DOING ARTS THINKING: ARTS PRACTICE, RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Artist-Teachers in Context

International Dialogues

Raphael Vella

SensePublishers

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DOING ARTS THINKING: ARTS PRACTICE, RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

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In the arts, the concept of theoria goes back to the original notion of thinking as a form of reflection/contemplation that remains integral to practice as both a practiced thought (*phronesis*) and as critical practice (*praxis*). This book series is aimed at capturing and reasserting the wider possibilities that we give ourselves by doing the arts. It explores how the arts and education can only converge through paradox, where what we seek by doing arts thinking remains an open work and in continuous inauguration.

Thus *Doing Arts Thinking* is an alternative view of arts education. Rooted in arts practice and arts research, it purposely retains a degree of ambiguity. It is not limited to "thinking about the arts", or engaging with art theory as a separate entity from practice. Rather, this book series intends to show that to mistake arts thinking for abstract theory would be as false as dismissing arts practice for mere making; which would result in a narrow view of both arts practice and arts research, especially when a third element – that of arts education – is involved.

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Note: In all the interviews in this book, Raphael Vella's questions or statements are represented by bold typeface while sections in regular typeface represent the interviewee's answers.

LIST OF FIGURES

RAPHAEL VELLA

INTRODUCTION

Being What You Teach

> By addressing everyone as if each person were a lover of art, indeed, an artist, we liberate desire and enthusiasm. If only because a school populated by impassioned people is a more vibrant school, and nothing guarantees the maintenance of passion more than the annual arrival of young men and women consumed by the passion to make art, I want to plead here for the maintenance of art schools conceived as crucibles in which technical *apprenticeship*, theoretical *instruction*, and the *formation* of judgment are brought together to create a unique question of address…We should ask ourselves why Beuys had up to six hundred students lapping up his words at the Düsseldorf Academy… Perhaps the art school of the future will not necessarily be an institution made of bricks and run by an appointed team of professionals, but nothing more or less than a mode of transmission of art addressed to everyone as if they were all artists.
>
> (de Duve, 2009, p. 24, original emphasis)

ADDRESSING OTHERS AS ARTISTS

Schools don't liberate desire and enthusiasm automatically. We can probably all remember mind-numbing moments in our schooldays that dragged by at a snail's pace, our imagination stifled by repetition and sheer boredom. It is not unfair to think that at least some of these moments would have been due to a teacher's lack of passion or formulaic teaching modes. In the teaching career, enthusiasm is not a given, but whenever it is present, that career has the potential—as philosopher Maxine Greene once wrote of "the kinds of education required in a technological society"—"to remind people of what it means to be alive among others, to achieve freedom in dialogue with others" (Greene, 1988, p. xii). How, indeed, can educators and learners achieve this freedom? Art theorist Thierry de Duve asks us to imagine a school not as a building but as a "mode of transmission of art" which addresses everyone as an artist rather than as a person who lacks the requisite cultural baggage—a school, that is, where the teacher's form of address takes the potential of each student's desire and enthusiasm for granted. But, in imagining this scenario, de Duve assumes that the teacher is himself or herself an artist too. He is, after all, writing about art schools rather than the compulsory educational system, even

though the metaphor of the artist-learner can be inspirational in the latter context as well, as evidenced, for instance, by the student-run Room 13 which began in a Scottish primary school in 1994 (Adams, 2005). It is perhaps relevant that de Duve refers to Joseph Beuys—arguably the best-known artist-teacher of the second half of the twentieth century—as an excellent example of an artist who could address all those who cared to listen as artists. Having an artist-teacher who assumes that he or she is preaching to the 'converted', therefore, would seem to be the most effective way of sustaining the student's or public's passion for art. The artist-teacher and the artist-learner or artist-public would co-exist within a system that is much bigger than the school's physical confines, populating a dynamic social sphere in which art's mediation happens in a way that does not presuppose the public's ignorance.

However, this desire for a mode of transmission that avoids excessive didacticism is also invoked at times in order to maintain a particular hierarchy of the arts and education. I am referring to the hierarchy that pits the artist against the teacher, the adventurer against the pedagogue, the professional against the mere enthusiast. According to this order of things, pedagogy (gallery education, for instance) represents a simplifying, mediating tool between art and its public, relegating the function of education to an unwelcome procedure that dumbs down artistic experiences and spoon-feeds, even patronises, the audience. In a contemporary art world that has become increasingly associated in recent years with an "educational turn" (O'Neill & Wilson, 2010; Allen, 2011), debates have frequently revolved around the challenge of developing educational strategies that work hand-in-hand with curatorial and artistic goals, yet such debates also tend to echo frictions and power imbalances that characterise a field in which educators working in arts institutions such as galleries are generally seen as mere service-providers whose work is subordinate to the more professional work of curators and artists (Kaitavuori, 2013, pp. xiii–xiv). The very existence of such an imbalance would also seem to imply that, despite the recent proliferation of discourse revolving around the blending of pedagogical processes and art-making (for example, Helguera, 2011), we are still faced by a general perception that interprets teaching and art-making as mutually exclusive careers with different social statuses. In accordance with this perception, teaching and art-making would therefore appear to belong to two partially overlapping yet separate realms or 'communities of practice', defined as groups of people which are mutually engaged in joint enterprises and shared repertoires (Wenger, 1998).

While this friction may derive from a lack of knowledge about the work and expertise of educators (Allen, 2013, p. 65), it is nevertheless clear that the question of status has substantial social and personal implications, as some of the artist-teachers' narratives collected in this publication confirm. However, some of the interviews gathered here also show that the borders of such institutional realms can be transgressed and even merged into each other, often from within the institutional frameworks of art practice and/or education. Contemporary artists who appear to have extended Beuys' model of pedagogy-as-art (such as Tania Bruguera and Pablo Helguera), artists who have enacted educational environments in their installations

(Vella, 2015) and teachers who persist in being artistic practitioners show that forming part of one community of practice does not invalidate membership of other 'communities'. Indeed, we need to remember that the very notion of 'community' is in flux and cannot circumscribe our incomplete understanding of artist-teachers' identities. Referring to the incompleteness of any such 'communities', Dennis Atkinson expresses these infinite reconfigurations of the artist-teacher's identity when he writes that "art always incompletes art, learning always incompletes learning, the subject always incompletes the subject and communities always incomplete communities" (Atkinson, 2011, p. 130).

This incompleteness or refusal to impose limits on artist-teachers and their professional identities is also the motivation behind this book's emphasis on different cultural, political and institutional *contexts*. Despite the fact that the experiences of artist-teachers based in international contexts sometimes overlap, it is also obvious that artists and educators in different geographical scenarios are confronted by substantially diverse political realities, challenges, norms, ambitions and conditions of work. Developing more international perspectives on the subject contributes to a stronger awareness of culturally specific conditions and helps us to gain more nuanced understandings of preconceived ideas about art teachers, such as the idea that those who opt for a teaching career are less artistically able than full-time artists (see Rush, 1995). At the same time, many of this book's individual interviewees' hybrid experiences and encounters with different educational situations—often in countries or continents that are markedly different from their country of origin—help us circumvent the essentialism of identities regulated solely by national, territorial or ethnic qualities. The complexity of each interviewee's personal history and negotiated sense of 'being' implores us to prefer a perpetual reassessment of artist-teachers' experiences and practices over hasty resolutions of what is often perceived as a struggle or identity crisis.

ARTISTS-TEACHERS: THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

The need for more international or comparative approaches to the study of artist-teachers is corroborated by the fact that existing literature tends to focus on realities in specific areas, particularly the US and parts of Europe that are perceived as 'centres' of contemporary art. Some literature has studied specific national frameworks, such as Galloway et al. (2006), which evaluated the Artist Teacher Scheme in the UK. Other publications are more international in scope. The individuals included in another collection of interviews with artist-teachers (Mollin & Reardon, 2009), for instance, are mainly well-known, European artists teaching in academies in the UK and Germany: artists like John Armleder, Liam Gillick, Erwin Wurm, Walter Dahn and Tobias Rehberger. In his study of artist-teachers throughout Western history, Daichendt (2010) also references mainly British, North American and German artist-teachers and institutions, such as Arthur Wesley Dow, Victor Pasmore, Richard Hamilton and the Bauhaus. It is relevant that in Daichendt's list of five perspectives

that characterise literature on artist-teachers (p. 10)—historical accounts, studies of artist-teachers' education and dual identities, partnerships between artists and teachers, studies of individual teachers and nontraditional artist-teachers (based in museum settings, for instance)—he does not include comparative studies on artist-teachers.

To say that an understanding of the different cultural and socio-political contexts in which art teachers are situated is important is not to say that their practices merely reproduce traditional structures and local habits. Rather, it means that their artistic goals and educational projects are expressed within localised contexts that are increasingly shifting and transnational in nature rather than territorial. It also means that the myth of a universal understanding of contemporaneity resulting from globalisation must be replaced by a space within which singularities, hybrid structures and forms of sociability enmeshed in global media as well as different economic conditions can be rendered intelligible. The individual narratives collected here are not representative of a global collectivity (artist-teachers in general), nor do they represent precise national patterns, but they do testify to the workings of different temporalities, histories, policies, personal challenges and even privileges within the lives and experiences of international artists who teach. The frequent references to different contexts in the interviews remind us that an artist-teacher's self-image exists within and is possibly coloured by specific social realities, labels and practices.

These workings are especially evident in one of the themes listed by Daichendt: education and the dual (or multiple) identities of artist-teachers. The relationship between artist-teachers, artists in schools and even artists' gender and identity theories has been explored elsewhere (Zwirn, 2006; Hall et al., 2007; Thornton, 2013). Some art teachers may perceive themselves as having mainly an educator's identity, while others may think of themselves more as artists or as a combination of the two. Identities may also shift throughout one's teaching career and may depend more on self-legitimation than any clear-cut criteria that define the role of artist-teachers (Thornton, 2011, p. 35). Naturally, self-legitimation alone cannot guarantee acceptance by other stakeholders in the fields of art and education, such as full-time artists, curators, gallerists, academics, teachers of other subjects, and administrative staff in schools. To some extent, arts-based research has contributed positively to the field by developing new theorisations of practice and innovative formats for research and by making headway in doctoral studies and literature in different cultural contexts (Nelson, 2013), yet this in itself has hardly been sufficient to wipe out prejudice and tensions.

In a significant way, the roots of existing identity issues are often traceable to the education of future art teachers, and education is by its nature enmeshed in social structures, discourses and conventions that affect motivations and ideas about the status of artists and teachers. Perceptions about the art teacher's career are affected by factors like a weak (or strong) grounding in the literature of art education attained during initial teacher education programmes, the influence of

mentors and the support of administrative staff in schools (Hatfield et al., 2006). The course structures of preservice art education programmes and job requirements for art teachers vary from country to country. In some contexts, as Daichendt points out (p. 4), degrees in art education may include comparatively little studio practice or do not expect prospective art teachers to have a first degree in fine art, as is the case in the Netherlands (Hoekstra, 2015, p. 354). In other countries (the UK, for instance), art teachers would have generally received a first degree in studio art before obtaining a further postgraduate certificate in education or even an Artist-Teacher MA, which has been shown to have a positive impact on students' artistic and pedagogical practices (Page et al., 2011). Having entered the formal educational system, beginning teachers' identity conflicts may be aggravated by heavy teaching workloads and limited time for creative work, which can also lead to burnout (Mack, 2012). Occasionally, artist-teachers' placement in ambiguous "boundary positions" that are not shared or understood by colleagues in schools or academic contexts and the contrast between their ideals and formal roles, expectations or the subject's low status lead to feelings of marginalisation and even departures from the educational system (Cohen-Evron, 2002; Scheib, 2006).

While the existence of such identity conflicts may raise some doubts about the viability of de Duve's dream of a generalised mode of transmission between artists who support or empathise with each other, they also testify to the need for a more thorough understanding of the benefits that can be reaped from the overlaps between art and education. A better understanding of artist-teachers' negotiated identities can lead to revisions in initial art teacher education programmes, making students more aware of culturally specific and international challenges they could face after graduating. Students in arts education could explore these inner dialogues more self-consciously and in the company of their peers (see Carter, 2014, for instance). Professional development opportunities for art teachers in schools could have a wider than usual remit that integrates the artist's needs with those of the teacher (Scheib, 2006). A more authentic engagement with artistic practice could also lead to a refinement or redefinition of education itself, which is often bound by curricular and policy frameworks that do not encourage the open-ended kinds of learning we associate with contemporary artistic practices and the work habits of creative practitioners. There is much to learn from the stories of those who refuse to compromise art's alliance with change and the unknown for the sake of prescribed outcomes. Hence the need for interviews such as those in this publication.

THE INTERVIEWS

The twenty-one individuals included in this book were interviewed over a period of several months in 2015. The interviews occurred in a number of iterations, commencing with a series of individual and context-specific questions (rather than standardised questions) that were then expanded in subsequent rounds. The interviewees deliberately represent a wide range of artist-teachers based in different

countries in Europe, Asia, North, South and Central America, Australia and the Middle East. Thornton describes contemporary artist-teachers as "professional artists who teach students in art schools, or an art teacher in general education who also makes art" (2013, p. 20). The selection here is somewhat wider and includes teachers of varying ages based in secondary schools, post-secondary colleges, schools of fine art, departments of art education in universities, and even artists who have worked on educational projects. Following an idea elaborated by Daichendt, who interprets the artist-teacher's role as "a philosophy for creating and thinking" and states that the role "has less to do with the professional activities of an artist and more to do with an active thinking process applied to educational situations" (p. 65), the questions and answers in the interviews emphasise artistic thinking processes and their potential at different educational levels. The interviews also discuss the ways different professional experiences and paradigms co-exist and contribute to each other, and try to highlight the advantages (rather than merely the 'problems') of occupying an in-between or fused space.

As stated earlier, this balancing act does not simply express the various artistic and educational commitments that artist-teachers may have but also refers to transnational influences and educational experiences that characterise the majority of individuals interviewed. As the history and dissemination of contemporary art show us, borders are becoming increasingly porous and artists tend to think of themselves as forming part of an international network that shares information channels and artistic or curatorial modes of presentation and communication. Some interviewees in this book received at least part of their artistic education outside their country of origin, while others have taught for sustained periods of time in international contexts. Some travel to produce or show their creative work in different countries while others speak of international mentors who have inspired their own visions and teaching methods. These narratives of physical and intellectual migrancy bear witness to a desire to do away with romanticised or polarised understandings of place that clearly separate one meaning-making system from others. At the same time, social realities and learners encountered in international contexts present a broad range of situations and challenges that show us that the global dynamics of art and art education are often experienced differently, which may lead to redefinitions of the prospects and roles of artist-teachers in different countries. A handful of interviewees, for instance, speak of political transitions that have characterised the places they inhabit and discuss how such transitions have affected their students' ambitions and themselves as artist-teachers. One interviewee discusses the way his minority status during his childhood affected his own education. Another speaks of the lack of opportunities on the Mediterranean island he was born in and the subsequent need to travel abroad to study. Some artist-teachers in higher education teach their students to be sceptical of a market-driven art world, while others who are based in contexts where innovative forms of art face serious challenges feel that their educational role makes them somewhat responsible for nurturing contemporary trends in their country. While artist-teachers' experiences

of hybridity, mobility and transition result in many converging ideas, they also testify to different cross-cultural fertilisations and institutional milieus that are characterised by culturally specific circumstances.

One of the converging ideas that emerges from several interviews is the marginalisation of art educators' work in schools, universities and in the art world. Several artist-teachers discuss the relatively low status of art in school curricula, a fear of change, or an emphasis on conformity and standardisation (for example, when instrumental notions of economic productivity and an obsession with grades and qualifications overtake more aesthetic or 'human' aspects of art-making). Unsurprisingly, perhaps, the problematic status of the subject transcends curricular hierarchies and is also associated with the choice of an artistic career as well as, in some cases, the status of art education as a discipline in academia. In some academic and cultural contexts, this marginalisation of art education seems to perpetuate itself in the art educator's work elsewhere, given that some artist-teachers feel stigmatised in a cultural sector that may perceive their creative work as being amateurish or even fake. On the other hand, some artist-teachers consciously resist the seductions of the art world and believe that the real-life situations they find or even create in the educational sector offer more genuine possibilities for change.

The interviewees' experiences of the 'dual identity' of the artist-teacher are varied. A handful have experienced some success as full-time artists represented by galleries or funded by official cultural entities. Others left behind their artistic career for several years before returning to it, or have had to organise their time systematically to sustain both their artistic and teaching practices. A few have also found time for a third activity in their careers, like art therapy. The very idea of a dual identity is problematised by several artist-teachers, who interpret art as a fundamentally holistic approach to living that is not only about the artist's relationship with techniques or materials, but also about one's relations with others in the street, the classroom, and so on (a "total art experience", in the words of one artist-teacher based in Beirut). Education, according to this view, is one aspect of life amongst others. One artist-teacher prefers to think of identity as being made of "a lot of pieces" rather than two parts, and in saying this, she is clearly voicing the views of several others. Besides, some see the actual experience of art-making as an essential component in an art teacher's life, helping that person to build an intuitive understanding of artistic processes, attitudes and problem-solving possibilities that feed directly into their pedagogies.

Several interviewees, in fact, speak of the rich possibilities involved in linking artistic thinking processes, attitudes and instrumental knowledge (teaching artistic techniques, for instance) with educational environments. One artist-teacher creates performances that, in her words, "deterritorialise the functions of teacher and student". Another has initiated long-term projects with adults in public spaces, while others feel intellectually supported by the development and spread of arts-based methodologies in research and have engaged in methodologies like a/r/tography. Having developed a creative output or having an artistic attitude toward

teaching are understood as assets. In some contexts, such as Germany, this attitude has expanded into a full-blown philosophy of art education, expressed by the term "artistic art education" (*künstlerische Kunstpädagogik*). In other contexts described by interviewed artist-teachers, the advantages of combining artistic work with teaching include the possibility of developing collaborative work or performances with learners, learning from each other's creative work, teaching about the relevance of 'messy' or unpredictable work that does not follow strict rules, deconstructing arbitrary divisions between creative and non-creative areas of education, and inspiring learners with projects or workshops dealing with artistic or political issues that one would have already researched in one's own practice.

The interviewees' discussion of the political and social realities they inhabit also expresses the diverse cultural scenarios in which they work as artists and educators and how these realities affect perceptions about the role of art educators in society. These realities affect artist-teachers at different stages of their career. A Singaporean art teacher, for instance, speaks of the difficulties he faced in the US, where he was expected to question his professors—an expectation that he feels his earlier Confucian upbringing and education had not prepared him for. This contrasts with the statements of a US-based artist-teacher, who describes social engagement and the questioning of authority as a "family tradition" back in her childhood and youth. Learners' ambitions are indebted to local, successful ventures or predicaments: young, aspiring artists in Mexico dream of emulating their compatriot Gabriel Orozco while their counterparts in Cairo dream of leaving the country, according to an Egyptian artist-teacher interviewed here. In some contexts, artist-teachers are accused of using teaching methods that are 'Westernised'; in others, they have faced persecution for opposing a regime. Some of the more 'difficult' contexts provide very inspiring stories about the significance of creative teaching. In one narrative, for example, an artist-teacher describes her approach to teaching art in Beirut and explains, amongst other things, why she believes that discussing Cézanne's apples with her students at the height of the conflict in Lebanon was relevant, despite the tragedies that her students and herself were experiencing so closely. In her words, the most distressing experiences helped her understand that those painted apples were "a stabilising force amidst the social and political upheavals".

Possibly, what these interviews transmit is not so much a desire to find a resolution but the need to engage with and even embrace the tension that may reside within the co-existence of art and education. This tension permeates the themes, process-based work, unpredictable outcomes and collaborative pedagogies of many artist-teachers. To some extent, art education *is* this tension. Cuban artist Tania Bruguera has stated: "I don't want an art that points at a thing. I want an art that *is* the thing" (quoted in Thompson, 2012, p. 21, original emphasis). Perhaps this is the most significant asset of a pedagogy that considers art to be more like a way of being in the world than a school subject. The most effective pedagogy is that which *is* already what it sets out to teach.

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1. THE COMPATIBILITY OF TEACHING AND MAKING ART

You were born in Mexico City but studied art in Rome, Stuttgart and Berlin. What attracted you to Europe, and in what ways were the experiences and the education you received there different or similar to what you had gained in your home country?

It is not strange for a Latin American middle class family's child to be sent to foreign schools. I studied at the German school Alexander von Humboldt in Mexico City by chance, just because it was close to where we lived. The French or Japanese lyceum would have been almost the same. So when I thought of studying art later on, I went to Germany, because I had already spent two years in a boarding school in Bavaria and spoke German fluently. In Rome, too, I attended the German school, where I chose art as a major. I mention this to explain that my approach to art and thinking is very much influenced by German culture. I never studied art in Mexico. Moved by this inherited idea that art education would definitely be 'better' in Germany, I was very surprised when I started studying at the beginning of the 1980s, to learn that the art academy, following a non-academic trend and maybe also a sense of inertia, didn't have any scheduled teaching at all. There were art history classes, teachers with more or less specific backgrounds, and as a student, I was able to do whatever I wanted. No grades, no classes, no degree.

As a whole, I can say that coming back to Mexico in the mid-1980s and meeting artists my age, I was surprised to see that they only worked if they had a show coming up. In Germany I learnt that art is a way of being in life and is also a way of 'working' life. Art praxis and thinking as the centre of life, as a central value to which everything else (money, time, affects and body) is related. To work on the relation between art and life is anchored in German Romanticism…not to speak about the relevance of work.

In Germany I had access to books and to art exhibitions (we are talking about a pre-internet world), and the presence of a close art scene was also very formative. All of these things existed in Mexico City back then, but in a very exclusive way.

As a whole I can say I learned to be more committed and to take art very seriously. I worked very hard for many years.

