacy and numeracy were covered, they included daily lessons in these subjects. While many parents might think this was important, the young woman giving me the tour caught the look that flashed across my face when she mentioned phonics lessons. "I know they seem young, but we do want to prepare them well for school."

I wondered what place "dancing rainbows; naughty rainbows" would have in such a context. Would a child's interest in rainbows be reduced to a science lesson about light rays and prisms so the children could acquire the "correct knowledge" for when they got to the primary school? Would the experience be reduced to reciting the colours in order, colouring in pictures of rainbows, singing the rainbow song, and maybe even a phonics lesson on the letter r?

I use the image of dancing with rainbows for the joy and wonder they provoke when they are not reduced to facts, knowledge, and mechanical representations. I will explore what it might mean for those of us engaged in arts education to dance with children and rainbows. I will use the metaphor "dancing on the edge of the rainbow" to explore the difficulty of questions whose answers are not easily pinned down but always in negotiation. Dancing on the edge of a rainbow can be experienced as an uncomfortable position. Do we dare to take this first step? As educators/researchers, are we grasping at flickering colors that can't be caught or shooed away? Is there a dark side? Where do "naughty rainbows" figure in this discussion?

2 Dancing with Rainbows

To dance with rainbows I think it is important to reposition ourselves to become researchers with children who themselves are deeply engaged in researching the world. Frequently literature in early childhood education talks about young children as explorers of their world. The notion of child as explorer rests solidly in a developmental realm that has been critiqued by reconceptualists and others (e.g. Canella, 1997; Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007; Pacini-Ketchabaw, Nxumalo, Kocher, Eliot & Sanchez, 2015). I would suggest that to label children as explorers limits them to discovering the world that is already there, the world that we have constructed for them in early childhood classrooms based on our image of the child. Often when we consider children as explorers, we have fallen into the role of determining, as in retaining control of, the nature of the exploratory experiences we offer them. These experiences are often based on unquestioned assumptions about children's capabilities and our assumptions about what constitute appropriate early childhood art experiences. In this way our assumptions limit the possible meanings that children may construct and limit them to discovering the world we know. Sylvia Kind (2010) addresses this:

> Engaging in the visual arts as a means of exploring ideas, developing concepts, positing questions –that is using art as a language for inquiry—has been a familiar idea in my own artistic practice, dissertation research, and ongoing investigations. In early childhood contexts, however, this is most often an unfamiliar frame. Within Canadian early childhood contexts, the visual arts often find their meaning within the scope of children's development. Processes such as painting, working with clay, and drawing are seen as activities that contribute to children's social, physical, emotional and creative development.… While movements have been made towards thinking of children's artistic expression as languages (e.g. Pelo, 2007), even centres that view the arts in this way typically have thin understandings of art and artistic practices. There may be an interest and desire to engage with the arts as a visual language, yet without a depth of conceptual understanding too often the arts are viewed as literal representations of self, experience, or knowledge. (p. 116)

How might dancing with rainbows help us consider new possibilities?

3 To Dance with Rainbows: We Need to Consider Aesthetics as the Basis for Education

When my granddaughter was caught up in the colors and movements of the rainbows, she was immersed in an aesthetic experience. Merle Flannery (1977) describes this experience:

> We come into aesthetic feeling when we allow feeling to command our full attention. Aesthetic feeling, because it completely floods consciousness, increases the intensity of feeling. It is feeling with the volume turned up. It does not lead to practical, efficient, or productive ends in and of itself, it is its own end. (p. 22)

Vea Vecchi (2010) concurs: Aesthetics “is an attitude of care and attention for the things we do, a desire for meaning; it is curiosity and wonder; it is the opposite of indifference and carelessness, of conformity, of absence of participation and feeling” (p. 5). It is dancing with rainbows. Vecchi continues, “If aesthetics fosters sensibility and the ability for connecting things far removed from each other, and if learning takes place through new connections between disparate elements, then aesthetics can be considered an important activator for learning” (p. 9).