What do you mean by "the relevance of work"?

I mean 'work' as a central value in German culture. In Mexico we have a different relation to work. Outside the big cities (and sometimes even there), family, religion and celebration are as important as work. Compared to Germany, work is not seen as the main activity for one's personal fulfilment.

Figure 1. Mónica Castillo, Self-portrait as another person, *1997*, *oil on canvas, 90 × 80 cm*

So you see yourself as a Mexican woman imbued with a German way of thinking. Perhaps your education in the visual arts could be seen as a metaphor for your own works of art, which have often dealt with the fragmentation of the self. It is relevant that the title of one of your exhibitions which travelled around South America was *Yo es un Otro* (I is an Other). Judging from your own experiences and work, would you say that art helps us to understand ourselves more or is it only a way of coming to terms with the self's duplicity?

Louise Bourgeois talks about the fatal relation between art and life: the more you dig into yourself (history, image, body), the more you free yourself from a burden and tie yourself to it at the same time. I don't think I "came to terms" with myself through painting self-portraits. I stopped making them because it became easy and also because they were successful and people started to think about me simply as my self-portraits. In actual fact, I had started this investigation because I thought I could establish a distance between the object being represented and myself.

I don't think we are two (a duplicity), I think everybody is a lot of pieces and maybe the happiness of making something with forms and materials, that echoes in your body and affect, is a way of feeling (whole?!), or finding, at least temporarily, something outside where you 'belong'. In a way, making things—and since a number of years, collaborative making too—is a fulfilling way of being in a specific context. Making something that 'fits' in a context or being able to react to something and to make a gesture that is acknowledged as 'fitting', is definitely a high.

Around the year 2000, when I stopped doing self-portraits, I kept researching painting and trying to imagine, in my terms, what the origin of representation could be: touch, the surface, the material and its relation to the living object. At that point, I received an invitation to create a school in the Mexican Caribbean and I practically stopped making art. My whole energy went first and foremost into creating the curriculum, then moving to Yucatán, where we started putting the school together with next to nothing: ten plastic chairs and tables, a monitor, a VHS cassette player and my personal laptop. It was an incredibly challenging situation. Life practically swept away all my concentration for making art. Teaching in such a precarious environment, with an institution that was not structured at all—students were very sceptical and kept asking if it really was going to be a serious thing…—gave us the possibility of being really crazy in class. It was lots of fun, and to be honest, also scary at times, because limits were not very clear. There was always something going on. After investing four years in this project, I had become a bureaucrat. I missed making art very much, but at the same time I realised I could not go back to where I was before. It had already been done and the experience in Yucatán had moved me deeply in ways I'm not able to verbalise yet. It has to do with Mexico being a violently stratified society, which, through my privileged upbringing and the many years abroad, I hadn't really been in touch with. Paradoxically enough, the only thing that occurred to me was going back to school myself…but in Germany

again! I spent three years in Berlin studying and trying to answer questions about the relations established between people, when creation is at stake.

Figure 2. Mónica Castillo, Model for a Self-portrait, *1997*, *textile, 160 × 40 × 15 cm*

There I got to know this interesting exercise called ‘common space-individual space’ developed by Gregorz Kowalski, a professor at the Academy in Warsaw. This non-verbal ‘game’ can be played in relation to all kinds of topics and formal issues. It’s a ‘pre-artistic’ way of signifying, finding things out about oneself, one’s relation to others and the meaning constructed in specific contexts.

Since I came back to Mexico, I have been working with art as a vehicle to move socially and explore contexts to which I did not have access. This happens mainly through participation projects that are related to education. Lately I have been collaborating on a project that is taking place in a suburb of the Mexican city Oaxaca. It’s a group of self-organised neighbours and three artists, and we are making collaborations for and with the people in the neighbourhood. These are collaborations on creation, workshops, programming cinema and so on, actually, very humble gestures…I also moved there and we have a beautiful house, where we have artists-in-residence, who we, as a collective, invite to work in the neighbourhood. Recently, I have been drawing diagrams which envision and explain the structure of the project and developing a cooking book with other women, based on food we can get in the local market. On an educational level, this project offers all participants situations during which they constantly learn from each other. There is one elementary teacher, a student, a convenience store’s cashier, an electrician, a woman who makes and sells embroidery in the market, a high school student, an urbanist and an artist, a former student of mine, who grew up there.

Let’s talk a bit more about your shift to education. Since 1986, your creative work has been shown in scores of solo and collective exhibitions. What led you to decide that you wanted to be a teacher?

For me teaching is a privilege, a field of research, a challenge, but also lots of fun. I agree with Joseph Beuys, who said that teaching was his most important work of art. I enjoy making art a lot, but I have never enjoyed the art world: shows, curators, galleries, PR, art as commodity, and so on. To some extent, to me teaching is a way of coming to terms ideologically with art-making. It’s a modest service to an institution, and here in Mexico, this is a neglected institution. It’s a way of creating collaboratively, without having this dark side of the commercial art-world or being attached to the big spheres of money and power. But I think it’s also important not to interpret it naively: the institution of education is a protected space where, structurally, teachers delegate the answers to tough questions to students. I can be a very critical thinker as a teacher, but the student is expected to react and make something out of that.

Nevertheless, to me developing projects with students is as exciting as creation, since I have to imagine who is this person who knows lots of things but is not able to articulate them. What does s/he want? Is it creation, affect, biography? What is at stake? How far can we go in problematising together, without me making a personal statement through the student? I think education just works out when both

persons, the student and myself, meet in an exciting place. When both sides discover a mystery together. If this doesn't happen, it's terribly boring for both sides. The student thinks that I'm a bad teacher and a frustrated artist and I think that the student does not have much to offer, artistically speaking.

Do any of your students become teachers of art rather than artists? How do you feel about this?

It's interesting…actually I don't have many students who have become full-time teachers, at least the ones with whom I'm still in touch. Many have taught temporarily. When it has happened I enjoy talking with them very much about how they feel being 'on the other side'. I'm also curious to know what and how they do in class.

Strangely, I'm very proud of the ones who have taken risks by finding different ways of being an artist: one is working on experimental art therapy, another is working at an underwater sculpture museum, one moved to a little beach town to surf and paint, one is travelling, drawing a journal about encounters with women's organisations. Another one, a well-off girl, married a very poor guy and they are creating a cultural centre together. I feel very sad when they think the commercial art world is the only option and they work hard to get attention, without being really convinced of the way it works. In the last few years, I have been working a lot with them, discussing different fields of possible action within art—the commercial field being just one among many others—imagining ways of expanding the field of creation together in terms of where and how to do that, imagining life situations together, where maybe risk is a way of achieving a little sense of freedom… To still feel inspired and challenged by my ex-students is a great thing. To feel surprised seeing that they imagined something I couldn't even get close to. But strangely enough, only a few of them teach and as far as I can remember, not one of them has chosen an institutional academic career. To see them turning into bored teachers would definitely disappoint me. But it seems that there is something strange going on that I had not realised until now: me, being passionate about teaching and not having any ex-students who feel the same way about it…

Given that you are so passionate about teaching, have you ever thought about the limits of art education? Is there anything an art teacher *cannot* teach?

It's a tricky question. There are too many things involved to define a limit: institution, specificity (history, gender, class) and moments of the different actors (teacher and student). How does a student integrate and understand knowledge? Teaching is, as we say in Spanish, "like shooting into the sky". It has happened to me that former students hug me thankfully many years later for all the things "they've learned from me". Sometimes, I do recognise some positions and language and I get the feeling that I did have an influence, but sometimes I´m terrified of what they've become

and ask myself whether I'm responsible for what they are. Nowadays I try to show different ways within art of becoming a professional, but I see a strong trend in young people who dream of becoming a rock star: an artist, but also a celebrity. I don't teach them to become 'star artists' and students know me, but there are always a few who end up investing their time in public relations, running after gallerists, and going to openings. So, I think as an art teacher, you never know exactly what you taught and what you didn't. It depends on so many things working together.

Figure 3. Mónica Castillo, Creation of a utopian curriculum, *2010*, *participatory project*

Could you delve a bit more into the specifics of your teaching methods? For instance, you spoke earlier about the *Escuela Superior de Artes de Yucatán* in Mérida in Mexico. Tell me a little about the educational programme you created there.

The school in Mérida, in the Caribbean, was founded in 2004. There were concrete issues we wanted to address, very basic ones, like reacting to the schools in Mexico City. Back then, video, multimedia and photography did not have the same importance as painting and sculpture. I still had some faith that contemporary art could be distributed and approached in a less institutionalised and commercial way, especially in a place like Yucatán. In five years, we created a strange and very ambitious programme, based on a pseudo-semiotic structure, with lots of (too many) classes, where we pretended to meet all the possible fantasies a student could have. Reality then showed us that an institution should not try to 'possess' all the desires a student can have. We had one central topic per semester and all classes and teachers had to work around it, similar to the way Waldorf schools work. We had discussions, once every semester, where all teachers discussed each student's work. We were able to invite interesting artists I knew, from different places. We were passionate about

teaching. There were very traditional thinkers and also radical left-oriented artists, migrants from Cuba, very young artists, who had just finished school and me, who came from the established art world. We could do really crazy things, like covering the school in graffiti together, getting all the students into buses and taking them to Mexico City to see museums, or organising a competition, in which we sent the winner to visit Europe. We improvised a lot, imagining things together at all levels. The best part of the school was feeling alive with students and teachers, engaging in very serious fun by making sense through signifying. It had more to do with an adventure than with a specific knowledge base that I had gained through my work.

And today? What are the dynamics and challenges that affect the teaching of art especially in higher educational institutions in Mexico? What kinds of opportunities exist for young artists?

I teach at the "Esmeralda" (Escuela Nacional de Pintura, Escultura y Grabado "La Esmeralda"), the biggest and most renowned art school in Mexico. Now, what affects education mostly is the 'Gabriel Orozco dream'. Since the 1990s, with the funding of galleries, being an artist has become associated more with recognition than becoming a critical person. But it remains largely a dream because, of course, they don't know what it takes to be an 'internationally recognised artist'. It's fine to be ambitious, but it's very easy to lose a sense of context. Most students and artists who have this ambition think that showing one's work around the world is a goal, instead of working at the grassroots level. It's very common here to see artists and students seduced by power, dreaming of being taken into account by an institution (a gallery or museum), of being in a position where you can decide over others or ignore them, or wanting to be admired like a rock star. So, it's difficult for me sometimes to make the point that it's far sexier to operate in the margins, being in touch with people, acting in concrete contexts, bringing producers and public closer to each other, thinking about the local and about education as a highly political activity, and so on.

I also understand that it's very abstract for them. I've been assessing a self-organised cultural project in the suburbs of Oaxaca city and decided to dedicate this year to it and there I've seen that students from Mexico City, through getting to know and living the experience of this 'lab', understand the liberty and limits of creation in a self-organised context. This would be a direction that I would encourage students to take. I don't believe in helping or training students to get as fast as possible into the art institutions, because it doesn't allow the future artist to imagine new ways of making his or her art public.

2. YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME

The Serious Business of Socially Engaged Art

You've worked as a teaching artist for almost four decades. Tell me a little about how it all began. Were there any specific events or political movements that helped to convince you that you needed to engage yourself actively both as an artist and an educator?

As the granddaughter of immigrants who were seeking refuge from poverty and pogroms in Eastern Europe, I was supposed to live out the American dream and choose an upwardly mobile career. I was being pointed towards something in the world of science that would lead to a lucrative occupation. At the end of my senior year, my high school art teacher asked which art school I had chosen to go to. I responded impulsively, "You've gotta be kidding me; no way! I'm going to do something serious with my life!" That snide remark has served as an illustration for my students for many years. What does it mean to live in a culture that constantly instils the attitude that the arts are frivolous?

In truth, my values were and continue to be quite counter-culture. Participating in the 'rat race' was something I sneered at, like a good number of my generation did. I could see the immense contradictions of the status quo early on, and wanted little to do with upward mobility. Living simply and collectively, and doing something that served others, seemed a much saner way to be present in the world.

Social engagement was a family tradition. I was taught to think critically about what I was learning in school and to question authority. We went to antiwar marches, signed petitions and canvased for progressive candidates. Whether organising for the local: changing the girl's dress code in high school, or against the bombing of Cambodia, I experienced my nascent activism as functional and effective much of the time. When our progressive candidate (Eugene McCarthy) lost, my father would remind me that we were part of a river of activists and that victories emerging from the grass roots might take generations of organising. Although I was inspired by all the burgeoning movements of that time, I could also see how progressive groups fragmented, factionalised and sometimes became dogmatic. All of this was discouraging to my idealistic self so I stepped away from outright activism during my first years in college and chose a more inward path of self-exploration and reflection.

As my high school art teacher had observed, I had developed an addiction for using art to make sense of both my inner and outer chaos. All through my childhood I had used art as a way to process my feelings. I was considered an 'overly' sensitive

kid who spent a lot of time alone stringing together words, images, stories, sounds and gestures to express a whole world of fantasy, but mostly angst: the alienation of growing up in the land of shopping malls, being dark-skinned and different in the world of whiteness and freaking out about nuclear war. Encountering *Echo of a Scream* by David Alfaro Siquieros in the Museum of Modern Art was one of those "aha" moments; here was an artist who understood how to convey the shadows of a world that most people choose not to look at. I was mesmerised by his truth telling.

I first began to understand the power of pedagogy to transform people in high school. I observed two dynamic teachers, one who taught poetry and theatre and brought emotionally wounded young people out of their shells, and the other, a former marine and football coach, who had the courage to teach the reality of the Vietnam war, and helped students run a teach-in after the bombing of Cambodia. Both were great risk-takers and role models for me.

In college, I studied with Paul Wellstone, when he was a young activist. I was beginning to think it was the norm to have social justice advocates as teachers. It was a surprise when I encountered the opposite, and ironically that often happened in the art classes. Some explicit episodes with sexism in the latter threw me back into the ring of activism. One of my male professors thought he was flattering me when he said that I could be "the one" female art student who could make it in the "boy's club." He suggested that the other female students would become good art collectors once they had married well. His insults (and he thought he was praising me) were startling to me, but the timing couldn't have been better. One of my female peers had a connection to the new feminist art programme at CalArts and we were able to access some of their resources. Our college had very few female professors (the art department had none) and our art history lectures made it appear that only white men made art. So we occupied the department chairman's office and made our demands known: women faculty, our own exhibition space, female visiting artists, etc. As a result, we had a festival of women's art and performances, the art history lectures gradually changed and women faculty were hired. Two visiting feminist artists gave us a dose of a dogmatic approach to feminist art, and we thankfully had the good sense not to follow that narrow path. Every one of us went on to become serious, practising artists, all shaping feminism into something truly liberatory. And none of us married "well", at least not in the sense that my teacher had imagined.

In graduate school, a theory-based, conceptual approach to art-making was dominant at the time. I was introduced to the writings of Ivan Illich, Paolo Freire, John Berger and Neil Postman and began my journey into how key questions could be brought into the classroom to raise consciousness. In post-graduate school I explored feminist and race theory and bell hooks' writings on pedagogy became an important piece of my tool kit.

As a result, I could not conform to teaching art in the traditional ways (technical exercises, lessons in western aesthetics and current trends in the art world). Instead students developed projects, often collaborative ones, where they deconstructed myths, questioned stereotypes and assumptions and told their own stories.

As a teaching artist in NYC museums I had lots of practice in "teaching art as a subversive activity". My students were encouraged to ask questions about the work they saw on the walls, not just what does this work mean, but who is this art for and what stories were being told about whom? We talked about privilege, who has it and who doesn't, and how does one claim one's values in a culture that tries to erase them. Similarly, once I had arrived in academia, I experimented with many different strategies to help students find their voices while learning about social issues that impacted their lives. My summers teaching at the Institute for Social Ecology in Vermont, training with Augusto Boal of the Theatre of the Oppressed, and teaching for Goddard College (with its John Dewey-influenced, learner-based pedagogical model) in their newly founded MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts also gave me many new strategies for working with students.

A most recent fusion of my art and teaching practices has taken place over the past dozen years at UW Tacoma, where I was invited twelve years ago to "teach whatever I want" with interdisciplinary majors and non-traditional public university students. More about this later…

Lucy R. Lippard has written that she admires your "commitment to an alternative path to teaching art and social justice without contradictions". What kinds of contradictions do you think she was referring to? Can we—indeed, should we—avoid contradictions in education and artistic practice?

I believe that Lucy is referring to the contradictions of the marketplace and what it means to be an artist in this time of late Capitalism, without playing the game of galleries, dealers and being beholden to the whims of status-driven collectors. I briefly tasted that experience when my practice was young. With the mentorship of a few older artists, I explored the activist margins of the NYC art world, went to openings, met peers and exhibited in many group shows – most of them in alternative spaces, but a few in museums. I was lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time with the right thing and got some recognition.

Articles about my work in *Art Forum*, *Art in America* and the *NY Times*, felt like too much attention, too soon, since I was in my mid-20s at the time. I was unprepared for the competitive energy it stirred up from others. I felt untested and not at all wise – I did not yet understand the ageism of the art world and how it eats its young. I saw the opportunism, ego-stroking needs and pretensions up close and it felt bone-deep wrong, given the intentions I had for my work. With the world appearing to head towards nuclear war (and many other disasters that were accelerated during those Reagan years), the act of sipping cocktails at fancy art parties with people discussing their real estate deals just didn't make sense or appeal to me. Some artists I respect deeply have had a greater tolerance for those contradictions and both they and their work appear to not have suffered for it. I was not very resilient or mature, and thankfully had both the instinct and opportunity to leave so that I could grow in the ways I wanted and needed to.

An artist 'friend' told me that by leaving NYC at that moment when my career was clearly blossoming would essentially throw all my gains in the trash; she said it would be like falling off the edge. So I let myself fall and the further I got from the hubbub of the art world, the less I heard its siren call.

Once I was in Los Angeles, the marketplace's shadow could not compete with the lively alternative art scene there. I had no shortage of venues for my work and intellectually engaging peers. The only compromise in staying there was the challenge to my health.

Things are quite different here in Seattle where socially engaged and feminist art practices are not as commonplace because they have not been taught (LA had the Woman's Building spawning a couple of generations of practitioners). This distinction has encouraged me to make my studio a place for gathering peers in monthly discussion groups and to find interdisciplinary allies outside of the local arts community while I build an audience for my projects. I also maintain a fruitful dialogue with artists, teachers and activists all over the world through my 'Arts for Change' Facebook page and several other online discussion groups.

The neoliberal explosion of the art marketplace during the last few decades has become repulsive to many artists who discover early on that the whims of the industry have little to do with the depth or merit of their art. Some younger artists are choosing the entrepreneurial model to survive, creating businesses and becoming freelance public artists while others are joining collectives and developing permeable egos so that they can collaborate well, create stronger projects and offer each other support. Some of us older artists are choosing to do the same.

You are frequently involved in educational projects in which the word 'change' features prominently. At the University of Washington Tacoma as well as in the workshops you conduct at your Seattle studio and the Facebook page you mentioned, you talk about "arts for change". What does change mean to you? Are artistic changes as relevant or important as political changes? Is it possible that the notion of change within educational contexts becomes too prescriptive beyond a certain point?

Frankly the word "change" has almost become a cliché for me, especially since the word was co-opted by political candidates to imply "support me, I'll give you what you want" and then, lo and behold, we received more of the same. I wish there was another word to describe the evolution in thinking and acting that needs to happen. "Transformation" could be that word if it didn't have similar baggage. But I don't want to get stuck in the semantics.

The truth is that we need art that really shifts people out of denial, to help them grasp more deeply what is happening to the planet right now. We need art that allows people to grieve, feel less isolated and dream the future we want. And all of that means changing gears, changing perspective and seeing what's under the surface. Our American public has been so dumbed down by the media and an educational

system that was damaged by defunding, standardised tests and more. This process was started with the neoliberal agenda ushered in by Reagan and subsequent administrations.

As suggested earlier, I believe that all art has a politics, so the two merge in my mind. Can art create legislative change? Perhaps if it touches people so deeply that a grassroots movement emerges and it pressures those in power to change policies. One form of art that has the potential to do that is interactive, community-based work – when people are moved by a story to tell their own, that's when I've seen people actually shift a fixed position. Being heard and seen creates an unexpected momentum.

Within the classroom one cannot predict what changes will occur, especially if you are really engaged in a radical form of pedagogy. So I don't consider this prescriptive, quite the opposite. You can set an intention (we will make art about the ecological crisis), provide a context (in this moment in time, with these tools and concepts) and resources (with these readings, experiences, understandings of history and materials), but where the students go with that, both individually and collectively cannot be prescribed and, in fact, shouldn't be.

What I find compelling about what you say is that you have communicated your ideas about art, feminism and social change in many different contexts: from formal classrooms to museums and even community-based projects. How does your relationship with your audience change when you shift your teacher's/ activist's location?

First it's important to find out where we are located in relation to the context that we are working in. We do the research to find out who our audience might be, and look at how to create connection with them through shared concerns, questions and stories. Once we've found those places, we look to find common ground or experiences. Learning how to listen to who is in the room and discover how differently they might perceive things has helped me open up my heart rather than shut down and carry prejudices into spaces where it would inhibit dialogue or provoke some kind of cultural imperialism to occur.

How would you say your own practice as an artist has changed over the years? Were there any significant events, political milestones or authors whose work influenced such changes?

Moving multiple times across the continent for reasons that were both economic and health-related has had a big impact on my practice. I never planned to be this nomadic, but it has given me the gift of cohorts and networks in many places and a decidedly 'un-provincial' point of view. With each move, I've had to start from scratch in a new community and that has been both humbling and hard work. This experience echoes something I practise in the studio: I sometimes avoid the things that I do well

Figure 4. Beverly Naidus, So Uncomfortable, *a culture jammed image from the series* √Other: Breaking Out of the Box, *2001*

so that I can be in that uncomfortable, exciting and beginner's place where I know nothing. The 'mistakes' yielded by these experiments offer an antidote to smugness and often send me in productive directions. The gift of being invisible in a new context offers time for research, deep internal reflection, stream of consciousness drawing and photography, improvisation with materials and just putting everything on pause. Eventually, when new cohorts arrive, I get to collaborate and brainstorm with a new team, make a new home for my work, and develop a renewed sense of purpose.

As I've aged, I've witnessed and experienced so many challenges including those caused by economic limitations, patriarchy, racism and unhealthy environments (neoliberal academic institutions and polluted air, water, etc.), but despite all these issues I've been very lucky and privileged. I can make art and write about these challenges, and find audiences who resonate with my questions and experiences. My media seem to change often, although I always return to words, photos, mixed media drawings, improvisations with found objects and interactive installations.

Figure 5. Beverly Naidus, Eden Reframed: An Ecological and Community Art Project, *2011, eco-art inspired by permaculture design, Vashon Island, WA*

Over time, I've developed more efficient, portable forms (digital ones as well as objects that roll or fold up and easily fit in boxes) or ones that take root and yield harvests, like my eco-art project on Vashon Island.

Being unexpectedly evicted from several studios on my current campus required me to be enormously resilient and adaptable. I began working more outside, studied permaculture design and created *Eden Reframed* on Vashon Island, WA. The lack of significant work space also catalysed the writer in me, and my book, *Arts for Change: Teaching Outside the Frame* (New Village Press, 2009) emerged.

Wonderful writers of speculative fiction and revisionist histories have strengthened my resolve to tell different stories about the future and the past: Ruth Ozeki, Ursula LeGuin, Marge Piercy, Octavia Butler, Barbara Kingsolver, Starhawk, Doris Lessing, Margaret Atwood, Ernest Callenbach, Leslie Marmon Silko, Kim Stanley Robinson and Rebecca Solnit.

There are spiritual roots to much of my socially engaged work. They come from different traditions. Joanna Macy, a Buddhist teacher and environmental and anti-nuclear activist helped me transform my despair and cynicism about the future into art that might inspire action. Due to her influence, my installation about nuclear nightmares, THIS IS NOT A TEST became more explicitly interactive. Joanna often speaks about our relationship to "future beings." Our new collective, ARTifACTs is imagining our descendants in *We Almost Didn't Make It: An Illuminated and Participatory Manuscript from the Future*.

Doing grief rituals with Sobonfu Some of the Dagara people gave me a deeper understanding of how to work with personal and collective grief as part of "Curtain Call: Portable Altars for Grief and Gratitude." Thich Nhat Hanh led a retreat for activist artists where I was given tools for being present, using my art for healing and more. Meditation practices, yoga, sweat lodge ceremonies, dream work and earth-based rituals all have offered me spiritual nourishment and added to my art practice.

Here in Seattle, my dance community has given me a space in which to express things that I can't say with words or images; they taught me about "contact improvisation" – a concept that I have taken into the studio, creating balance and tension between objects, dreams, textures, ideas, colours and feelings.

My husband, Bob Spivey, who aside from being an extraordinary partner and stalwart activist, scholar, poet and a lay Buddhist monk, introduced me to social ecology and the many passionate activists, scholars and teachers from the Institute for Social Ecology.

What kind of role, if any, do your own works as an artist play in your teaching methods?

When I was invited to teach at UW Tacoma they told me I could teach whatever I wanted. Given that it is an interdisciplinary programme without the resources for a conventional art department, I wanted to experiment with teaching art thematically rather than from the medium, allowing content to determine the forms. Students

share the stories about the topic in various media (everything from digital art, artists' books, performance and site-specific installations). They learn to think critically about the issues discussed and the art that they research with similar content. They develop skills with visual grammar to make their work as compelling as possible. They learn about process-based work, collaboration and how to use art as an intervention in everyday life. In every class they keep journals where they are encouraged to take risks with materials and ideas, vent about the course content and brainstorm projects.

Figure 6. Beverly Naidus, Homage to the Paris Climate Talks: An Eco-art Class Action, *University of Washington, Tacoma, D10, 2015 (Photo: Eunice Min)*

Each course is based on the themes within major bodies of my own work. In other words, *THIS IS NOT A TEST* inspired my 'Art in a Time of War' class. Given my concerns about continuing wars, the high suicide rates among veterans, and the amnesia and ignorance about the causes and histories of war, I felt this course was ideal for our student body, many who are vets or grew up in military families, in a community surrounded by military bases. There are also a sizeable number of students who come from families who are refugees from war-torn areas. My artist's book, *One Size DOES NOT Fit All*, provoked my 'Body Image and Art' class. Decades of work about environmental issues inspired my 'Eco-Art' course. Coming to terms with my identity as a person of colour, raised to be white, and making work about those issues encouraged my class in 'Cultural Identity and Art'. 'Labour, Globalisation and Art' emerged from my installations about unemployment and nine-to-five life, as well as

my work as an activist within the global justice movement. 'The Artist as Visionary and Dreamer' was inspired by my work in dream groups, as well as my long history of making art about dreams and nightmares and my desire to help students imagine a world quite different from Hollywood's dystopian futurism. The latter passion was influenced by my years teaching at the Institute for Social Ecology, where I learned about reconstructive visions of the future, again not prescriptive ones, but ones that will help people imagine the future we want.

Working within academia at an underfunded state institution, with a constantly changing administration, has had many limitations but I am grateful for the freedom I have in the classroom and take full advantage of it. We do meditation, read and watch materials that are critical of racial, gender and class oppression and work with community collaborators like the Washington State Labor Council. Artists from the networks I've created around the world have arrived in the classroom, including visits this year from the Beehive Design Collective and Bread and Puppet Theater. I experience my work with students much like facilitating a ten-week, community-based art project.

If we are able to go against the neoliberal tide, our proposed major, Arts in Community, will be approved before too long. The curriculum we have developed over the past 13 years will be used to train students to develop art projects in a wide variety of community contexts. In my Seattle studio, and eventually in Tacoma as well, I will continue to teach workshops, modified versions of my content-based courses to a diverse group of adult learners. The goal is to seed cohorts who connect with a wide spectrum of socially engaged art practices and see what emerges.

3. CREATING AN EDU/VIRUS

You are a very engaged artist whose work has been shown in many international venues in Europe, the US and Egypt amongst others. Yet, you also studied art education up to doctoral level and you have been heavily involved in teaching in Cairo, where you are probably as well known as an educator as you are as a contemporary artist. What led you to become so active in both fields? How do you find time for both?

As you know, it's difficult to find a balance between an educator's work and an artist's work, but recently, I started using my teacher's experiences as part of my art. Teaching has become a framework for my art because it presents a multi-layered experience which helps me to create new kinds of forms. Before, when I started my career as a painter, my passion was about creating paintings that were self-expressive. The change happened when I moved away from being a painter to becoming a research-based artist. In this approach to art, an idea becomes a research project, which is then transformed into an artistic project. I started with *Stammer*, which was the beginning of a shift in me as an artist. *Stammer* started from my personal memory and history because I used to stammer as a kid. I first experimented with language and then moved to research. My awareness of the idea and the speech disorder widened and became more professional. I decided to use my experience as a teacher by employing a performative language in conjunction with

Figure 7. Shady El Noshokaty, Stammer: A lecture in theory*, 2007*
(Photo: Shady El Noshokaty)

drawing, physically performing the idea of a lecturer in theory who is overwhelmed by emotional forces that interfere in the symmetrical arrangement of his drawing. I suddenly became a performer, something I had never been in my life. I started to see myself as a performer, not as a painter. This realisation came directly from my experience as a teacher. So I thought, why not use this experience as art? With *Stammer*, I learnt two different values, which affect my practice. First, I learnt how to combine academic research with artistic research. With my experience as a practising artist, I tried to find ways of making these experiences become one. After *Stammer*, even my performances in class became different and I changed all my classes. Secondly, students also asked to perform with me in class to produce this creative language. This happened organically.

So, when your students interact with you during this performative teaching and learning experience, is it completely spontaneous? Do you prepare them in any specific way?

When I ask them to interact in a performative way, it's part of their learning process because they are put in a situation where they must think about their physical interaction. They can choose between reading a text, or performing through creative movement, or even think about how they can interact with the wall. I only open different possibilities that make them think differently about their interaction with each other and me. Of course, I have a kind of plan to begin with but it's ultimately a multi-layered experience that gets them to think, there and then, about how they can use interaction and performance in their daily lives, in their art, and in their studio. So, the idea is not only to teach them how to work on an art-piece, but also how to perform in their lives: walking in the street, sitting in a bus.

I guess this means that you are granted a fair amount of freedom by the institution in which you teach now, the American University of Cairo (AUC).

Of course, there is a syllabus and every professor has a kind of guideline. However, it is important to note that undergraduate students can choose between different experiences and topics along with their major requirement in art. Students have many different subjects apart from their major, which is art. They are encouraged to experience the overlaps between different subjects and art. We want to develop the idea of using scientific research as a foundation for contemporary art. This is something new that we have been promoting in our curriculum recently.

I know that you have coordinated other educational projects outside the institutional framework provided by the mainstream educational system. In particular, two pedagogical activities stand out amongst the various workshops, educational projects and university courses you've been involved in: the Media Art Workshop and the more recent ASCII Foundation for Contemporary Art

Education in Cairo. How did these projects develop, and what ideas that are specific to contemporary art do you think need to be especially disseminated in your region?

I started the Media Art Workshop in 2000. This was before I applied for a Fulbright scholarship to study avant-garde cinema and new media art at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. During that year, I decided to organise this open workshop that was free for all students from the Faculty of Art Education at Helwan University, where I had graduated and where I also subsequently worked as a professor. The reason for opening this summer workshop was that I discovered that there are many talented students who don't stand a chance of succeeding as artists in Egypt. They are talented but the educational system doesn't allow them to express their freedom or their awareness of contemporary art. The system doesn't let them express a global artistic language they are already aware of at a personal level. So I decided to create this workshop to give them the opportunity to produce art in a space that was not restricted by the limitations of being a student. It opened as a summer workshop with a lot of different activities, like creating work in an offered studio space and working in collaboration with others, discussions, screenings, invited artists, and so on. So it is similar to postgraduate studies but more short-term, just one month. Then I went to the U.S. and returned in 2003. That year, I decided to change it from an open workshop to something more like an educational programme, where students are presented or introduced to different educational experiences related to the history of new media and technical skills related to video art, animation and sound art.

What about the ASCII Foundation for Contemporary Art Education?

ASCII was launched in 2013 in a basement in one of the poorer areas of Cairo. It's huge, around four hundred square metres, the sort of space which is difficult to find downtown. People can come here and interact with our workshops or performances. Now it has become more problematic for NGOs to get any funds without approval from the government. We have no funding and everyone who works with me is a volunteer. ASCII needs to be understood in the context of a traditional educational system. There is a big difference between the system at the AUC, where I teach now, and the Faculty of Art Education. The curriculum and the school programme at the Faculty of Art Education were very traditional and there was no opportunity to introduce students to contemporary artistic ideas or new media. The system was just craft-based. So I developed this workshop to raise an awareness of contemporary art and new media theories and philosophies, even if it is only for one month a year. The university never funded our workshop so we functioned without any kind of fees. From the start I hoped that this structure would grow and break the system from the inside with new ideas, and maybe with time, the system would change.

Figure 8. Shady El Noshokaty, ASCII Lecture Performance, *2014*
(Photo: Shady El Noshokaty)

I wonder whether the educational authorities see this as a threat. Were you accused of imposing Western ideas on your students?

They hate it actually. They cut the electricity supply, they did whatever they could but they never prevented it from existing. It became an internal war because for the administration our workshop is Westernised. It is crucial to understand the meaning of 'originality' in this context because in Egypt this word means something quite different. In English it means 'new' or 'creative', while in Arabic the word is 'asala' and refers to heritage, tradition, finding one's identity in origins. Originality for those who criticise us means creativity through the study of heritage, especially our ancient Egyptian civilisation and our Islamic heritage. This understanding of 'originality' pervades the whole system, not only the educational system but also the art market, art galleries and all the artists who belong to that system. Even today, you can still find calligraphic work or abstract paintings in Egypt that try to connect abstract European art and Islamic art. They try to connect installation art and ancient Egyptian architecture because they say that ancient Egyptian art was the first move toward installation art. They talk about postmodernism through their own eyes, while I try to argue that this is very different from what is understood by contemporary art in the West. For them, the kind of art they produce is their religion

while they call me the prophet of Western imperialism. I am regularly accused of this on my Facebook wall. For ten to fifteen years now, I have been accused of being Westernised. I discuss this idea with them. What does being Westernised mean? I ask them about what they do, mixing European art with Islamic art: is this original (‘asala’)? It’s a conversation that never ends.

For me, the biggest crisis in the Egyptian educational system is the expectation that contemporary artists should learn their ancient heritage. On the other hand, we try to create a completely different direction at ASCII and understand a more global history. We try to show why installation art and video art came into being, and where they come from. For those who have a traditional mindset, conceptual art is a problem because it doesn’t have a form. Contemporary art is intellectual so they cannot play with it or around it!

The war between us began within the student body. Students became more aware of the problems of the curriculum and more critical of the work they were doing with their professors, and consequently their ideas were not accepted. We live in an environment where people are in constant fear of intellectuals. Critical thinkers are considered dangerous because they don’t create stability in the region and the system forces people to conform. My students’ Facebook pages were checked in the past and they got into trouble with university authorities because they were being critical of their education. These people want to keep the system as it is. Everything goes back to the political system. Anyone who moves away from this system must be punished or sent away. This is very frustrating.

So what happened in our workshop is similar to what happened in our revolution, the 25th January revolution. The revolution started to create a new liberal, futuristic idea in a system which is difficult to change. The system is very heavy, bureaucratic and traditional and is assisted by an army of servants who serve this system in order to keep it as it is because without it they would lose their jobs. Without it they would lose their power. So this is why it’s a kind of war, because it is not only an educational programme. It is much more political in nature.

At the same time, I decided to go to teach at the AUC. At the AUC there are better facilities that help me to develop my ideas and I was encouraged to change the curriculum. Today our curriculum is very successful, and our students are achieving international standards. This is a huge achievement, which happened during the last four years. At the same time, I still miss the situation outside the AUC because I came from there. I know how much the students suffer, and that’s why we created ASCII, to serve all students who are studying art all over the country. ASCII was a challenge, because we had no money and it is far away from the centre. But it was created because many students here have no opportunities and need guidance. They are aware that they need to learn a lot to reach international standards. In this context, it is not sufficient to talk only about art but one must also discuss cultural and political institutions.

How do you think ASCII will develop in the coming years?

There is a radical change happening now at ASCII foundation. I am now thinking of ASCII as an art project, not an institution. This means that all my lecture performances, screenings and experimental workshops are part of my art project, not part of an institution's work or activity. This redefinition of ASCII should give me more freedom to create open and different educational forms and also allows me to work freely, at a distance from institutional funding requirements. Dealing with ASCII as a formal institution was clearly wrong from the beginning. Thinking of creative, open, experimental educational forms as art is a great new direction for this project and a development in my career. It should open a lot of possibilities for me and brings me closer to the idea of being an artist/educator.

What are your students' ambitions? Do they dream of leaving Egypt for good?

Yes, they generally want to leave. When I was in the US I was offered the possibility of leaving for good but I refused. I wanted to come back, mainly because I am somehow very connected emotionally to Egypt. I try to talk to my students about this and ask them: If all intellectuals leave the country, who will stay? If every intellectual leaves, we would be left only with mediocre people ruling us and ruining our future. Yes, we can leave and have a better life as individuals but this is very selfish. We need to have a wider perspective of things, not a selfish perspective. There are amazing people who will be remembered as artists. To think about the future, to think about how this circle could be wider and more effective, to change society, to change the future of those in my society: this is of more lasting importance. This is why I created the workshop and have worked on it for so many years.

Do any of your students move into art education? Do any of them feel the same way as you about having an impact on society through education?

Some of my students at AUC have a strong portfolio and travel abroad to do their Master degree. When they return I invite them to teach on a part-time basis with me. My goal is to give them this responsibility and to learn about teaching. The experience becomes deeper when you are giving something to others. The programme's vision grows from the inside. They are the ones who understand the system best and this means that they can do things without me. The system starts to work by itself. My vision is to create a society of people who believe in liberal ideologies, a free democratic society as well free and creative arts.

In the beginning, I started by myself in the workshop, then Ahmed Basiouny and others joined as students and eventually created their own workshops. Basiouny started off as a student and then went on to become a close friend. He created a sound workshop after I encouraged him to see whether other students would want to follow him. The same thing happened with comic strips, video art and performance art. All those students who came with valid ideas about workshops and teaching were allowed to teach others. If I hadn't allowed them to do this, then nothing would

have happened. By 2008, I didn't need to supervise the workshops any more. I would be away on residencies and the workshops would be running without me. The new teachers had become the workshop's leaders. It became their workshop, not mine. This is how we created a system from the inside, to help others become not only artists but also educators. We need more educators in Egypt. This is how we create the future.

You also curated Ahmed Basiouny's work after he was shot and killed in the revolution. Tell me a little about the curatorial work you carried out for the Egyptian pavilion at the 2011 Venice Biennale. How did this come about?

I had never worked as a curator before in my life. Curating is not my career. The idea of the Egyptian pavilion started when Ahmed Basiouny was killed during the first three days of the revolution, on 28th January, 2011. Between the end of February and the beginning of March, after Mubarak had left the presidency, we heard that Egypt would cancel its representation at the Venice Biennale because there was no funding and the committee had not yet taken a solid decision. I knew some of the committee members and in two days, I presented this idea, but I invited Aida El Torie to help out as curator because I had no experience in curating. We wanted to get financial help and asked for funding from the AUC. We needed funding because we planned an exhibition of video art and all the equipment needed to be maintained throughout the duration of the biennale.

In one month, we decided to create a project called *Thirty days of running in the space*, in which we presented the documentation of two different projects. One of the projects was from 2010, in which Basiouny used open source technology, while the second project was filmed during the first two days of the revolution, as he was running physically in the crowd while planning to make a performance. Nobody knew then that it would become a revolution. The idea we presented in Venice was to show around fifteen original videos of his as they were, without any sort of edit. The result was completely spontaneous; we had no control over the footage. His videos looped randomly, with no kind of synchronisation between them. The footage itself creates and presents its own ideas. If you stayed in the pavilion for the whole day, you would never see the same show twice because it was completely random.

More recently, you started researching a new project in some depth and you have also exhibited this ongoing work at a gallery in Cairo. How does this new work relate to your earlier work?

With *The Tree of my Grandmother's house*, produced in 2001–2005, I started to research my own family and Egyptian middle class identity. I criticised the way society tries to prove that people have a certain identity that is actually a history of colonisation. When people talk about identity in this country, they often try to present a fake identity, an ancient Egyptian identity or the idea of an Islamic identity.

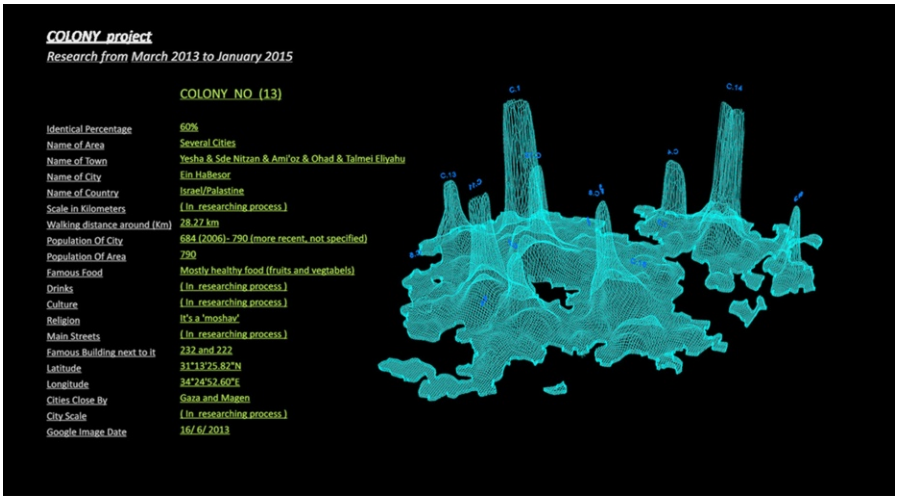

Figure 9. Shady El Noshokaty, Colony *animation, 2015 (Photo: Shady El Noshokaty)*

In parallel to my PhD research, I started to use information to create a kind of art that does not care about forms, but ideas. I wanted to show how I could use research to present a point of view, while with *Stammer* I wanted to merge my experience as a teacher with my experience as an artist.

Art is not about presenting my research as informative facts but as fiction, that's why it becomes art. This is very evident in my latest work, *Colony*, a researched project with lots of drawings, maps, diagrams and even a growing ice-sculpture. *Colony* started when I began to analyse a birthmark which I have on my hand. My father and grandfather also had the same birthmark, it's part of the genetic code of my family. The outline of this birthmark looks like a map and I got the idea of searching for it on Google Earth. My students assisted me and we researched this map for a year. We found fifteen different areas that corresponded with this map. We started investigating the cultures of these places, everything we could find about these areas. And then I began to create artworks based on each of these areas, transforming this project into a manifesto of colonisation. The work is based on appropriation, using an old colonisation concept. I use my hand to colonise others, I use their history, culture, their natural resources and any possible creative data to inspire me to create my own work. Scientific/conceptual research becomes creative art.

4. CONFLICT

Cultural Identity in Art and Education, from Northern Ireland to Inner London

You spent your childhood in Northern Ireland but you are now based in London, where you teach art to children in a secondary school. How would you compare the social and political environment in Northern Ireland when you were growing up with that of the students you teach now?