While aesthetics is at the core of the experience, it is not the sum total of the experience but part of a complexity of interactions, relationships and possibilities.

Consider what possibilities for learning might open up from a dance with rainbows when an adult does not determine the end point.

Kind (2010), and most recently Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kind and Kocher (2016), provide rich examples of “encounters” with materials that moves away from thinking about art as happening in particular kinds of ways in particular places. Kind (2010) writes:

> Thus entering into art as an encounter situates art as an interactive event, an engagement with the world. This means conceptualizing art and children’s artistic engagements and productions, not primarily as self-expressive, individual, interior, or private experiences, even though they may exhibit and invite these qualities, but as a complex, conceptual, inventive, shared, participatory and investigative encounter. (p. 126)

Vecchi (2010) suggests that:

> There is nothing in the education training of most teachers to prepare them to be sensitive to aesthetics or consider aesthetics as powerful element for understanding and connecting with reality…that is why teachers are often seduced by techniques and tend to propose them with children using only simplified knowledge of their expressive potential rather than informing sensitive dialogues with reality. (p. 36)

In their book, *Encounters with Materials,* “Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kind and Kocher, (2016) describe “encounters “with clay, paper, paint, charcoal, and blocks, stating, “Our focus became paying careful attention to materials in interaction. Through that process, we discovered that materials have a life of their own in classrooms and that these lives matter immensely for how we think and act in classrooms” (p. 5). They found that, “thinking with materials transforms early childhood education provoking educators to notice how materials and young children live entangled lives in classrooms, how they change each other through their mutual encounters” (p. 2). They ask, “What if materials shape us as much as we shape them?” (p. 4).

Dancing with rainbows in the kitchen has become part of my granddaughter’s and my history together. The experience has influenced the drawing and painting we do together and has left me open to listening for new possibilities. However, I remind myself to stay in a dialogic relationship rather than to impose a topic on our time together. This is not always easy, as Davies (2014) describes in her painting experiences with a young friend, Clementine. Davies recounts such moments where Clementine challenges her expectations by dipping her brush into all the colors of

the paints, and dips a pencil into the paint to make dots. Davies concludes her description of these mutual art-making experiences:

> Being open to that sense of surprise and joy in the affective flow of our art-making is what I most gained from our work together. I have learned through this work together to listen differently, to be open with all my senses to what is unexpected and new and to be affected by it. (p. 71)

Dancing with rainbows, as Davies has described it, is to be open in the experience. It represents that state when we are in a mutual dialogic relationship with children in their research of the world. We dance with them when the colors envelop us and together we are caught up in their magic and in our wonder – when it is neither child nor adult taking charge but a mutual exchange of ideas, what Reggio educators call "tossing the ball" (Filippini 1990; as cited in Edwards, 2012, p. 151) or what Brent Wilson has called "other-than": other-than children's productions and other-than adult's interests (p. 11). It is a space where "each has an opportunity to contribute, to propose changes in direction, to innovate, and to exercise power and control" (Wilson, 2007, p. 11). Additionally, to dance with rainbows is to be engaged in a state that dissolves or blurs subject or curriculum boundaries where the focus is no longer art or science or language arts.

To dance with a child dancing with rainbows requires attentive listening. Writings by Dahlberg et al. (2007), Lenz Taguchi (2010), Olsson (2009), Pacini-Ketchabaw, Nxumalo, Kocher, Elliot and Sanchez (2015), Rinaldi (2006), Tarr (2011), and Tarr and Kind (2016) have challenged us to listen and to consider what it means to listen to children, to listen with all of our senses, to hear beneath the surface to understand children's thinking, questions, and desires. This ethical listening is, I believe, the most challenging task that we face as teacher/researchers.