Northern Ireland during the 1980s and 1990s was a socially and politically volatile place to grow up in. Of course, when you're born there, you don't necessarily know any different. It is only relatively recently that I have begun to investigate this experience in relation to my current context as an artist and a teacher based in London. I grew up during the later stages of 'the troubles' and issues of identity were hugely significant. Where you were located, physically and politically, was clearly demarcated by the colours, flags, murals and insignia that both defined and divided the community. A sense of belonging in a place of such segregation can be highly emotive and the affective bonds holding it all together are strong.

I recognise the same affective bonds in the students I now teach in a typical inner London secondary school. Although much less visible—at least to a white, middle-class art teacher—there are very definite boundaries, both geographically and culturally, for teenagers in London. Over three quarters of my students have English as an additional language and there are a high number of refugees, many of whom come from areas of conflict. With such a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, the politics surrounding identity in this new complex terrain is precarious and requires constant negotiation. Although the sectarianism I experienced in Northern Ireland was of a dualistic nature, the frontiers established by divisions within community groups by way of different cultural, religious or ethnic identities are similar and there are lessons to be learnt.

Despite decades of reconciliation attempts, the schooling system in Northern Ireland remains largely segregated – Catholic children typically go to Catholic schools and Protestant children to Protestant schools. This very physical division at such a formative age makes any attempt at integration much more difficult. Parochialism and essentialist myths of the 'other' are free to circulate unchecked. There were lots of initiatives encouraged when I was young and I became involved with numerous 'cross-community' art projects that attempted to bring young people from divergent communities together. My memories of such projects are that they

were largely superficial and did little more than reinforce essentialist motifs; at no time do I remember critically engaging with actual issues surrounding community division. I just remember painting a lot of 'peace doves' holding both the Unionist flag and the Nationalist flag. With hindsight, I see a lot of missed opportunities. Yet, I also see this major difference between my students' school experience and my own as perhaps the biggest opportunity for approaching issues of cultural identity today.

My own childhood experiences have highlighted the importance of engaging meaningfully with the inherent challenges involved in identity politics. This is not only possible in the culturally diverse environment my students now occupy but it is becoming increasingly important. Research conducted by the University of Nottingham suggests that race relations in Britain have deteriorated since the 2011 London riots and prejudice towards ethnic minorities in Britain is on the rise. There is also a growing fear of extremism and radicalisation which has prompted the current UK government to stress that 'fundamental British values' must be taught and encouraged in schools.

Figure 10. Alan Cusack, Craigavon Archive 1966–1983*, 2015, installation*

You said that a good number of the students you teach are refugees. What sort of role does cultural diversity play in the pedagogy you practise with them? Which authors, artists or educational theories do you think helped to inform your approach to teaching art?

My current approach to teaching is largely in reaction to the multicultural model I found to be predominant in secondary school art education. I think it would be difficult to find an art department today that does not deliver a project dealing with some aspect of identity or culture as part of its curriculum. This is particularly prevalent in inner London schools where the perception of the celebration of cultural diversity must be maintained. The subject of art can often be seen as a safe space in which to undertake these explorations and its visibility in the school environment ensures the keeping up of appearances. All too often I have seen a very superficial expression of traditional cultural forms, which, in its most harmless form lacks any real substance or context and at its most damaging can reinforce essentialist cultural notions of identity. This type of inquiry was all too familiar to me, reminiscent of the many cross-community arts projects I had experienced in the past. Asking my Congolese students to draw a traditional African mask did not seem a worthwhile or particularly relevant inquiry into contemporary African culture, particularly when they are currently negotiating their current context as young African students in London. I am interested in contemporary notions of culture and identity and so I initially looked to British cultural theorists like Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy, but I was later informed by writers tackling issues of performed and hybridised identities such as Judith Butler, Henry Giroux and Zygmunt Bauman. I now try to employ more of a critical or engaged pedagogy and take an issue-based approach to my teaching. I am also much more mindful of the artists I introduce my students to. I have found a distinct lack of engagement with contemporary art and contemporary art practices in school. Many art curricula still seem to be based on a canon of largely Eurocentric and Modernist art with only a tokenistic sprinkling of diversity. Located in the centre of London, my students have access to a huge range of museums and galleries, some of which specialise in inter and trans-cultural contemporary art. Galleries such as INIVA, 198 and The October Gallery show emergent art that critically engages with more current, global ideas of identity and culture. Taking full advantage of these resources ensures my students are exposed to contemporary and relevant debates and practices.

I am also interested in the growing popularity of 'Visual Culture Art Education' and its attempts at using students' own cultural experiences as a means of inquiry. This suggests to me a level of engagement that goes beyond the re-production of established cultural motifs and institutionalised art practices. Taking this approach not only de-stabilises the notion of a fixed identity for my students but also guarantees a degree of agency by legitimising 'their story' and placing it at the centre of their own inquiry. This, in turn, creates a more discursive space, something I try to achieve in my classroom. To this end, I am influenced by the political theorist Chantal Mouffe and her work on 'agonism'. The idea of agonistic pluralism acknowledges difference as legitimate and creates a space where potential conflicts can be confronted and played out with the acceptance that any rational solution may not be possible. Accommodating this discursive space in the classroom is not without its challenges and things can get messy. But then, an art room should be messy.

In your view, what are the main political, cultural and economic forces that are shaping art education in the UK today? What is the curricular status of the arts?

Ever since I qualified as a teacher, the subject 'art' seems to have had to defend itself. Although I have been fortunate to work in a school that does, for now, value art education, increasingly its position within the curriculum appears under threat.

Among the many forces currently shaping art education in the UK, the most profound at the moment is undoubtedly political. With the 2010 coalition government came a flood of educational reforms, few of which having much sympathy for art and the lasting damage of the changes are yet to be felt. The future appears even more uncertain as a fully conservative government has just been elected. A huge increase in University fees has had a great influence on my students' decisions to continue their art education. Funding cuts for PGCE training has resulted in fewer qualified art teachers, while the introduction of academies and free schools which are not bound by the National Curriculum mean that some students are not offered an art education at all.

Figure 11. Alan Cusack, Craigavon: New town, *2015, installation and projection*

How does this affect your daily work as an art teacher?

Where I teach, a former arts specialist school, taking a subject in one of the arts at GCSE was compulsory and extra-curricular arts activities were both encouraged and well-funded. Until recently, we even had a dedicated Arts College Manager who established partnerships with outside agencies, institutions and practitioners. These resources are continuing to dry up and the opportunities I was once able to offer my students are no longer there. More worrying, however, is how art continues to be perceived as a 'soft' subject in relation to the more 'academic' or 'hard' subjects.

The introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) has done little to help that image. To achieve this 'performance measure', students who would undoubtedly succeed in art are under pressure to choose the more 'academic' subjects outlined in the EBacc, in which Art and Design does not feature. This is supposed to encourage more rigour, giving students more of a chance in an increasingly competitive job market. This seems to be a reputation that art finds difficult to shake. Although Art and Design is compulsory for the first three years of secondary school, the decision for students to choose it at GCSE level is becoming more difficult. Every year I encounter the ubiquitous question, that I remember my own parents asking, 'but what can my son or daughter do with art?' This view is shared by the current education secretary who also believes choosing art would restrict career options. Amongst such marketing, convincing a parent otherwise is a difficult task. I find this particular denigration of the arts baffling. I am reluctant to have to defend the arts in terms of its economic utility, when it has so much more to offer in education, but the creative industries just happen to be both a huge employer and contributor to the UK economy. And yet, with the current government's relentless focus and promotion of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects in schools, art will continue to be marginalised.

Working in a diverse city like London has its own influences on teaching art. With such a high number of immigrants, refugees and students with English as an additional language, the art department can be an accessible space for students to engage in learning which might otherwise not be available to them. However, this perception of art as a purely visual subject can often result in students being 'placed' in art lessons who might not necessarily choose to be there. This can lead to dynamic opportunities but is not without its challenges, particularly due to the fact that to achieve a qualification in art, a level of written literacy is required. This leads me to what I feel has one of the biggest impacts on my day-to-day teaching of art: Grades—my students are obsessed with them. The artistic inquiry almost always plays second fiddle to the promise of a good grade with both parents and students asking what they need to do to get a C or above. It's not their fault, it is simply the culture. Unfortunately many art teachers are under the same pressure. In the market-driven environment, schools need to perform well on the league tables to ensure a healthy number of students on role. This means that teachers also need to perform. The number of their students achieving a C or above at GCSE is normally the measure and can decide whether a teacher is awarded pay progression. This is a real shame as it can lead to art teachers relying on 'tried and tested' formulas to ensure a safe number of C grades and stifle more potentially innovative lines of inquiry.

Another debilitating factor is that teaching in the UK is predicated on continuous surveillance. The relentless inspection and judgement of your teaching practice can become over-bearing and, depending on the criteria with which you are being judged, can be highly problematic. What is deemed a successful lesson in another subject area where compliance and conformity is privileged may not quite feel the same in an art lesson, and why should it?

Do you think the continuous surveillance you refer to could lead to self-censorship? Can art education maintain a kind of critical edge in this context?

I think an increasing level of surveillance (and competition) can only lead to self-censorship, for both students and teachers. The resulting 'tried and tested' art lessons are often rigidly followed inquiries based on predetermined outcomes, where the teacher is confident that the lesson will tick the right boxes and the student knows exactly what to produce to get the grades.

There is little room for innovation or criticality in this context, unless we are willing to be cleverly subversive and reflexive in our approach. Art education could look more towards contemporary art practices where indeterminacy and collaboration are privileged over accepted aestheticised forms.

Contemporary art also plays an important role in your life because you are in fact a practising artist. Can you remember an earlier stage in your life when you thought of yourself simply as an 'artist' rather than a teaching artist?

Not really, but I did find it difficult at times to reconcile both. When I was young, I was involved with lots of youth and community art projects and so a lot of the practice I was exposed to was hinged on some level of pedagogy. My Fine Art degree led me to a view of art production as a reflective process of meaning-making. Although it wasn't explicit at the time, by approaching my practice as a conceptual inquiry I regarded art and education as intrinsically linked. I always maintained a studio practice consisting mainly of drawing and installation and, although I was producing work for shows, I was definitely more engaged and generated more interesting work when working with other people. After my degree I pursued commissions working on integration arts projects with various different community groups, so qualifying as an art teacher and working in a school in inner London seemed like the perfect next step. However, it was not until this point that I felt a tension between the two. The perception may be changing but there is still certainly a palpable divide between the two identities, with a lot of chips on shoulders. When I made the decision to become a teacher it puzzled some people and it was seen by many of my friends from art school as selling out or giving up. Although I had been teaching for years, doing it in a school is apparently much worse. I encountered the same disregard in my students who would refer to visiting artists-in-residence as 'real' artists as opposed to their imposter art teacher.

Maintaining a meaningful practice takes time and energy. Teaching in UK state education is not an easy job. A heavy workload and a stressful environment leaves little in the tank for the studio. Also, in a target-driven secondary school, having an art practice of your own is of little consequence and rarely encouraged. I have met many art teachers who lament an abandoned practice and vow to 'get back into it'. I have also worked with many art teachers over the years who still maintain

successful art practices outside the classroom without ever exposing their students to the particular expertise or methodology their work entails.

Although I kept up a studio practice of sorts and spent a lot of my holidays on residencies, I often found this jarring. It was difficult to get any traction with my work until I was introduced to practice-based research during my MA in Art and Education. I learnt how to regard pedagogy as potentially an artistic practice and this reconceptualised my approach to teaching. Although I never had any real hang-ups over the artist/teacher identity predicament, my work as an 'artist' really came alive when it became part of my teaching.

Let's talk a little about your own work as an artist. I know that it involves pedagogical and researched processes pertaining to different disciplines and I also know that you are interested in storytelling, memory and myth. How do you combine these themes and methodologies? Do you consider your artistic practice to be a form of research, a pedagogical method, or a hybrid practice?

The culture I grew up in is steeped in myth and storytelling. However, the notion of truth during the troubles of Northern Ireland holds important significance and is heavily contested ground. Conflict resolution through a truth and reconciliation commission is still being debated. There is a fear that, without a meaningful 'truth' recovery process, myths will take precedence over memory. My artistic interest comes from the deeply rooted mess of tangled histories, stories and marginalised voices that construct the narrative of the place and my practice is an inquiry into some of this contested ground. Through investigating archive material, personal memory and collected narratives I search for the grey areas that sit between the facts and fictions associated with the place. It is an inter-disciplinary practice that draws on the idea of the parafictional by exploring inconsistencies and presenting new narratives. The open-ended nature of my practice and its research is generative of knowledge. It continuously instigates questions, which require a meaning-making process. In this sense, it is also a pedagogical method.

My investigations seek to destabilise any essentialist notions of identity and interrogate cultural givens. This is a process that is just as pertinent to the diasporic students I now teach as it is to me. As first and second-generation migrants, much of my students' cultural identity and access to heritage is constructed and communicated through stories. The challenge is to grant access to this heritage in a contemporary and contextually meaningful way. So I apply the same narrative approach to identity in the classroom. This approach to identity construction is not only fruitful, but a theoretically accessible way of addressing ideas of the self with young people. It keeps the idea of identity fluid, opening the possibility of critical exploration into one's heritage. It helps steer any projects tackling identity away from essentialist cultural motifs.

An integral part of my work involves the use of more orthodox data collection borrowed from narrative-based research methods associated with social sciences.

Using personal narrative techniques and interviews to elicit stories generates an enormous amount of data that can be developed through an art practice. I can use this pedagogical method as a model in school to ensure my students take an inquiry-based approach and become directly implicated by their investigation. The narrative inquiry, which is both an artistic and pedagogical practice in itself, opens up a space that necessitates discourse.

This discursive space is further facilitated with my research into political theory. By applying the principles of *agonistic pluralism*, I try to encourage my students to think politically and engage with the inevitability of conflict. The teaching and learning this produces has a formlessness that is similar to more contemporary practices found in relational or dialogical art.

There seems to be a growing number of terms and definitions describing the relationship between art practice and pedagogy. I really enjoy the fluidity of this kind of practice-based research and its reluctance to be pinned down. My art practice and my teaching have benefited enormously from their integration—the more permeable the distinction, the more exciting the possibilities. I have a studio practice that attempts to tackle the very same issues I encourage my students to engage with. This practice presents further lines of inquiry and provides a methodology I can both model and use as a collaborative investigation. It is always generating new questions and producing new research. This is a process of triangulation that keeps things critical, relevant and dynamic, for me and my students.

In collaborative work, how do you negotiate artistic decisions with others when their input becomes an integral part of your work?

My studio practice is an on-going investigation into my own cultural narrative situated in a specific time and place. Although it is dependent on input from a range of sources, I allow the work to develop through the accumulation of various narrative materials and so it is constantly under negotiation. I aim to keep the same open-ended approach to production in my teaching practice, where the destination is indeterminate. In this sense, negotiating artistic decisions has become the work.

While working with others, either in formal or non-formal educational settings, I try to facilitate collaborative inquiries as much as possible. Much of my work is dependent on the interrelation of collected narratives, therefore, each voice is equally legitimate and I regard this discursive process as the artwork. Much of the decision-making that follows is dependent on how the generated material, whatever form that might take, could be presented to an audience. For example, one day I shared a personal family photograph with my students, along with all the stories I associated with it. This prompted lively discussions around nationalism, conflict and migration. I asked my students to bring in a photograph of their own and we spent the next few lessons conducting interviews with each other about the photographs. One of the outcomes of the discussions lay in the ambiguity around some of the stories and so we decided that the students should interview their parents about the photographs and as

Figure 12. Alan Cusack and year 12 students from Regent High School, Inherited Family Photographs, *2014, installation*

the previous interviews had been recorded we could compare the two and explore any inconsistencies. This was an insightful inquiry and generated a lot of discussion. There were of course many differences in the two narrations, which led to our critical understanding of how the meanings we attach to personal objects of heritage are not fixed but are dependent on context. The material generated throughout this inquiry consisted of family photographs, recorded interviews and transcriptions. The photographs were all typical family photographs, so we decided to install a domestic space in the school by creating overlapping wallpaper constructed from the printed transcripts, onto which we hung the photographs. It was accompanied with headphones playing the recorded interviews. The installation was a great success and generated a lot of interest but for me the real work, both artistic and pedagogical was in the discourse that led the inquiry.

The challenge is convincing others that the process is the actual work. Outside the classroom this is rarely an issue. Many contemporary art practices and socially engaged projects are comprised of such interactions. However, in the results-driven environment of the secondary school, competition is privileged over collaboration every time. Although the pedagogical value of these collaborative and discursive practices is obvious, there remains a commodity-based view of art production in school that promotes individual enterprise over social engagement. Both students

and teachers are held to ransom over this market-style system and trying to find ways of fulfilling assessment criteria without losing critically is becoming increasingly difficult.

The approach I now take with my work in relation to my day-to-day teaching has begun to address these issues. Blurring the distinction between my artistic and teaching practice has helped disrupt the established student-teacher relationship and produced a less hierarchical environment. When my students are aware that their input is integral to my work as an artist and a researcher they become invested in the process. This fosters trust. Likewise, the development of my work becoming implicated with their own artistic inquiries gives them the confidence to critically engage. This levelling of the playing field helps suppress notions of ownership and creates a community of practice which values input and process over outcome.

5. BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN THE ARTS AND ARTS EDUCATION

You grew up in the coastal city of Fortaleza in northeastern Brazil, and you describe your education there as being very restrictive – a matter of following the teacher's instructions. Was it comparable to what Paolo Freire called "banking education"?

Yes. I studied in private schools, like most middle class kids in Brazil. Unfortunately middle class families in my country typically do not believe in public education or fight for a better public education, preferring to put children in paid schools. Some of these schools are very expensive and also function as an instrument of separation or division between the social classes, reinforcing the serious social inequity that already exists. Middle class families try to put their children in the same schools as those of richer people.

I was in classes that resembled a prison environment, at least this was how I felt at that time with so many disciplinary measures that punished students who would not adapt to the square rules. Banking education persists in our educational system and takes away creativity from students specially because the teacher is considered as the owner of knowledge and the student only receives information that is considered necessary.

We still face challenges to innovation and creativity, despite the many efforts of Ana Mae Barbosa and the Movement of Art Educators (MAE) in the last thirty years. These efforts are visible in the changes made to legislation. Now Art is obligatory throughout the Brazilian educational system, but is not an effective discipline in all schools for two reasons. First of all, because teaching is not seen as an interesting career. This is not only due to low salaries, but also because teachers are not yet perceived, socially, to be important players in the development of the country. This devaluation is even more pronounced in the case of arts teachers. Secondly, beyond the problem of having many public or private school administrators and even school principals with little knowledge of art, visible and invisible violence between students and other students, students and teachers, teachers and other teachers, and between the administration and teachers, still persists.

As a professor who teaches and dialogues with students in Visual Arts Teacher Education, I aim to help them rethink their methodologies and processes of teaching/learning when they are giving classes at school (to 11–18 year old students), and I worry that the system is so standardised that it will make my students drop out of

their teaching career. This is one of the most significant concerns gathered from my experiences and research.

You told me before the interview that the low status of the subject also affected you directly during your youth because you received no formal classes in Art and you were discouraged from studying the subject seriously. You also told me that you left Medical school and joined an Art school behind your family's back. Do you think this was a common experience for young, Brazilian art-oriented students back then?

I cannot generalise, but even today, I often hear my students talking about the difficulties related to choosing a career in the arts. Becoming an artist, an arts teacher or arts professor in Brazil is still not considered to be as good a choice as becoming a doctor of medicine or a lawyer. I think that it is also connected with the colonial, Western and Eurocentric thinking rooted in many actual discourses and socio-cultural practices in the country. In the historical narratives of the arts in Brazil, we can find a strong influence of French, Portuguese, Spanish, English and American discourses in arts education. If you analyse those influences you can connect the Brazilian methodologies and curricula to the areas frequented by theorists coming from those countries.

Many Brazilian researchers are making efforts to discuss and rethink important questions of a postcolonial nature, I am one of them and I choose an emancipatory position. The difficulty of choosing a career related to the arts is now reinforced through an economic factor. Those same countries that influenced Brazilian art education focus too much on the current fashion of creative industries and design, which is nothing more than a return to what was done in England in the late nineteenth century as an answer to the aesthetic development of French manufactured goods.

In order to change this situation we must face the actual crisis. We cannot find an answer to this social, cultural, economic, ecological and human crisis only in design production, thinking and teaching. More than ever, it is now necessary to come back to the essential aspect of our subject. The essential aspect of the arts and arts education is a reinvention of worlds, criticising the world, renovating it. Emancipating through art, creativity, technique, cognition and expression. If some of these aspects are missed in the educational process, our efforts are destined to fail.

You earned a doctorate in Art Education from the University of Porto in Portugal and cite a/r/tography as an international theorisation of art education, research and practice that has been influential on your own academic development. You now teach again in Brazil, at the Universidade Federal do Vale do São Francisco. Where do you locate yourself, theoretically and artistically speaking?

I have participated in many seminars and conferences around the world and I have been working at this university since 2009. I have been trying to rethink

arts education in San Francisco Valley, especially in Juazeiro, Bahia and Petrolina, Pernambuco. I think that teachers or professors play a significant part in the transformation of the place where they live. This is more than a competence or ability; this is an indispensable path for anyone who chooses to work in education. It is not a missionary ideal but an agonistic question that confronts the traditional and modern paradigms without destroying them completely. We must find ways of recycling such paradigms for a post-colonial reality, in a world where there is no more space for so much consumerism and destruction of the ecosystem.

I met Rita Irwin at the 2011 InSEA World Congress in Budapest. At that time I was doing my Master's Degree in Visual Arts with a research topic focused on the methodologies and approaches of Visual Arts teaching used by art teachers in Juazeiro – Bahia and Petrolina – Pernambuco. My readings of Irwin helped me to build my own academic practices. I am now responsible for disciplines that discuss the theories, practices, methodologies, historical narratives and epistemology of Arts Education based in Visual Arts. I also contribute to the students' Teaching Practice: I accompany them and dialogue with them when they go to schools to teach Visual Arts, and I revisit their tensions, difficulties and problems. In all the disciplines I am responsible for, I seek to show students that becoming a teacher is part of a dialectic that bridges theories and practices. I also utilised a/r/tography when I wrote the actual curriculum of the Visual Arts Teacher Education programme at UNIVASF with my colleagues.

What kind of impact has globalisation had on art education in your region?

Globalisation brought two things to my region: one is economic development through wine, fruit industries and so on, and the other is the expansion of monocultures, the presence of Monsanto, which has prioritised the use of pesticides, the tightening of familiar agriculture and transgenic corn and transgenic soya with a huge presence in supermarkets, endangering the health of the population. Our San Francisco river is also bleeding, with industrial sewage and all kinds of untreated waste discarded into it. In a world threatened by new diseases and food shortages, the water crisis for me is one that could lead to a major war.

As for art education, globalisation is evident in the influence of other countries and theories in-between discourses and practices. In 2011, I wrote the first arts curriculum of Juazeiro Bahia and all municipal schools (with students from 5 to 18 years of age) now follow it as a parameter, not as a rule. My goal was to unite different methodologies and theories and bring together many aspects of local, regional and global importance. This curriculum also responds to the needs of arts teachers in the city. We discussed the main problems and difficulties of those teachers during meetings and the need for a greater emphasis on artistic education. One of the results of this development is the holistic vision that combines multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary aspects of the Arts, also known as MITA.

I understand that globalisation and the internationalisation of universities is inevitable, but they cannot be completely blind to local and regional questions. Some of the questions I ask could be generalised globally, while others can't. We all live in a world in crisis, but we cannot generalise the production of art and research about it, or even what it means to be human. There is a song in Brazil, *Comida* (Food) by Titãs, that says: "We do not want only food, we want food, art and entertainment". This reminds me of people like Kandinsky and Herbert Read, who thought of art not only as a discipline but also as a basic human necessity.

Figure 13. Flávia Pedrosa Vasconcelos, The eyes*, 2014, drawing*

What role does art practice play in your life and in the courses you teach? Do you believe that every art educator should also be a practitioner?

Arts practice for me forms the basis for reviewing things and the context where I live. When I produce drawings, paintings and performances, I am especially interested in interpreting the context, my feelings, mental images and an intersubjectivity related to the creative process.

At the end of my graduation in Fine Arts in 2008, I developed a performance called *Acordares* (Wake up). This consisted of the registration of a performative action in which I slept near the front door of Fortaleza's museums, questioning the lack of opportunities that these spaces give to local artists. This work led to another photo-performance which was selected for "57th Salão de Abril", a very

relevant Art exhibition at Ceará State. This was one of the first performances held in relation to the context of the institution UNIVASF. The performance challenged the categorisation of students on the basis of test scores and raised awareness about the importance of their general education.

Yet another performance was presented in an international Art education congress and was a reflection about drawing and the necessity of representation, referring to the myth of Dibutades about the origin of drawing told by Pliny the Elder.

The creation of an artwork can be poetic and can also come from an insight. When a work is a poetic form of expression, the creative process is developed aesthetically, and its relevance resides in the different expressive qualities found in the media. Insight depends on practice; the more I draw, paint and make performances, the more my artworks grow in the production of meanings. I am drawn to contemporary art but most of my work is not only conceptual. For me art has to defend points of view, and a meaningful artwork should demonstrate expressiveness, creativity, cognition and technique. If one of those things is missing, the artwork will not have the aesthetic, political, and reflexive qualities it should have.

I have some difficulties with technical and idealised drawing. Through reflections that formed part of my PhD research, I discovered that those difficulties could be a result of my education and they should be faced. Everybody can learn the arts, but not everybody can become an artist or a teacher or a researcher. Artistry is a new term that is very fashionable in Britain, and one comes across it in many Canadian studies. The term begins with Elliot Eisner's lectures, when he referred to education as an instrument that promotes teaching and learning, a search for excellence, and the stimulation of artistic processes. This thought has been perverted in actual educational policies and I have come across researches that shows that some public schools are killing the idea of the arts as an important and specific form of knowledge by using the arts as a methodological tool to teach other contents in disciplines that are considered more important such as mathematics or languages, which has led to many arts teachers finding themselves unemployed.

I think that this is a neoliberal and consumerist idea that aims to eradicate the arts from curricula in schools around the world. Artistry for me is a search for excellence in competences and abilities. It can also be found in teaching (teachistry) and in research (researchistry), and it comes with time, patience and an understanding of the slowness of the process of becoming. Employing quantitative methods used in the evaluation of science as methods for evaluating art is problematic. Our scientific governmental agencies persist in North American methods of evaluation that put quantity over quality. The emphasis on productivity is killing the arts.

I utilise some artistic practices to question my students and deterritorialise the functions of teacher and student and we reread theories through practices. I'm influenced by Rancière's notion of the "ignorant master", Paulo Freire's writings and now Gert Biesta and other authors who connect post-structuralist and post-colonialist thinking.

For those reasons, practice makes art education stronger and brings out the potential of the teacher, the professor, the artist and the researcher. I consider myself as a professor/artist/researcher because I am always thinking and living through those identities, and I take the aspect of continuous becoming into consideration. Everyone should be a practitioner in any career, by practising theory, reviewing theories and true innovation comes into being in this way.

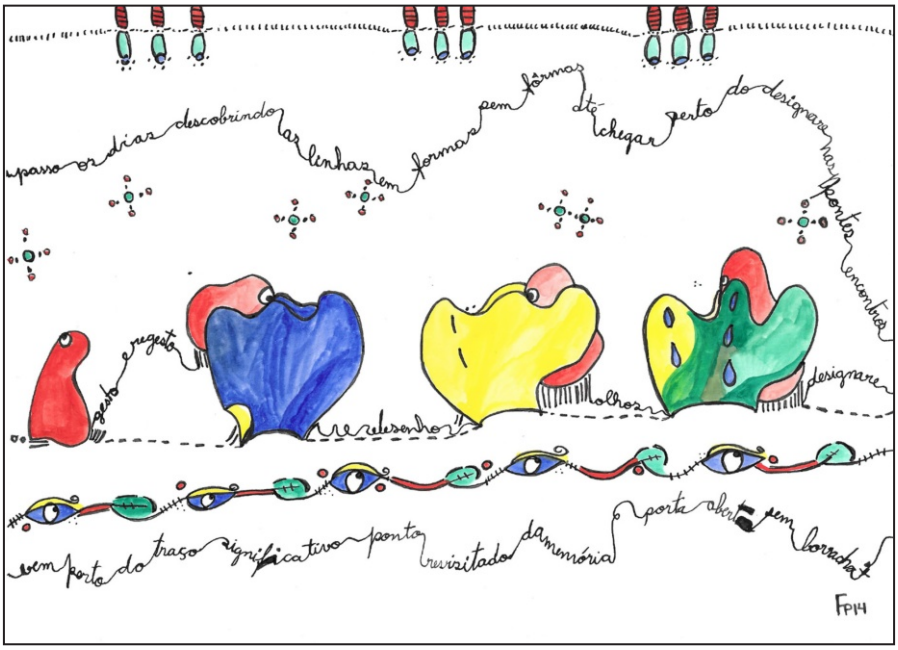

Figure 14. Flávia Pedrosa Vasconcelos, Designações a Miró ou porque eu preciso desenhar*, 2014, drawing*

Talk to me a little about your own research. In what ways does it create bridges with realities out there, for example in public schools?

During the last five years I have reflected about my experiences in Visual Arts teacher education, in which I focused on creating bridges of knowledge. I interpret knowledge as a divergent unity of a set of theories, practices and in-between competences and abilities that develop one's multiplicity. So the analysis of knowledge in any area also means the analysis of the different bridges that it can unite or divide. I am interested in the tensions and possibilities of curriculum development, methodologies, teaching/learning processes, aesthetic experience, intersubjectivity, expression, cognition, creativity, theories and practices in the arts. Bridging in my research is an attempt to present the issues that knowledge

and its production offer in visual arts teacher education as part of an educational process.

A project I worked on with my research group MITA involved teachers from public schools, visual arts education students and university staff as well as the carpenter and cleaning people. The focus of the project was to recycle forgotten wood in order to produce sustainable furniture. This was how I got some of the furniture for the laboratory I created in the course (Visual Arts Didactic Production Laboratory – LAPDAVIS).

My concern with public schools is not only related to the effectiveness and quality of arts classes, but to the appreciation of the teacher in this area. It makes no sense for me to theorise teaching practice or artistic practice in a university if I do not stimulate change. In my job, it is important to bridge university with schools, by helping to implement policies for the enhancement of public arts education, free and quality-driven for all in the region in which I work.

Figure 15. Flávia Pedrosa Vasconcelos, Lightning*, 2014, drawing*

Many academics in Europe, especially those who work in the arts, complain about the amount of bureaucracy and administrative work that stifles their creative output as well as their ability to be more experimental in the pedagogical methods they employ during their classes. Do you feel that art education runs the risk of becoming too formal and outcome-oriented in the context you work in?

I feel that it is also a global problem. The suffocation of academic work through bureaucracy, administrative work and the productivity obligation are factors that increase stress and affect the person's well-being in the exercise of his or her profession. A university is not a company. The production of thought and review of knowledge is not like the production of an industrialised product. And academics are humans, not machines. This reminds me of Chaplin's movie *Modern Times*.

Judging from the conversations I have with other academics in universities in different regions of Brazil, I think that this reality is evident in the bigger and older universities and affects academics who work in post-graduate programmes which are funded and supported by government scientific agencies. The high standards of evaluation increase stress about productivity and make those professors spend hours or days every month updating their curriculum, completing paperwork and organising proposals for new forms of financing.

As an academic I received financial support from government agencies for my Master 's degree and later on too. Many of these funds were connected to the development of training in distance learning courses, the administration of a distance course in Visual Arts Teaching and support for developing my thesis in Portugal and debating it throughout Europe and Australia. This support was always connected to the pressure of productivity standards but nothing that gave me too much anxiety or interrupted any artistic processes which I was developing in my research.

UNIVASF is a young, Brazilian university and is the only federal university created in recent decades with a regional development mission. Its area of influence and action is spread throughout the north-eastern, semi-arid region. From my experiences in this university, internationalisation and globalisation are concerns but do not restrict it too much.

Actually I am obliged to give at least eight hours of classes per week and to be involved in research and artistic work at least every two years, which allows me to progress in my academic career within this institution. In order to do this, my artwork, research (projects, publications, participation in seminars, and so on) and education (courses and disciplines I teach) are evaluated every two years by a referee who belongs to a Progression Committee of Professors. In comparison with other academics and other arts departments in Brazil, I am satisfied with the time I have to research, to supervise students and also to do bureaucratic work. I think that we risk making arts education too formal and outcome-oriented in my working context if the educational policies in Brazil continue progressing in a productivist agenda. However, I have a great hope in the potential of arts education to review critically indispensable issues in Brazil and I will make my efforts to promote an emancipatory dialogue to find solutions together with my colleagues, especially in Latin America. An example of these efforts was the recent inclusion of Bahia as the first northern state in Brazil participating in the Latin American Arts Teachers Education Research Network (LAIFOPA) in Santiago, Chile.

6. WHERE I AM NOW

You told me before the interview that you like children and enjoy working with them. What makes working with children so special to you? Which age group do you prefer working with?

Yes, I enjoy working with children. In the past, I had tried working with university students as well as adults, but it was never quite the same.

My headmistress at school told me recently that I expect children to follow me as if I were the pied piper of Hamelin. She said this during a conversation where I was about to get disciplined for not leading my class in the expected manner. She told me that this attempt to enchant students is not democratic nor is it very educational. To be honest, she was right about one thing, it is not the same experience when one does this with fifteen-year-old students and with eight- or ten-year-olds, but I believe that it is possible with both.

When you work with children I think you can plan ahead and have teaching plans, but you should always be prepared to go in the opposite direction. You should always be alert and attentive. This is not a very comfortable place for children to work in. Boundaries exist but are very flexible and changes are the bread and butter of this kind of dialogue. And in order to do this, being a 'piper' is important. One should lead the way within uncertainty. Having said that, I should add that doing this with younger students is easier. Unfortunately, as we get older each year, it becomes harder and harder to keep our minds open and let ourselves follow an unknown path. This work is special for me for the simple reason that I, as a human being, flourish in chaotic situations. I despise closed structures, fixation and order.

Tell me a little about your formative years at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem and your postgraduate studies at Brunel University in London. How did these institutions and the people you met there help you become who you are today?

My academic path was quite oblique. I arrived at the gates of Bezalel academy as a painter because the only genres of art I knew of at the time were painting and sculpture. It is only during my first year that I started to familiarise myself with artists who are concerned with time-based art. I came from a professional basketball career and had played in the top Israeli league with a local team, but stopped playing at twenty-three years of age, during my university years. Due to this background, I had bodily routines that included preparation, practice and exhaustion, repeated in

regular training sessions. Besides, playing in front of an audience and as a part of a team was a part of my everyday life. My fantasy back then, which actually turned out to be a myth, was to find these qualities in art. I became disappointed faster than I thought I would. I began looking for a way to accommodate my habits within the actual art-work. I wanted to get enthusiastic before I started making an art-work, I wanted to be tired after finishing one, I wanted to meet an audience and to be able to talk with them, not only through objects. So I began to make performances, and I've never looked back. I had a very special teacher who encouraged me. He never talked about actual performance, but about my presence in space, and that I couldn't ignore it, and therefore I would have to perform. He was my mentor. He wasn't actually 'teaching' me much. Rather, he was always listening, very seldom criticising, always finding time to meet up or talk to me. Through our conversations, I was able to develop my ideas, to express my concerns, to try, to fail.

Brunel University was a different story. Turning from a white box environment to a black box one (physically and symbolically), from chaos, opportunity and dirtiness at Bezalel to structure, order and hygiene at Brunel, I met a system that came to terms with performance in a way I had never experienced before. Libraries with bookshelves that seemed to be filled only with literature about performance, organisations fully concerned with live art and artists' welfare, professors and students reading for PhDs in Performance: all these factors came together to create a world that astonished me. At Brunel, I was able to maintain a dialogue about my main field of interest, to watch cutting-edge shows, both classic and avant-garde ones. Learning about performance in London was more like an auto-deductive activity than one led by my professors.

What is the advantage of working with performance art rather than more conventional media used in the visual arts? Do you see your practice as being closer to the visual arts or theatre? Does it matter?

I chose performance quite consciously as my main field of practice at the end of my BFA degree. For me performance is a place in the world where I can do whatever I choose, wherever I choose and whenever I choose to do it. This was and still is very important to me. Visual art does not present this exact feeling. When you do sculpture you need to carry things around and you need a studio. Belongings accumulate. Painting is the same. A painter is a lonely rider. I needed a conversation, I needed to work in real time, with real space and create real art. Also, historically speaking, I saw myself keeping up the tradition of revolting, standing out, provoking. I saw this as my ideal of art-making in this life.

Thinking about the question whether my practice is closer to theatre or visual arts is an issue that is very much linked to my education. The place where I was to meet the basic foundations of my practice, where my passion was first lit, was the Department of Visual Art at the Bezalel Academy in Israel. The context is more than a matter of chance because I feel that I do very localised performances. My work

is structured in a way that adapts itself to Israeli audiences. Besides, I think my works depend on images produced in American conceptual art in the early 1970s. That genre of art influenced a whole generation of teachers who later became my teachers. Theatre, my second point of reference, was something I came across in London. The performance-making department that I was taught in formed part of the drama school. My teachers were actors and choreographers. England is a very theatre-minded place, representing various theatrical modes. In England I was expected first of all to think about my audience, what it is that I wish to convey, and also to think about text as part of the performance.

In conclusion, I think It does matter how I define my practice and where exactly I position performance between theatre and visual art, but I should also mention other fields that have been important: anthropology, sociology, technology, sports, economics, and so on.

I imagine that your experiences with performance in England helped to inspire the organisation you created later, called "Performance-Education and the Development of Live Art". How did this organisation come about? What are its aims and what kind of challenges does an organisation like this face in Israel?

My organisation came into being in 2010 and was inspired by the "Live art development agency", a London-based fifteen-year old institution that works very hard to advocate for live art throughout the country. Coming from an Israeli cultural desert for live art—though this is no longer the situation today—I felt an entrepreneurial urge to create for myself and fellow artists a broader strategic base for performance in Israel, in a way that eventually would impregnate society and work towards a brighter future through performance. My vision turned into an economically self-sufficient organisation, and therefore planted education at the very DNA of my activity.

During the first five years of activity, my organisation has faced three main challenges. First of all, given that I work within an interdisciplinary field of interest, finding long-term partners inside an educational eco-system flooded with notions of nationality, the constant need for achievements, a fear of change and art, and prejudices that target human beings as well as art specifically, hasn't been easy. Whereas the natural aim of education is to meet international goals, produce loyal citizens (in a way that evades critical judgement) and fearful soldiers, performance is a provocative medium that contradicts the realm of schooling.

Secondly, the lack of institutional training for performance teachers, not to mention performance artists, was an obstacle that still has no answer today. I did a lot of marketing and had a lot of job opportunities, but I needed good teachers to work with me. I was not aware of the need to train them correctly, and therefore lots of efforts went down the drain, although I gathered the best people I could.

Thirdly, performance required me to spend more time with students in order to have them go through the process I wanted them to experience. A lack of time interfered

with the deep connection that I have tried to create between what I understand by an educated citizen (mostly achieved through a process of questioning reality) and art.

During the last two years, as I continued to confront these challenges, I have been working on a different path. I am no longer working simply as their performance teacher, but as their history teacher. I am still doing almost the same thing, with the same methods, but I now have eight hours per week with students and not only two.

Figure 16. Daniel Yahel, A manifest on the performance of pedagogy*, 2013, TEDx seminar, Hakkibutizim College of Education, Tel Aviv (Photo: Lionel Mitelpunkt)*

More specifically, how do you combine performance art and pedagogy? Does the artistic process and end result belong to you or the children who participate in your sessions?

It's not really me who combines performance and pedagogy. The orchestrated structure of the dialogue between a teacher and students is a performative situation by definition. An awareness of this situation primes every move I make from lesson planning to the conclusion of a classroom activity. This is not to be confused with a theatrical situation, which is a very common concept, that is, looking at the teacher as an actor and the student as audience. Rather, I try to sustain the very basic qualities of performance, arousing, provoking and exposing in-betweenness. I see the performance teacher as a tour guide for the areas inside borders. What I mean by

a 'border' is a material, a place, not a line, not a thing that stops you or that you wish to overcome, but a place. A beach to stay and wander around in.

Of course, such places can be dangerous. The teacher is responsible for bringing back the students safely. The performance teaching methods I apply incorporate the history of performance, eliminating prejudice and experiencing reenactment. This conception of method establishes my claim that everything that is explored during the time and within the space of a lesson in the classroom is the teacher's. I am not claiming that whatever the student learns is mine, but, given that I am the teacher/artist and teaching is a performance, and given that the material of performance is human bodies, and students have bodies, therefore, the artwork of a lesson is mine and only mine. It is all happening in my spaceship. We are all in it together but when the performance that takes place in class is an artwork, it belongs to the artist.

Figure 17. Daniel Yahel, How to make a professional demonstration*, 2015, New City project, Tel Aviv (Photo: Eran Eizenhiemer)*

What about the students' own performative response to your performance? Does this somehow 'belong' to your performance too? Don't you see this as a shared process that you initiate and they help to develop, a creative exchange of knowledge?

Well, this is more difficult to answer. Where does my performance end and theirs begin? I can claim that all that happens behind closed doors is mine to appropriate (or perhaps their parents') although this kind of attitude might be too one-sided, non-educational and maybe not even legal. My solution to this kind of problem is to understand whether the outcome or objects made in class—be they actions or real objects—could stand alone in a museum as art. If they could, they no longer belong to me but to them. In this case, as producers of art, the students do help in creating an exchange of knowledge. To summarise, in thinking of teaching as an art form, I stand between two subjective truths. If an action occurs within the context of a classroom and I am the only artist in the room, then the work is mine but if more art works are produced by the students within my action, the work is theirs.

How does this function in practice? Could you briefly describe a concrete example of one of the performances you have conducted with children?

During the summer of 2013, I conducted an educational performance with my performance ensemble entitled *The things that art and basketball have in common 3*. This performance forms part of a trilogy that deals with the connections between art and basketball. I performed the first two parts of the performance alone, as artworks in the past, and the results were exhibited in galleries. The last part was done with the ensemble and was performed as an open class in the academy of basketball and art that I have initiated. During the performance, students showed my interdisciplinary method of combining the two genres. The students were practising movement and sculpture tricks, including jumping over sculptures that they had formed. They were asked to adjust the sculpture to the jump and vice-versa. After that, we practised drawing circles and throwing balls. Students seated in front of empty canvases were asked to draw a perfect circle and immediately afterwards, shot a ball to the basket. They repeated the same actions. Later, we rehearsed in an open classroom, where all students as well as myself were occupied with individual chores like celebrating a birthday, playing a cello, making graffiti and building a wall out of cardboard. I tried to shoot six balls into the basket, stopping only after six consecutive, successful shots. Throughout the performance, I interacted with the audience.

And what do you set out to achieve when you perform such a piece?

The art and basketball project is an autobiographical piece. I quit sports for art, believing that art would give me the same adrenalin rush that I used to have while playing basketball: preparing the body before games, having an audience, fatigue, excitement. I soon realised that art wasn't the same kind of activity. Therefore, I have tried to link my two favourite occupations. This linkage derives from different sources. Art history, especially Dadaist structures and happenings, led me to combine two objects with no relations, with a sense of humour. Interdisciplinary as a central principle in performance and having an audience were two factors that led me to weld these two activities together.