4 Pedagogical Documentation as an Ethical Way of Listening

Pedagogical documentation is the collection of photos, videos, note and artefacts with the intention of understanding children's thinking. It is an essential part of researching with children. In my experience working with teachers beginning to document, pedagogical documentation most often becomes the retelling of an event that has a beginning, middle and end. It is considered an end rather than a process and form of research. In *Journeys: Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Practices through Pedagogical Narration,* Pacini-Ketchabaw et al. (2015) provide examples of collective re-examinations of documentation/pedagogical narratives through multiple and critical lenses, such as gender, race, and feminist perspectives which in turn challenge the educators/researchers to reconsider and deepen their understanding of how children are constructing and enacting their understanding of their world. Their examples illustrate the shifting fluidity and complexity of each situation.

Documentation is difficult work and requires educators to share their documentation, their questions, and to be open to differing points of view in order to shift practices beyond commonly accepted ones rooted in developmental theory.

Olsson (2009) asks the teacher/researcher "to focus on that which is coming about" (p. 119):

> Look for and construction the production of sense through nonsense. Do not look for solutions; look for and engage in the construction of problems and how this relates to the sense under production. Do not look for knowledge, look at learning processes, that is, look for and construct how the involved bodies join a problematic field. Do not look for methods, look for and construct how the entire culture surrounding the entering of a problematic field proceeds; take into account thoughts, speech, actions but also material and environments. (p. 119)

Listening to understand children's thinking and desires places us on the edge of the rainbow.

5 Dancing on the Edge of the Rainbow

At a conference in London in honour of the publication about Loris Malaguzzi and the schools of Reggio Emilia, Peter Moss (2016) presented the following quote:

> Malaguzzi contested "a prophetic pedagogy" that "knows everything beforehand, knows everything that will happen, does not have one uncertainty, is absolutely imperturbable. It contemplates everything and prophesies everything to that point that is capable of giving you recipes for little bits of actions, minute by minute, hour by hour, objective by objective, five minutes by five minutes. This is something so coarse, so cowardly, so humiliating of teachers' ingenuity, a complete humiliation for children's ingenuity and potential. (see also Cagliari, Castagnetti, Guidici, Rinaldi, Vecchi & Moss, 2016, pp. 421–422)

To dance on the edge of the rainbow is to dance counter to this pedagogy. We dance, I think, to follow this metaphor, on the edge of the rainbow when we are in that state of trying to keep our balance when we are working in this unknown territory of truly listening and provisionally interpreting the documentation we have collected. It requires us to dance on the edge of the rainbow when we don't have prescriptive lesson plans to follow. It is truly scary to look down or look ahead when we don't know exactly where we are going. We might fall, or fail, or we worry that maybe the children won't learn. We are in that state of negotiation and balance when we are fully listening and cease to be concerned with looking at the familiar and known, but are fully present in the experience. This requires trust in children and trust in ourselves. It requires risk and comfort with uncertainty. In this way we can dance into the unknown with children as dance partners – not as followers but as co-creators of the dance.

6 Naughty Rainbows

I ponder about the role "naughty rainbows" play in this dance. When my granddaughter called the rainbows "naughty" she caused me to pause and to consider a new perspective and new possibility. Likewise, when young children told Sylvia Kind that her camera could look but adults couldn't, Kind reflected that the camera has been invited to participate as its own identity thus opening up a new perspective (Tarr & Kind, 2016, pp. 257–258).

Loris Malaguzzi identifies the importance of the "naughty rainbow" in the work of the educators in Reggio Emilia and for educators and researchers:

> precisely from this fact that every other week, every other fortnight, every month, something unexpected, something that surprised us or made us marvel, something that disappointed us, something that humiliated us, would burst out in a child or in the children. But this was what gave us our sense of an unfinished world, a world unknown, a world we ought to know better. (Cagliari et al., 2016, p. 392)

Our challenge, as teachers/researchers in the arts with young children is to embrace these "naughty rainbows" while we fully experience the dance with the rainbow, while balancing on its edge.

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