Figure 18. Daniel Yahel, The things art and basketball have in common #3, *2013, Under the mountain new public art festival, Jerusalem (Photo: Haim Barbalet)*

Do you believe that the performance art you conduct with children has political or transformative potential? If so, what do you think you are transforming?

Of course I believe my work has transformative powers. On the other hand, I cannot really know for sure because this transformation could happen seventy years from now, in the future. Thinking about myself as a designer of reality, changing people, ways of behaviour, audiences, students, is not my conventional way of thinking. I would rather be much more modest than this. I create situations, I shed light upon things, I reveal. As a teacher of performance (and not performance art), I understand that this field of study has disciplinary concepts, one of which is transformation. Here, concepts of education are taking the upper hand. As a teacher, my perception is that students make their own changes with time, almost regardless of their teachers' help. It is true that students still talk about the help they get from their teachers, but I prefer to doubt this idea, as this is possibly only a way of saying things in a world where dependence is strong. Nevertheless, I do believe that I am making a political change. The main shift I try to achieve through the political minds of my students is to make them aware of certain aspects of reality, let them be as giant or microscopic as they wish and to try to develop critical thinking in them.

7. NAVIGATING MULTIPLE PRACTICES

You currently lecture in art education at Deakin University in Melbourne but you are also a practising artist and have worked as a creative art therapist and practised in a hospital for three years. Do you ever feel that one of these roles is 'stronger' than the other two? Which is the most demanding?

I think that my practice as an artist is 'stronger' because it is the practice that best fuels and balances myself and that generates new knowledge for my other work as both arts educator and creative arts therapist. My artistic practice is a wellspring of experience and knowledge. I develop technical knowledge and insight to place, culture etc. through experimenting with ideas, image, materials and techniques; and I develop knowledge about myself through interpreting metaphoric images I create. The experiential way in which I create art means that as issues arise I research these issues further. This has led to some obscure research topics such as the use of 'the dress in art' or 'working with pattern in the visual artistic practice process' so my artistic practice is also very research-oriented. I would say my artistic practice is experiential, experimental, knowledge building and definitely therapeutic and these benefit teaching by providing confidence to teach art in a student-centred way that facilitates students' experiential processes.

In reply to your question about which of my practices is most demanding, I would say that they each have their own demands but as exhibition or research paper deadlines loom, my art and arts practice based research becomes extra demanding.

When I was a full-time artist and had pressure to put together solo exhibitions regularly (and struggled financially because the costs of art production don't leave much room for profit margins), I found my artistic practice to be very demanding. This was because I felt my artistic practice was a vocational calling and despite economic hardships, was driven to work more-or-less full-time at it. During my twenties and thirties I took my artistic practice and identity as an artist really seriously and tried to build the foundations of a career as an artist by developing community art projects and having regular exhibitions.

My interest in art therapy developed from my habit of psychoanalysing myself through interpreting metaphorical meanings of my art. In my early thirties, while practising as an artist, I worked part-time in four of Melbourne's hospitals known then as *North West Hospitals*. I was completing my master's degree in art therapy at the time so working really long hours juggling study, hospital work and my own studio practice. I worked in a team of health professionals caring for patients with psychiatric conditions and forms of dementia. This work was sometimes demanding

when working with clients in the hospital. As a form of self-care and because my main practice was then my artistic practice, I would spend long evenings back in my studio after working in the hospitals, in order to nurture and balance myself through my work. Addressing the demands of each artwork was a good meditative process for me.

Now in my late forties, I work full-time as an academic lecturing mainly in art education. Currently, the most demanding part of my job is aligning my coursework assignments to assessment criteria because art is so difficult to assess. As my students are generalist teacher education students and not art students, some do not understand or perhaps value artistic-creative processes. The experiential and experimental nature of artistic processes mean that assessment criteria can be challenging to prescribe and some students have trouble with this. Creative processes in art and art education are messy – but some students don't like being messy – interpreting creative, messy processes as dis-organised. In short, messy, creative-artistic work does not fit so well into education systems and I find this clash to be demanding in my work as an academic. However, I kind of enjoy researching this clash also, so whilst it is demanding it is very interesting.

How does your approach to "messy" creative work vary in art education and therapy? How do these differences affect your relationship with learners or patients?

My approach to artistic production in art education is to teach the many dimensions of art to my pre-service teachers: technique, media, design elements and principles/composition/form, art history, art theory and criticism, the different artistic practices and so on. This is in effect knowledge about artistic practice and appreciation geared toward the appropriate cohort and pedagogical approach within the limited time frame of a unit. I can only teach so much of this as overall my education students studying a four-year degree would get about 20 hours of tuition in visual art education, 20 hours in dance/drama and 20 hours in music. I teach up to 28 students at a time in a studio-based classroom and try to be as student-centred as possible in my pedagogical approach. For instance, I might get students to do quick drawings to express how they feel about something then show them how they can interpret the meaning of these images for themselves. Through expanding on these kind of student-centred artistic experiences, I get students to explore their identity, place or other topics unique to each individual. I then direct them to artists that I think would be relevant to the images, subject matter, style etc. that may be emerging in their work, if I think they can learn from these other artists.

My art therapy work is client-centred and about encouraging clients to express their feelings and emotions through art. This differs from art education as, instead of teaching composition, design elements and principles, I put clients at ease so that they can express themselves in an authentic way. I then inquire into the meaning of what they create by getting them to tell me about what aspects of their art mean

for them. In this work, I use a different approach to that of my teaching practice because my clients are usually unwell, so a gentle, therapeutic approach is required. I am obviously not assessing their work as I am with art education students, so in the art therapy context there is more freedom to explore the realms of artistic expression, subconscious and embodied thinking and how this affects their wellbeing, behaviour etc.

That said, I think creative art therapy fits well into schools and is an area I am starting to research. Art therapy helps young students – particularly teenagers, to be able to express themselves and learn more about their identity, persona, place etc. Knowing this, when I teach pre-service teachers how to teach art, I incorporate a few exercises that are in effect art therapy skills. I do this for two reasons: to teach them a little about this approach, but also because it's important for pre-service teachers to know the difference between art therapy approaches and teaching art education. I point out for instance that it is wrong to interpret students (or clients' art work) without first asking them what they think their own work means for them. I also share with both my art education students and clients in art therapy, that it is common to feel a bit anxious about creating art and to assure them that they are not being judged on their artistic talent – art, after all, isn't for everyone.

Let's talk about your own creative work. What, if anything, does your own practice give you, personally and professionally, that neither art education nor art therapy can offer?

On a personal level, my own practice has allowed me to construct my identity. This has guided my professional work as it has enabled me to help others using the qualities of art. My experience as an artist is what has inspired me to do these other art-related things (art therapy and art education) as I know and value creative-artistic processes and art.

As an artist I enjoy interpreting metaphoric and symbolic meanings of my work. For example, a re-occurring dress, or particular uses of pattern in my artworks across a twenty-year practice, have strong personal meaning for me about my ancestral ties to place and general interconnection with place. These images and the ways I work out their meanings, have evolved as a result of intense practice over time.

This knowledge and insight from my artistic practice in turn gives me professional confidence and know-how to develop structure and scaffold lessons for my pre-service teachers, or activities for my art therapy clients so they have appropriate artistic experiences in a short time frame, over time. In my teaching, this requires careful consideration in the planning of workshops, suitable pedagogical approaches and diagnostic, formative and summative assessment strategies. In my art therapy work, the design of the activities draws on many different artistic experiences I have encountered, but are obviously altered to suit the needs of the client.

You previously lived in New Zealand and then moved to Australia, where you now live and work. A sense of place and transience has in fact characterised much of your own work as an artist. Can you tell me a little about how your own artistic work developed in relation to post-colonialism?

My artistic work developed in relation to post-colonialism mostly from living in New Zealand. I lived in Wellington until I was eighteen then moved to the University of Canterbury in the South Island to do my first four-year degree in Fine Art. My upbringing and education in New Zealand taught me about Maori culture and I grew to love it. I have always supported the nurturing of Maori culture in the New Zealand social, cultural and political landscape. This is perhaps best demonstrated by a documentary I co-directed on Maori Nationalism during my years at the University of Canterbury, *Maori Nationalism, a twenty-first century perspective*. My mother was a fourth generation New Zealander and my father migrated to New Zealand from Ireland when he was in his thirties. This meant that, along with the fact that I am not Maori, I had a sense of belonging in places other than New Zealand and this 'otherness' has fuelled my arts practice and academic writing into place philosophy and Identity. When I came to live in Australia, I was a bit surprised that there seemed to be a wider gap between Indigenous and mainstream or 'white' Australian culture. I was drawn to work with Indigenous Australians through my teaching and found that my experiences in New Zealand and as artist, creative arts therapist and educator, help with this work. I have taught on and off for the past ten years, adult Indigenous students studying to be artists and/or teachers and I am very excited that I am about to supervise an Indigenous student for her PhD.

I am a reflexive practitioner in all my professional work so these experiences feed into my own work. My work tends to be autobiographical and about self-construction but also increasingly about broader social and cultural issues. This is because, through my work I have learnt that I am part of my ancestors and connected to place in a holistic way. It probably sounds a bit corny but it is a view that has affinity with my understanding of Maori, Indigenous Australian and Gaelic/Celtic ways of being. These ancient and indigenous cultures hold rich knowledge about ways of being that academia struggles to include. When you've had insight into these cultures before academia, it seems a bit odd that they are not included more. In my experience, understanding the similarities between people of different cultures (which is often found through engaging in holistic experiences such as art), is a powerful way to address the focus on cultural differences and biases (racism).

'Place' is, by nature, linked to communities, identities and multiple social narratives, which bring us to another of your interests: community art. What, in your view, is the relationship between community art and art education? In what sense is community art pedagogical and in what sense is art education 'relational', to use Bourriaud's term?

The relationship between community art and art education is that community art is a very important movement in art that I think is quite compatible with art education. This is because community art is inclusive and acknowledges that art comes from community interaction and in turn informs communities.

Community art is pedagogical because it teaches that art doesn't necessarily have to be for the talented and individually successful. It enables students to collaborate to create art so that they all get a turn and feel part of this creation. They can then see the social and cultural benefits through community interaction with the art.

This is one of the many ways in which art education can be 'relational'. Going to see art in a gallery is also relational and learning about how an artist developed his/her ideas, approach and so on, through his/her relations with others is also a way of learning how art can be relational. I do think that for a group of students who are studying to be generalist teachers (such as mine), relational art – particularly in a community art context – is a great way for everyone to participate and learn without feeling inadequate because of their perceived lack of talent or ability.

Could you describe a specific community project you have been involved in?

One community project that I was involved in was *Artists in the Gardens* at the Geelong Botanical Gardens in 2004. Not long before this project began, I had moved to the regional town of Geelong with my two small children and artist-husband, Phillip Doggett-Williams. I had found it isolating, being a stay-at-home mother of pre-school children, and through mother-baby groups, had made a few artist-friends who belonged to an artist collective. This artist collective had been attempting to showcase the work of sculptors working in the regional/rural region of Geelong for a year or so, and had prepared a call for expressions of interest from artists who wanted to create large-scale outdoor sculpture. Artists were required to submit a maquette of their proposed sculpture along with instructions and designs about how it would be installed. I had been wanting to make sculpture for a while and one of the reasons we had moved out of the city of Melbourne to Geelong was to purchase a house with land so that we would have space to create sculpture in our backyard. Phillip had been welding and casting sculpture for a few years and I had developed drawings and maquettes of my flying dress that had evolved from my portraits, dresses and birds in my paintings over the years. A figureless dress transitioning from a European interior to the Australian landscape in *Surrender* represented my own transition to my adopted home of Australia. A decade later I created *Dress at Bundanon* during an artist residency at Bundanon.[1] The flying dress represented a way of being in the world I had come to know which was transient and about not laying claim to a place.

For the *Artists in the Gardens* exhibition in Geelong, I submitted a maquette of a flying dress from the Victorian era snared on the branch of a tree. This represented my transient journey through life represented in the flying dress that, having found my new home in Geelong, would also be snared on one of its trees. At the same time

Figure 19. Shelley Hannigan, Surrender, *1998, oil on canvas*

Figure 20. Shelley Hannigan, Dress at Bundanon, *2008, pastel and gouache on paper*

I was tapping into the Victorian style of the Botanical Gardens and the Victorian architecture of Geelong that had enabled me to feel connected to the place. Thus my maquette represented my journey and connection with Geelong but also the idea that the dress could have been blown from a clothesline from the Victorian era in Geelong. My maquette was selected to be developed into one of the twelve large-scale outdoor sculptures that would be exhibited for two years in the botanical gardens. I called this sculpture the *The Wind in the Billows*.

Figure 21. Shelley Hannigan, The Wind in the Billows, *2004, stainless steel and metal mesh*

We each visited businesses in the community to generate additional funding as needed. A metal company donated some welding metal for me to create my dress and a local art collector who had a factory and crane facilities at his disposal, offered to build and install a tree that I could connect this dress to. We were also supported by the curator of the Geelong Botanic Gardens, and had some funding from Regional Arts Victoria, The City of Greater Geelong and private donations.

The twelve artists who were chosen to create and exhibit their sculptures formed a group (along with other members of the community who planned on including

art students with disabilities, to also create a sculpture). All artists involved created a collaborative sculpture meaningful to the place, utilising felled pine trees and equipment from the botanical gardens site. This piece became a ground-quilt of slabs of timber that were stitched together with wire. This quilt was then planted out with native grasses and left to break down and merge into the landscape.

At the end of this whole project when thirteen sculptures had been installed, we realised we had in effect generated a sculpture park. This community project had been motivated by the need for artists in the region to be visible. They had been concerned by the lack of funding for the arts in the region, as funding had tended to go to sport and other community events. At that time there were very few galleries or exhibiting opportunities for artists in the region and the artists involved had wanted their place to be an artistic/cultural one not so dominated by sport. Creating a public exhibition space to showcase artists in the region served two purposes: It was an opportunity for the artists' community to take the initiative and create a professional exhibition of sculpture in the region but it also sent a message to the community at large that 'artists are here and contributing to the place'. This community arts project coincided with other cultural incentives and Geelong today has changed for the better with more artistic and cultural events, creative markets and cafés.

How much do you feel has 'place' had an impact on your decisions regarding your career as an artist-teacher? How do you think are artist-teachers perceived by others in your region?

I don't think that place initially impacted my decisions to become an artist-teacher. Place is something that I have become more interested in over the years as I created my own art and realised it often referenced issues of place. For my PhD research, I researched this phenomenon, to understand what place actually means in connection to identity, and how place was distinct from space. This led me to delve into how artists understand place as it had been my experience that artists deal with experiences of place using visual-spatial thinking within their work but also through reflecting on their individual perspectives, experiences of place and social-spatial issues. This was important for me to work out, as I continued down my path of having these three professional practices (artist, art therapist and art educator); particularly as I found that the term space is often used in education, or used interchangeably with place, yet there is a lack of clarity about what the terms actually mean in each discipline or field.

Now that I understand these terms more from artists' perspectives, I incorporate place and identity issues in my art-teaching. I also make the distinction between space and 'place and identity' in my work.

With regard to your second question, my personal experience is that artist-teachers are not perceived that well in my region. I pick up from conversations from both the

artworld and education field, that you are either an artist or a teacher. There seems to be an assumption that if you are a practising artist you cannot be a dedicated art teacher/educator and vice versa. I disagree and actually believe that all my practices inform each other. I choose to do all, because I am passionate about my work in my three practices.

You said that your different practices inform each other. More specifically, how do you think teaching can contribute to an artist's creative practice?

My teaching contributes to my artistic-creative practice in a number of ways. Firstly, I have had to learn many different techniques to teach secondary students and tertiary level art students in various employment positions I have had (schools, community art colleges, universities). I have learnt darkroom photography, Photoshop, how to make photographic stencils and use solar etching techniques. I've learnt many textile-oriented skills such as screen-printing, sewing, felting, paper-making and so on. Through learning and doing these activities I have developed other ideas for my art. Sometimes if I have had to create samples to demonstrate printing techniques, I have then used these to paint on as part of my own artistic practice work.

Secondly, teaching art requires me to be clear about the knowledge I am conveying. This has required me to clarify some of my own understandings of art, keep informed of contemporary art and learn about new techniques, materials and processes

My work as an academic has also informed my practice as an artist. My most recent work emerged from a research group in which we were discussing papers and presenting our ideas exploring celebrity culture. I had been writing so much for academic journals or conferences that I could only manage to work on one drawing at a time. This was a change to my earlier adult years of being a full-time visual artist when I would work on multiple works at the same time. This singular work I was developing, was based on the champion racehorse, *Black Caviar*, as *the* celebrity animal of Australia at the time. I developed this painting with clear steps that involved designing a stencil of my own altered Australian coat of arms that included other iconic images such as the Sydney harbour bridge. Once I had developed a certain textured surface on the canvas and stencilled my image into a patterned wallpaper, I was then able to paint my drawing of Black Caviar in one sitting in a fresh, gestural way using oil paint.

I would have to say that since having children seventeen years ago and having to juggle many hours of work as a creative arts therapist, an art teacher and academic, I use my time as an artist very economically. In contrast, when I was a full-time artist (prior to having children), I would spend a lot of time contemplating my works, and whilst this was an opportunity to channel my subconscious and create and interpret interesting images that emerged from this experience, I do like the more resolved and more technically proficient works I am developing now.

I'd also like to ask a final question about the key issues or debates in arts education in your region. What are your thoughts about these issues?

I would have to say that the key issue in arts education now is the standardised testing model that the government introduced a few years ago. This has been a way to judge students' literacy and numeracy abilities but is also used to assess the performance of schools and teachers. Art and creativity do not seem to be considered in this model.

The recently rolled-out Australian curriculum, ACARA, has required all primary schools to provide two hours per week of the five art forms: dance, drama, visual art, music and media arts. This curriculum has been an issue for some arts educators as there have been questions around how we can do justice to each discipline when we only have about 20–30 minutes to dedicate to each subject, per week. Of course there are creative and successful ways of teaching the arts in integrated and interdisciplinary ways but it is important to also teach some of the discipline knowledge of each art's modality in schools. I notice media is often incorporated into other subjects like literacy or ICT, but there are unique ways of teaching media in visual arts and music for instance, so it is important that media arts is kept in the arts area. The recurring issue of the arts in education is the limit of time we have to teach it in a quality way. I can't help but interpret this lack of time and space given to the arts in education as symbolic of the way the education system, government, policy makers who make these decisions, undervalue the arts. I wonder if some of those in power really even understand the arts – this would explain the lack of value that comes through the system and Australian society at large. I really think that if anyone really understands the arts and experiences them properly, they will see the value the arts hold for teaching, learning, creative thinking, problem-solving and well-being.

NOTE

[1] Bundanon was the home of the artists Yvonne and Arthur Boyd. It was bequeathed to the people of Australia to be used as an artists' residency, environmental and artistic education centre. It is located on the edge of the Shoalhaven River in New South Wales, Australia.

8. AN EDUCATION IN ARTISTIC THINKING

You like to say that your work combines three disciplines: art, philosophy and education. All your colleagues and students know that the ideas of Joseph Beuys—himself also an artist, profound thinker and teacher—is one of your major sources of inspiration. Would you say that it was Beuys' example that inspired you to combine the roles of artist, educator and philosopher in your own career?

I studied art, philosophy and pedagogy in Wuppertal and Cologne. Düsseldorf lies only a few kilometres away from both cities. At that time, Joseph Beuys was living and working there as a teacher at the art academy of Düsseldorf. He was very present as an artist in the region at that time, but during my studies I was not yet focused on him. My teachers were Daniel Spoerri and Bazon Brock, who is still a leading theorist of art and once was a member of the Fluxus movement, where he collaborated with Beuys. I began my studies on Beuys' art and ideas when I started to work as a teacher at school. I felt unsatisfied with the art education curricula in schools and I wanted to bring together the three elements of my work in order to find alternative ways of a more art-related art education. I thought that Beuys was a figure who already worked in the relation of the fields of art, philosophy and education. So I decided to learn from him, and in fact – it was extremely inspiring for my further work. He spoke about art 'from inside', out of his experience as an artist. From there he developed an extended concept of art. He understood art not as a creative discipline of painting, acting or making music, but art as existential creativity. This is what he expressed in his famous saying: "Every man is an artist". His artworks – the drawings, sculptures and actions – are a form of research and a presentation of basic elements of human creativity. In endless discussions in galleries, museums, academies and elsewhere, he explained his theoretical perspectives of the 'anthropological art'. And he said: "Education is the most important aspect in my art".

I tried to create bridges between the extended concept of art and art education inside and outside schools. The focal point for me is the education of artistic thinking: sensitive perception, productive imagination, critical reflection and will-power activated in an artistic education. My reflection on these aspects is inspired by my experience as an artist on one hand and by philosophical theory on the other. So all three elements work together: making art, asking philosophically what art is and what we can learn from it, and developing art education curricula.

Figure 22. Carl-Peter Buschkühle, Untitled, *2015, print on paper, 110 × 80 cm*

Was there a time in the earlier stages of your career when you dreamt of living exclusively as an artist rather than a university professor? Did you attend an art academy?

During my studies I pushed aside the idea of becoming a teacher of art. In Germany you have to study two subjects plus educational sciences in order to become a teacher. I concentrated mainly on my subjects art and philosophy. I started to develop my own artistic work and at the same time I read theories of art and texts of philosophical aesthetics. I even began to write about art. My dream was indeed to live as an artist. But it became clear that my second passion was philosophy with an accent on aesthetics. So I could never concentrate only on art. If I did that, I would

miss philosophy and the other way round. It was very fortunate for me to have a teacher like Bazon Brock who was and still is an inspiring thinker as well as an artist. He calls himself an "artist without works", because he does not create artefacts like paintings or sculptures. But he developed 'action teaching' and 'rhetorical opera', where he combines performance with philosophy. These combinations of the two fields were very interesting to me. Beuys did this too.

So I concluded my studies at the University of Wuppertal and at the University of Art and Design in Cologne, a university of applied science, and did not visit the art academy in Düsseldorf. After finishing my studies I worked for almost two years as an artist and author. I spent some time in London, Paris and Italy, but then decided to work as a teacher. I did not feel enough passion to concentrate on a career as an artist. During my studies neo-Expressionist or 'wild' painters like Kippenberger and Fetting in Germany, Clemente and Chia in Italy, Haring, Basquiat or Schnabel in the USA were successful. They were only a few years older than we were and we wanted to be like them. But Spoerri said to me: "The time of wild painting is already over. You have to find new ways of being successful as an artist". But, even though I liked the romantic image of life as an artist, I didn't want to struggle for success in the art market. This was a time when we young artists felt that almost everything has already been done in art. The impulse of the avant-garde had ended. I didn't feel enough like an artist to concentrate only on that field. So I found my way to combine the two passions, art and philosophy, and I discovered a third one, once I started to teach.

You referred earlier to your vision of an art-related art education. This is what you and others have sometimes theorised as "artistic art education" or "künstlerische Kunstpädagogik" and seems to place an emphasis on the significance of artistic practices and modes of thinking in the pedagogy of art. Can you expand on this?

In German art education there was and still is a strong emphasis on the reception of images. In earlier times those images were artworks, but since the late 1960s, images from the media have been added. The concept that established media images as an important element of art education was called 'Visuelle Kommunikation' – Visual Communication. It is very similar to the concept of 'Visual Culture Art Education' (VCAE), which is currently influential in the USA and UK. As a practising artist it was not satisfying for me to be confronted with the follow-up concept of 'aesthetic education' which integrated art and media images, but still focused mainly on the reception of images. There was no elaborated didactic of creation. For me, that was one of the starting-points that led to my dissertation on Beuys' art concept as a form of art education. I combined my own experience as an artist with the theory of Beuys and other elements of philosophy of art, for instance Adorno's "Aesthetic Theory", and developed an art-related concept of art education which laid an accent on creation. During my time as a full-time teacher at a grammar school, I tried to

develop practical concepts and methods. The result was the ‘artistic project’, which integrates production and reception and combines the research of knowledge with creation. The core element of a theme-related artistic project is the individual creation of an artwork by the students. In order to do that they do not only need technical skills in the media they use or skills in working on formal aspects. They also need to gather knowledge about their theme. Research of information as well as reflection on relations between different aspects are both necessary. For instance, in order to create an image where figures perform an action, you need knowledge about the figures, the action and the setting.

To give an example: in a certain class 8 of a grammar school the pupils created hybrid heads that integrated human and animal elements. While doing so, they studied anatomical details in the faces of their neighbours as well as in prepared models of animals which we took from the biological collection of the school. While working on the head we examined a medieval image of the devil, a film poster which showed the Orks in ‘Lord of the Rings’, a picture of Darth Vader and the front design of an Audi. We found out that hybrid heads have a complex history. In beings like the devil they are symbols of evil. The devil is back in actual film figures like the Orks, while science fiction adds hybrids that are a mixture of technical devices and human elements, and the car design uses those elements in order to give the automobile an evil look that frightens others on the road. After developing the head-sculpture in clay, the students then created a whole figure. In groups they wrote stories about an adventure involving the figures and then they showed a dramatic moment of the story in a picture – they could choose whether they wanted to paint, to produce a digital montage or an animation video. In order to do this, we observed strategies of dramatic images which came to a climax in Baroque art. We discovered that strategies of lively images in popular media like comics, films or computer games are influenced by this historical epoch. The students transformed their observation into their own action images. So an artistic project revolves around the creation process and from there it expands to include interdisciplinary research in relevant fields and reflects aspects that inspire students’ individual work. The teacher is a companion throughout the follow-up phases of the project, prepared for individual support and for other lessons as well.

In this model of art education, art plays a central role in many perspectives. That is why I call it “artistic art-education”, “künstlerische Kunstpädagogik” or especially “künstlerische Bildung”. The artistic projects have an art-related pedagogy which puts the creation process at the centre of learning activities. Individual students’ experiments and research, group work and whole class activities alternate. Thus, artistic projects show that art combines knowledge with creation. In doing so it educates a complex creative thinking process that combines perception, reflection, imagination and skills. These are basic elements of an existential creativity ‘every man as an artist’ needs for his or her ‘art of living’ in a globalised, multicultural society, where everybody is challenged to develop personal identity, values and societal responsibility on his or her own account.

Would you say that "künstlerische Bildung" is a prominent pedagogical system in German art education?

"Künstlerische BIldung" has made a career in German art education for more than fifteen years now. It developed in a way that is typical of something new in a field. At first, most of the scholars in art education were against it. They thought there is too much creation and too little reception in this approach. This was a prejudice because in the first years there was mainly the theory of "künstlerische Bildung", that demanded more concentration on the pedagogy of the creative process and its different learning contexts. But there was a lack of practical examples in the beginning. Meanwhile many of these examples were published (Buschkühle, Kettel, Urlaß, and others) and many lively discussions took place in congresses and publications. In recent years, "künstlerische Bildung" has become an established concept in German art education. Actual curricula for schools integrate central aspects of its didactics, the concept forms part of the studies within universities and art academies, while publications on the history of art education in Germany end with "künstlerische Bildung" as the most recent development. In Austria this approach has become quite popular in recent years and actually influences the new curricula for schools and academic studies in art education.

In line with what you have explained about your belief in the importance of creative practice, you have worked consistently on your own art—a series of heads that are manipulated digitally and with multiple layers of paint. How did this work develop?

For many years I concentrated on writing about art and art education but in 2003 I started my artistic work again. After a break of more than a decade, it took some time for me to find the path again. It was important for me to find a theme which I could concentrate on. Given that I continued writing and teaching I did not have much time for the artistic work but it was clear that I had to work constantly on it, otherwise there would be no development. The head became the theme. It is rich in its formal and symbolic potential and you can create a strong expression of the face which is a good indicator of the form's power. During my studies at the university I had worked on heads in sculpture and now I started to produce them in painting. I was always fascinated in combinations of traditional and new media, so I experimented with the relation of painting and digital photography. I studied strategies employed by Rauschenberg, Warhol, Polke, Richter and others. This research finally led me to the method I use now. The head-pictures are mainly worked out on the computer but they actually consist of different media: elements of photography, drawing, painting and sculpture. Some productions have more than ninety digital layers so each head becomes a unique character; it represents nobody except itself. In bringing together these many elements to create a new head I practice something like a 'digital alchemy'. The heads are hermetic beings of their own, somehow looking wild.

Figure 23. Carl-Peter Buschkühle, Untitled, *2015, print on paper, 110 × 80 cm*

But as artificial electronic creatures consisting of different contributions they are somehow combined identities, trans-human figures.

Do you think this creative work is related in any way with your work as an educator? Do you ever show it or discuss it with your students?

The heads are not directly related to my work as an educator. All disciplines have their own qualities and challenges. Mixing personal artistic work with art education can quickly lead to a situation where an art educator mainly teaches her or his own

strategy of work. This is demanded when you are an artistic teacher at an academy but when you are working in schools or with students of art education different things are demanded. The aim of an artistic education should be the development of the personal creativity of each student. Theme-related projects have to face the challenges of the topic. The students need to gather relevant knowledge, and they should be able to choose the appropriate medium in which they want to express themselves. So it would be too narrow to work mainly on heads and digital imagery.

On the other hand, my 'head-works' are indeed related to my work as a teacher. I am convinced that art educators must be artists. Not to educate followers in their style, but to gain experience in the processes of artistic work. Art educators need to be intuitive about the developing forms the students create and about their working processes, capacities and problems. Theoretical knowledge alone is not enough to foster the students' creative process. Art teachers must have an artistic experience of their own in order to know what is needed in certain situations of the working process. They have to know about 'chaos – movement – form', the three elements Joseph Beuys uses to explain the creative process. Thus they know that a chaotic phase is nothing one should be afraid of, but it is very important to move forward in the direction of an authentic form. Working as an artist gives the teacher the experience as well as the knowledge to develop a pedagogy of creation. So they know that it is not easy to achieve a quality result. One has to struggle for it. And it is not the subjectivity of the student or the teacher that decides whether a work is ready or not. It is the work itself that says "I am satisfied with myself", as Beuys expressed it.

Theoretical descriptions do not help very much when it comes to listening to what a form 'says'. The intuition for it grows when you are working as an artist yourself. So you do not only have knowledge of aesthetic rules but you develop an aesthetic empathy that is fostered by working with one's hands and experimenting with the medium. So, sometimes I show some of my 'head-works' to the students and we talk about it. But I only do it when similar problems arise in their working process or when they ask for it. The reason why I use my own artworks sparingly in the teaching process is that I do not want to influence my students too much. There is always a certain risk when the teacher comes along with whatever she or he is doing, because in addition to the impression of the work there is the authority of the person. This double influence can make it more difficult for the students to find their own path.

In various cultural contexts, artists and teachers do not enjoy the same kind of social standing. Would you say this is the case in Germany?

In Germany there is a clear distinction in the social standing of an artist and an art educator. You can notice this in art academies or universities of art. There you have professional artists as teachers at the top of the system. Then there are the art scientists, for instance art historians. They are the 'priests' who explain the inspired

Figure 24. Carl-Peter Buschkühle, Untitled, *2014, print on paper, 85 × 60 cm*

works of the artists. In the third place of the hierarchy there are the caretakers who make sure that the practical life of the academy is running well. Finally, some strange creatures show up and nobody knows exactly what they are doing: these are art educators who teach art didactics to students who also want to become art educators. These students have a weak standing in academies, while the most privileged are those students who want to become professional artists. You can find the same hierarchy in society's estimation of these careers.

In schools art educators are strange beings as well. Teachers of other subjects often doubt that one can seriously learn anything in art. "They are painting nice

pictures with the pupils, but they often cause a mess in the classroom". Art does not play an important role in German primary and grammar schools. Although it is a compulsory subject the conditions aren't good. Most teachers in primary schools teach art without having studied the subject. In grammar schools there isn't enough time for the teaching of art. In classes 7, 8 and 9 there is only one hour for art in the timetable. Because this is too little, especially considering the time needed for creative work, the compromise is that art and music change each half-year, so that each subject has two hours a week. This system makes it very difficult to form a proper curriculum in these subjects. In the upper classes of gymnasiums, art is a regular subject with three hours a week and if pupils choose it as an intensive course they have six hours of art every week.

Why do you think art education is undervalued?

The problem is not that art education is a nonsensical subject, but that it is of such complexity that it is not easy to understand. As Joseph Beuys stated in an interview in 1969 in the German art education magazine *Kunst + Unterricht* (Art + Education): "Art is the most complicated subject. But most art teachers do not understand their subject, so it is the least respected subject". Art education is an art of its own. If you mix it with art practice then you reduce it and the same thing happens if you mix it with art history. Recent movements in German art education try to improve the reputation of the subject by making it more scientific, by pushing it in the direction of art history. In fact, art education is an interdisciplinary subject: art practice, art sciences (art history, philosophical aesthetics, cultural theory, media theory …) and educational sciences (pedagogy, psychology …). So it is not easy to grasp and not easy to learn.

And how do your own students like to think of themselves: as artists, teachers or artist-teachers?

Art educators are not specialised in one discipline in the field of art, but they are 'generalists', "uomini universali", who work in the relation of different relevant factors. Students have to develop their attitude towards these challenges. My observation is that those who want to become teachers in grammar schools see themselves more as artists who have more or less passion for teaching. Students who want to become teachers in primary or lower secondary schools are usually more interested in the pedagogical aspects of the subject and they think of themselves more as teachers than as artists. Both positions are problematic. Art is such a special and at the same time universal subject that it demands of artists and teachers that they understand their teaching as a complex art in its own right. Being aware of this helps us to avoid having frustrated artists in schools as well as teachers who use art simply as a compensation for the intellectual learning in other subjects.

9. SEARCHING THE WAYS OF THE ART OF ART EDUCATION IN THE NORTH

You are an artist and an art educator based at the University of Lapland in Finland. At the beginning of your career, did you consider the possibility of working only as an artist? How did you get involved in art education?

I was born and have lived for most of my life in northern Finland in a small village in the middle of the wilderness. I should be a hunter or a fisherman. Being a Laplander is one of the stronger aspects of my identity. As a youngster I was interested in nature and landscape, and before I started my formal education as an art educator, I made drawings and paintings. What interested me were the marks people left on the landscape: reindeer fences, lumberjacks' cabins, villages along a river and fishery buildings on the Arctic Ocean. I could experience the narratives infused in these objects of my interest and feel how people had found their place amid nature, on this planet, and under this sky.

Somehow I ended up studying art education in Helsinki. Back then in Helsinki there was the Academy of Fine Art and the University of Art and Design, where the art education programme was located. I received a modernist art education. This education dislodged my Northern identity, questioning its significance. At that time, art was seen as a universal phenomenon, with no real place for the voice of local people. Good art was independent of its surroundings. I was exposed to the basic tenets of modernism: the individuality of the artist, the autonomy of art and the emanation of art from centres towards the periphery. In art, modernism subjugated art to the point where landscape art itself, as a tradition for depicting localness, became regarded as a sign of dilettantism. Only the dabbler could take an interest in landscape art. When I was a student, and for a time afterwards, I felt doubly marginalised vis-à-vis modernism: I had taken an interest not only in the northern periphery but in landscape as well. I almost stopped making art.

The way back to the northern landscape and its essential elements revealed itself to me during my travels in Europe. People's natural and everyday link to the landscape had been broken in the big cities. The exposition in Paris of the Italian *Arte Povera* movement opened the way for me to return to the materials and traditional methods of my own environment. When I returned from my trip, the fish dams, hayricks and woodpiles where I lived took on a new aesthetic significance. I began to think of the prospect of making the work, the methods and the skills

which these objects embodied, and which I knew well, part of my art. The *MA space-time* exhibition, which illustrated the influence of the Zen view of nature on the arts in Japan, provided me with a new perspective on how I might work in the landscape. The experience of space and time in my activities in nature – fishing, hunting, picking berries and cutting firewood – found their counterparts in the meditative and holistic sensitivity to the landscape found in Zen art. The coordination of body and mind, the aesthetics and existence of moving around in a landscape began to coalesce into artistic activity. It was only later that the examples of American and English environmental art reinforced and signposted a manner which enabled me to approach my own environment as art. A common basis for doing and conceptualising art began to take shape, and became a permanent facet of my existence.

Since finishing my formal education as an artist, in addition to doing art I have worked at the University, where I have focused on developing art education and teaching in that field. Today, we have rediscovered the bond between art and the environment in which it is realised and marginality now has a place of its own in discussions of art. For me, the way my art addresses the North has become a method which I use to model and develop not only my art but also pedagogy dealing with the relationship between art and the environment. The fact that I know the northern environment from within helps me to assess the impact my art has on the environment in which it is located and created.

Figure 25. Timo Jokela, Daughter of Päiviö*, 1998, detail of a snow installation on the top of the fell of Levi in Northern Finland (Photo: Timo Jokela)*

What is the status of art education in Finland today? Do you think the students you teach are hopeful about their future?

I think art education has always had and still has a strong status in Finland. Art is not historically obvious as a foundation for visual art education in Finland. The roots of Finnish art education are in applied art rather than fine art. Alongside free artistic expression, a teaching of design skills has through the ages played an important part in the Finnish curriculum for visual art education. In Finland visual art teacher training is still placed with applied arts instead of being a part of traditional art academy training. This has guaranteed a certain independence from the rapidly changing artistic trends set by art academies, while it also continues to maintain its independence from the pedagogy-oriented university approach to teacher training. This background has given Finnish visual art education its characteristic stamp and explains its pragmatic background. The history of the subject also explains the ease with which Finnish visual art education slips into the current discussion about visual cultural education and creative industries as well.

You have studied unique ways of combining art practice and education through your use of arts-based action research (ABAR) and arts-based educational research (ABER). What does this kind of research mean to an artist?

As an artist I emphasise the fact that artists often find it difficult to talk about their works and the experiences associated with the creative process. The creative process is intense, experience-directed and often confused. Art involves a great deal of tacit knowledge. Making art does not require the same verbally articulated basis as academic research does. Researchers follow a particular path, which they define in theoretical terms and try to adhere to in the hope of reaching their goal. Artists fumble about and do not always know what their goal is; when they reach it, they cannot necessarily describe the path they took to get there. However, artists can try to understand their art by assuming the position of a researcher, and observing their work as a product of the culture to which they belong. An artist can also toy with different perspectives by venturing into the no man's land between art and science. This liminal space is very often the site where concepts and experiences exert complementary influences on each other. This is the field I personally like to work in and guide my students to work in as well. I think this approach is closely related to hermeneutics, and Gadamer's thoughts on dialogue and mutual understanding, as well as his idea of art as a kind of play related to concepts and their application.

How do you apply arts-based research to the field of art education? In your opinion, how does this kind of research differ from other qualitative and quantitative methods? Do your students also conduct such research?

In art-based research that develops the contexts of contemporary art and art education, the socio-cultural aspects of the communities, schools, pupils and other

Figure 26. Timo Jokela, Winter Conversation project, *2009, massive snow installation in Rovaniemi city centre. Collaboration with art education, construction engineering and Chinese ice carvers (Photo: Timo Jokela)*

participants have to be considered more than the artist's individuality. In my own artistic work as community-based environmental artist I have met some challenges. Firstly, the relationship between places, localness and being an artist always entails the dilemma of colonialism and emancipation. Artists must ask themselves whether they can really offer something through their art that surpasses the local people's everyday experience and knowledge of place. Artists also need to consider how their own life experience can be incorporated into their art, their conception of art and what they think is of value in art without colonising local people and places. Secondly, how can artists give their work a form that will allow the environment and the community to be a productive and constructive element of its artistic content? And thirdly, as art teacher trainer I should ask how to guide the future art teachers to plan and realise emancipatory processes without colonising the communities in which they will work. These questions are basic methodological and philosophical considerations in environmental and community art – choices about the way art is done. These questions are extremely important when working in the North and Arctic with indigenous groups of people in villages and small towns.

When I began looking for a methodological basis for research focused on contemporary art and art education I started incorporating action research methods into artistic activities. In the research of teaching and learning, action research is nothing new. *The teacher as a researcher* movement has had many different interpretations and emphases. The trend has faded at times and then recovered again. Practical approaches can also be called classroom action research or classroom research, teachers' research and curriculum research, but the creative aspect of art does not really play a role.

When talking about the issues of community and contextuality within contemporary art, the theories of critical action research and participatory research are emphasised

more than in the teacher as a researcher movement. Participatory action research emphasises the participation of members of the studied community and looks at new knowledge and skills in the light of social constructionism. My work leads to the empowerment of participants, even if the concrete target is to execute a particular art product. When developing contemporary working methods in the northern context, emancipatory viewpoints of the critical action research have been used as precepts. My approach is to talk about art-based action research (ABAR) with my colleagues when describing the method. To build a comprehensive basis for the development of an art-based action research method, the people involved are also required to draw on perspectives from the field of artistic activity. The initial socio-cultural and visual mapping of this method supported the idea of applying contemporary art to northern multicultural operating environments in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia, often amongst indigenous peoples. One of the most profound developments that employs the methods of art-based action research is winter art. Winter art has become an essential forum for developing contextual, situational and place-specific art pedagogy and art-based action research methods in the North. It has been assessed in several articles, and I think it still offers an interesting forum for promoting the interaction of contemporary art, co-design, service design, research, and contextual art and design education in relation to northern cultures and identities.

Already in the middle of the 1990s, at the very outset of the art teacher training programme at the University of Lapland, it was clear to me that studying the traditional studio- and workshop-centred techniques and expression was not the proper way to deal with the contextual challenges of contemporary art and art education. At that time it became clear that the adoption of the working methods of relational contemporary art required open and critical relations with the surrounding world. This was pursued by developing participatory and engaging cooperation between the various actors of the university's northern network and ABAR became a central method for art teacher students' master's theses.

What you say about avoiding to colonise local people through one's emancipatory practices is extremely important. How does this work in practice? How are artistic decisions taken during the process of creating new work?

Yes, very often creating a work of art is a process or project which I get the people in the area to commit themselves to. I strive for communication in my place-specific art, and one way of doing this is to focus on traditional work within the landscape, not an external aesthetic appraisal of it. In this way, I aim to create a dialogue that stimulates, transmits, and brings an awareness of the culture's own way of looking at the landscape and places and experiencing these. Art refines that which exists and does not import a model of aesthetic experience from outside the community in the vein of "the centre rushing in to rescue the periphery".

I often work in landscapes which look like wilderness. But the landscape is not without cultural meanings; it is not pristine nature. The landscape acquires its meaning

through the social narratives and tales associated with people's fields of activity or the local history. The intermediate level of my works is often the local community, which gives the works meaning by taking part in their creation and presenting their interpretations of the processes and the outcome. The interpretations voiced by local residents, men in particular, concur clearly with how aesthetic experience is discussed generally. Aesthetic terms of art are heard in everyday speech in the North. Aesthetic experiences and preferences are not expressed directly; it is difficult or even culturally forbidden. Both subjective and textual aesthetic experiences, whether related to the landscape itself or works located in it, are almost always expressed obliquely, in descriptions of what is happening in the landscape: stories of fishing, hunting, reindeer herding, hay making trips, berry picking, forestry, etc. Aesthetic experience of the landscape and of a work of art referring to it become represented and reproduced when people talk about and describe what they do amid nature. I feel that I have succeeded in my art if my works function as catalysts for and expressions of the existence of this communal discussion.

It's not so easy to explain interaction between art and art education or research orientation in my work as an artist or in the profession of an art educator. In artistic action research the focus is not on developing my own personal art or writing my own personal research, but interaction between co-artists and co-researchers. I like to call the result of this sharing and empowering process "the art of art education". I think that in art education something happens which can be described as communally produced structuring of the world, something which is not taken out of

Figure 27. Timo Jokela, The Story of Kirkkokuusikko *community art project, 2009, memorial for vanished Forest Sami community and the first church in Kemi-Lapland (Photo: Timo Jokela)*

its context, not classifying or formulating; rather, it is dialogic and ready to recognise the changes and therefore open to new aspects, but on the other hand it is also exact and truthful. The art of art education is the state of an encounter.

You tend to make use of words like 'indigenous', 'local', 'community' and 'environment' rather often and you seem to believe that there is something specifically 'northern' about this kind of work. What makes it northern, and in what ways is such a localised art practice informed by what is taking place around the world?

I know that art education is not automatically connected with the North. Art education has always been more about individual creativity, problem-solving and encouraging alternative ways of seeing the world. But I think that a close examination, however, reveals dimensions that show how the North and the Arctic environments and social-cultural settings can work as a laboratory for innovative art education research and act as an arena for the development of context-sensitive methods for art education that observe the special conditions of the rural and semi-urban places outside the cities and culture centres.

In several disciplines scholars have pointed out how the northern environment is changing rapidly and debate the cumulative and visible impacts of these changes on nature, economy, livelihoods (e.g. tourism and mining), social life, wellbeing, and the culture of people living in the region. Simultaneously the youth in the North, like in all peripheral places, are sent to have their education in the South or in bigger cities. This has led to an erosion of certain social structures in small towns and villages and has created a series of recognised problems, including ageing of the population, youth unemployment, decrease of cultural activities as well as psycho-social problems often caused by the loss of cultural identity. We can find these problems all over the world. I believe that the methods of art education we have developed in out northern laboratory are applicable in other places too.

In the whole circumpolar area of the North, the blending of indigenous cultures and other lifestyles is rather common. This multinational and multicultural composition creates elusive sociocultural challenges that are sometimes even politicised in the neo-colonial settings of the North and the Arctic. In recent years there has been a rising interest in rewriting the forgotten cultural history of the region. Attention has been paid to the role of arts as representations of the North. There exists a discussion of the need, significance and objectives of an 'indigenous paradigm', which is a way of decolonising the indigenous values and cultural practices by 're-centring' the research focus on their own concerns and worldviews. One of the main objectives of such a paradigm includes criticism towards the Western Eurocentric way of thinking and challenges the traditional Western ways of knowing and researching, and calls for the 'decolonisation' of methodologies of indigenous research. Many scholars refer to the indigenous knowledge system as a basis of indigenous research in the fields of culture, art and design as well as schools in general.

These paradigm changes have led me to re-evaluate how art is taught in schools and universities, and highlighted the aims of culturally sensitive approaches in art education and the objectives of UNESCO for ecological, social, cultural and economic sustainable development. These objectives incorporate current issues such as the survival of regional cultures combined with the inhabitants' self-determination whilst securing social and economic stability for all communities. In northern art education the question is not only about safeguarding cultural heritage but rethinking the nature of school education policy and curriculum.

Can this kind of work be exported? Have you considered the possibility of working in very different environments with different natural or urban characteristics? How would this change your process of working with materials and people?

We have seen here in the North that when one adopts the models of relational contemporary art, art education moves away from the prevailing opinion that it conveys the same worldwide cultural values and that the ways to implement education are the same everywhere. Bringing the operating modes of place-specific and socially active contemporary art into northern contexts and merging them with the aims of culturally sensitive education and the question of decolonisation required pedagogic renewal of the art teacher training courses. I think there is a similar need for re-evaluation all over the world in the field of art education.

Place-specific and socially and culturally sensitive work often begins with an analysis of the environment, where we survey the opportunities offered by the place we plan to work in. The point of departure here can be the sociocultural situation of the place. Frequently, we begin by exploring the cultural heritage and history of the place. What is most essential, however, is communication with the place, its history, the names of people and places, and the narratives of the people in the area. In other words, we build a foundation for my works by gathering an intertextual account of the place and the community. And the local community often takes an active interest in this process. In this way I hope my art is an educational dialogue for all participants. Besides the fact that place provides a starting point for all activities, there is also socio-cultural mapping, or getting to understand the context and needs. This is why the model is easy to export in different situations and natural and urban, or semi-urban, environments. We have already proven this while working in other contexts in southern and central Europe and in Russia.

When you do creative work in alternative contexts, do you consider yourself to be working within the mainstream 'art world'? How would you compare the kind of work you do with the work one finds in art institutions like museums, galleries and so on?

Art educators constantly find it difficult to be appreciated as artists. Since Finland is a small country, so are its art institutions like galleries and museums. Curating

and funding are in the hands of the few. Moreover, they are almost entirely focused and located in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Finnish art institutions are also traditionally tied to the Fine Arts Academy of Finland, now the Helsinki Art University. Stepping into the self-feeding institution is difficult from the outside. Artists with an art education background are often stigmatised as enthusiasts and several of them even hide their background in order to have a better chance of being accepted in art institutions. Those who sympathise with the mentioned dialogic, collaborative and pedagogical processes of 'art of art education' are usually located outside the institutions of art.

10. ART EDUCATION IN SINGAPORE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF LIVING DIFFERENTLY

You were born a Chinese Malaysian, studied in the US and have taught studio art in Singapore for many years. What do you think are the key experiences, movements and/or ideas you came across in these different places that have formed you as an educator?

I went to a private Chinese high school in Malaysia where I had a very different schooling experience from the majority of Chinese Malaysians, let alone those who are of non-Chinese descent. My parents didn't have any elitist intentions when they decided to send me to a private Chinese high school far away from my hometown. Being Chinese they wanted their son to learn about our own culture. Secondly, they believed that the school offered a much better education compared to the public high school in my hometown. Thirdly, students from Chinese high schools are more disciplined and have better prospects. I must say that I am very grateful that my parents sent me to a Chinese high school even though I had to stay in a boarding house.

Being a Chinese school, Confucianism was by default the main pillar of the school's philosophy. Therefore, after five years in the school and trying to find my own path as a teenager, the education system had inculcated in me the idea that the word 'teacher' signifies distinction, respectability and unchallengeable authority. Having said that, as far as I can remember, not many of my high school teachers were overly authoritative. In fact, most of them were approachable, friendly, and understanding yet strict. There was a consensus among teachers and students that there is always a line between them that no one should cross. This is the line of respect. It means students are to respect their teachers and teachers are to guide students to be better citizens. Education is firstly about character moulding followed by academics. Nevertheless, I do recall a handful of teachers who were authoritative and unreasonable back in my high school.

The professors that I met in the United States were not that much different from my high school teachers in the way they treated their students. To me, they were still the distinctive, respectable, and unchallengeable figures of authority. This is one of the reasons why Asian students do not speak out in class as much as students from a Western background. We always have the mentality that we are there to learn from the masters, which means that you do not question but try your best to absorb the knowledge you came all the way from home to learn. It is very difficult for

me to question my professors. First of all, I do not know how to do this because I was never trained to do it at any point in my life. It's a big challenge for me to handle confrontation. Secondly, language was another key factor that stopped me from doing that. I believe that not being able to think critically and to voice one's views are challenges that I need to overcome yet I find myself not being able to do it well even now.

Therefore, to provide a space for my students to speak their mind and to think about who they are as individuals within the collective mass is the key philosophy for me as an educator. I do believe that being students or teenagers, they are still going through a phrase of finding out who they really are and who they really want to be. Art-making is not merely about the making of something but a path or a means for people to reflect upon who they are. Education is not just about the learning of knowledge but more about the establishment of knowledge.

Your doctoral research at Columbia focused on the ways socio-cultural and other contexts come together to form the self and art-making. In what ways do you think regional factors and globalisation impact art students in Singapore? How do historical or socio-cultural factors impinge on the way you teach art?

I am currently teaching at pre-university level and the school that I am teaching at now is pretty much the only Singapore school that I have taught at since I started my career as an educator. Therefore, my comments may not reflect the country's system of art education in its totality.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to make sense of the general educational context of Singapore before one can understand its pre-university system of art education. As a former British colony, Singapore builds its judicial, political, and governmental constructs upon those of Great Britain. Therefore, it is understandable that the general educational system of Singapore revolves and evolves around that of Britain. To further their studies in the university track, secondary school students are expected to sit for and do well in the GCE 'O' Level Examinations (General Certificate of Education – Ordinary) before they can go to a junior college. Junior college students, on the other hand, are to take and excel in 'A' (Advanced) Levels Examinations so that they can enrol at any local and foreign university. There are other systems in Singapore, but 'O' and 'A' Level Examinations remain the pivotal system nationwide. Curricula are therefore written on the basis of preparing students for the two exams. Those who do not meet required standards continue their further education via the track of polytechnic and ITE, a vocational school system.

The Ministry of Education dictates what is in the curricula. Such standardisation leaves teachers with very limited allowance to come up with their own curricula. Many factors have contributed to such a phenomenon in Singapore's educational system and I think it is too complicated to describe them in detail here. The bottom line is that students, parents, teachers, schools, and the whole socio-cultural system in general perceive excellent grades in examinations as the main goal of education.

In this context, art-making is reduced to mere examination-oriented art projects that can pass the markers' scrutiny. However, the national average of the marks obtained in art marks has been low for many years. Only certain Art Elective Programme (AEP) Centres managed to score well in the examinations. As an art teacher from a non-AEP centre, my understanding of markers' criteria is still uncertain despite the fact that extensive marking rubrics were given to us and we have been using these rubrics as the ultimate guides for our students' work. Therefore, we always tell our students that "We never really know what the markers are looking for so be prepared that your results do not turn out the way you expected".

The students' ultimate goal when they sit for their 'O' Level art examination is to score an A1. Some of them succeed because they have a great interest in art-making, but the majority only do art because they think they are unable to do well in the humanities like Literature, Geography, and History. So, what is our role as art educators? I have to say that students within an exam-oriented system are myopic in their view of the world. Besides, they are still teenagers who are trying to understand their identity in such a closed environment. Most of them try to address their experiences as students within the exam-oriented system and their interpretations of their life as students tend to be melancholic. I believe that the pressure and stress that they have to deal with as students is much greater than I can imagine. Even though my art students all survive the examinations and move on to another level of education in one piece, I wish they had more time to explore and to interpret themselves as individual persons within society.

I imagine that in such a stressful environment, even teachers find it difficult to cope. How does such an environment affect your dual identity as 'educator' and 'artist'? Do you see this as a 'struggle'? How do you find a balance between artistic practice and teaching?

Recently, during our annual interview, my school Principal actually asked me when I am going to have my exhibition. He totally understands my difficulties when I told him that I am so caught up with other school-related commitments that I don't really have time to work on my own art practice seriously. Of course, being an Asian boss, he did not offer me a way out other than expressing his sympathy towards what I am going through, struggling between my roles as educator and art practitioner. The school that I am working in is one of the top ranking schools in the nation. It is indeed a very busy school and there are events happening all year round. There is no end to administrative work even though I am only a teacher. I also teach 'Theory of Knowledge' (TOK) in the IB track to seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds, and I find myself spending more time preparing for TOK lessons and assessing TOK essays than art projects.

I left the school once after teaching there for nine years. After finishing my dissertation, the school offered me the job back. It took me quite a great effort to decide on taking up the offer again, knowing what is expected of me back at

school. I had a job offer at a local art college in Singapore a couple of months back, but after weighing out the pros and cons, I decided to stay in the current school. The reason is that I still see myself as an educator regardless of the fact that I am teaching art. In teaching teenage students, I have a strong sense of commitment and achievement. Quoting Maxine Greene, "If you do not have the ability to change the world, influence those who can". Well, something to that effect. I see myself primarily as an educator and then as an artist and I take great pride in being an educator. As I said earlier, being one of the top high schools in the nation, a majority of the alumni take up influential roles in the professions that they endeavour in, including politics, finance and banking, education, sciences and technology, law, medical and life sciences … the list goes on. Within the socio-cultural and political context of Singapore, art appreciation and art practice are still considered as uncharted territories. The way I see it, to educate people about art is more crucial an endeavour than to practise my own art. If I am to see art-making as a means of finding and realising an individual's definition of being within the greater collective mass, then it is essential to introduce this idea to youngsters before they are totally transformed by a system in which art and art creation are only other signifiers of monetary values.

Is it possible to find a perfect balance between being an educator and an artist? I have to say I am still searching for such a balance. I cannot really give a clear answer to the question. Nevertheless, I have to say that it would not be an eternal balance but more of an eternal struggle.

What do you think your students learn from your own practice? Do any of them aim to find art-related jobs later in life?

Most of my art students are fifteen and sixteen years old and I am still trying to find a better way to help them see my own philosophy of art and art practice. They are very curious and want to find out more about my art practice. I have been making baby steps introducing them to a different perspective of art and art-making. One that is built upon the current examination-oriented system yet also moves beyond what the system is looking for. It will not be an easy task and it is a going to be a very long journey, like trying to strike a balance between being an art educator and artist. One of my dilemmas is that after having them for a couple of years they have to move on to another stage of their educational life. As an educator, I can only open the door for them and help them realise the possibility of looking at things from different perspectives and to hope that they could continue with or pick up their art practice again along the way. Most of my students do not continue with a career in art-related profession. Nevertheless, throughout my experience as an art educator in Singapore, I've had a handful of students who continued their tertiary education in architecture, graphic design, industrial design, computer graphics, and fine art mainly in countries like the United States, Great Britain and Australia. A small number of them actually work in art-related professions.

The outcome-oriented vision you ascribe to your country's educational system is echoed elsewhere, perhaps in different ways. Nowadays, educational discourse, policies and reforms are often couched in terms that may sound overly prescriptive to educators in the creative arts: performativity, learning outcomes, curricular standards and testing regimes. You just referred to your own "different perspective of art and art-making". What role does the 'unknown' play in your pedagogies?

Despite the examination-oriented educational system that we have in Singapore, I strive to inculcate in my students the idea that there are things in life that are more important and crucial than examinations. The essence of art education, or education in general for that matter, is the establishment of knowledge, to find out and realise an individual's definition of being within society, and most importantly to be receptive about the possibility of living differently. I always tell my students that I do not 'teach'. Most people might think that teachers are there to teach. In fact, teachers are there to share and have conversations with their students. Educators should not stultify learners and should perceive themselves as being on an equal ground with their learners. I find that with this reciprocal relationship, I get to know my students better and I am able to help them draw out their expressive potential. From that point, I help them to build up the confidence required to share their thoughts and perspective of things with the world by ways of verbal sharing and artistic creation. I have to say that most Asian students are not used to express their thoughts in public. Making students realise what they have within them, drawing this out and optimising what they already have is more educational then merely 'teaching' them what we know and telling them what to do. I constantly find myself learning things that I do not know or that I have never realised from my students. To me, education is reciprocal by nature.

Do you think it's quite common for young, aspiring artists in Singapore to become art teachers today?

I would see "young, aspiring artists" as late teens who are pursuing an art diploma/degree at local art schools or polytechnics and also those who are taking art as one of their subjects at junior colleges. As far as I know, the Ministry of Education (MOE) of Singapore encourages graduates from local art schools to take art education modules at the National Institute of Education (NIE) so that they can join the teaching force upon completion of the modules. However, I don't have any statistic to show the percentage of art school graduates who go for this option. On the other hand, MOE also provides merit-based scholarships for junior college graduates who are interested in pursuing an art degree, either at NIE or art colleges overseas. These scholars will be bound for a number of years upon graduation depending on the kind of scholarship the person is given. Those who go overseas are most likely to be teaching in schools for a number of years and eventually are promoted to take up

major positions in MOE working on art curricula and art programmes for schools and junior colleges in Singapore. I have to say that there are also those who intend to become full-time artists but the number is considerably smaller due to the financial insecurity of the endeavour. I believe it has to do with the socio-cultural mindset of the people in Singapore. Financial security is still the primary consideration in life. Based on my personal experience, I would say yes to the question.

Let's talk a little about your own creative work. When you were still a doctoral student in 2010, you made a collaborative piece with seven young, Chinese art students at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing (CAFA). How do you negotiate meanings and artistic processes in works like this? Do you see collaboration as a form of pedagogy in its own right?

Due to spatial and time constraints, that piece was more of a documentation of my experience with the seven Chinese students in Beijing than a well-negotiated and

Figure 28. Hong Wan Tham, Untitled 2012 Spring, *2012, stoneware, ropes, branches, video, site specific installation (Photo: Hong Wan Tham)*

collaborative piece of work. None of the students actually gave me any input in terms of how they wanted their piece to be presented. I guess that, being a doctoral candidate from Columbia University, they saw me more as an authority figure than their working partner. During my interviews with the students at CAFA, all of them told me that their graduation show was a collaboration between their teacher and themselves. Within the context of CAFA, what this actually meant was that the teacher had the final say in terms of what would be included in the exhibition. The teachers saw themselves as the quality controllers and they were there to make sure that the philosophy of their individual studio/workshop was being carried through in the students' works. Personally, I do not like practices in which the teacher becomes the gatekeeper who determines what is to pass through and what is to be blocked. If it were a collaborative endeavour, then both teacher and student would have the equal amount of say in terms of what was to be included in the show. Of course, teachers might be able to see potential problems that students might not see, so finding a compromise is definitely a big challenge. Nevertheless, it could be a positive challenge if both parties have the same mentality instead of confronting one another or having one party dominate the whole conversation.

Figure 29. Hong Wan Tham, Untitled 2012 Spring, *2012, stoneware, ropes, branches, video, site specific installation (Photo: Hong Wan Tham)*

Collaboration can be a form of pedagogy but I foresee problems. Based on my understanding of Asian culture, the teacher would generally have most of the say and students would have given up their pursuit passively in no time at all. On the other hand, it may sound very unrealistic to jump to such conclusions. The situation is ultimately determined by the culture that the teacher has cultivated within the group.

What other creative processes do you employ in your artistic work?

To me, a work of art is a mediator between the artist and the spectator, and form and narrative are like Ying and Yang in the art-making process. They complement each other. It is very difficult to determine if I start my art-piece with a narrative in mind as the narrative could be something embedded or else it could come later in the making process. However, formal consideration has always been an integral part throughout the process.

Untitled 2012 Spring is an example of the organic approach I practice in art-making. My friend Jackie and her family live at Cold Spring, New York. She invited me to her house one of the fall seasons and showed me this little park next to Hudson River. I was mesmerised by the tranquility and the beauty that the park has to offer. Following that experience, when the foliage would reach its peak at Cold Spring, I would go for a hike amidst the hills and end my trail at this little park. I don't really stay in the park for very long whenever I visited it. I would go in from the gate and walk around the trail and when the trail made a loop back to the exit, I would make my way back to town. I cannot remember when the idea of making an art-piece based on this experience I had at the little park came to me. I just remember one day in early fall, as far as I remember, I took my camcorder and tripod, took an hourlong train ride up to this little part of Cold Spring, and shot the video. That was my first time sitting there listening to the rhythm and the breathing of the park. While I was recording, I also realised there were many other things happening in the park that I had never noticed before. I could hear the birds singing, the conversation of the trackers amidst the silence, the sound of the waves hitting the river banks and of the train from miles away … and the video just captured all of that.

Did you have an idea how the piece would look like before you put everything together?

Yes. It usually depends on how much space I have and what kind of materials I have to play around with. To create a harmonious conversation among all the components within a work of art is usually the ultimate goal. Perhaps, deep down, taking a train ride up to Cold Spring for a hike has become a ritual for me in the Fall and the park has transformed itself into my imaginative sanctuary. They have also become signifiers of my longing for Nature after being a city dweller for so many years.

Figure 30. Hong Wan Tham, Untitled 2011, *2011, stoneware, ropes, branches, approx. 5" × 10'× 12' (Photo: Hong Wan Tham)*

Sometimes I use a different approach to creating a work of art. *Untitled 2011*, for instance, is different from the work I have just described. I did not start the piece with any narrative in mind although both pieces were created pretty much around the same period of time. Nevertheless, I have to say the tripod-like-structure in this piece could be traced all the way back to my experience as a teacher in charge of the Venture Scout group at the school where I teach. I was assigned to take care of the administrative work for the group, not knowing much about scouting. However, over the years, I picked up some of the scouting skills like tying knots and lashes for pioneering projects and found a way to incorporate these skills into my art-making. The tripod structure could be seen as a small pioneering project with its functionality being redefined. Like the video in the other work, it took the centre stage of the piece and the rest of the components are playing more of a supportive role. What remains a constant in the two pieces is my intention to create a harmonious visual experience in my artwork.

Perhaps, at the end of the day, it is the formal aspect of art-making that I fall back on in my art practice regardless of the nature of the art-piece. Nevertheless, the inspiration of my artistic creation, I have to say, is grounded heavily in my experiences as a human being. It is a documentation of my interaction with the people and the surroundings that I cross paths with.

11. A LIFE COMPANION

Art Practice and the Studio Critique

After studying painting in Seoul, you went to Yale to do a Master's degree in painting and printmaking and finally read successfully for a doctorate at Teacher's College at Columbia University in New York. What attracted you to the US?

I have never stopped creating art, except during my twenty-six months spent with the military. Probably, my hands would not have become as experienced as they are now without my intense formal training. I have studied at art-focused schools since my childhood. By the time I reached college level, I realised that university entrance exams in art were not only boring but also too rigid. So, I had finally reached a point from which I had to back up a bit to reboot my creative energy. In a way, my military days helped me find the time and chance to cleanse or reformat my hands and routine thinking from past training.

After the military, I found myself looking for a radical and real change in environment. It is not because I hated the Korean educational system. As a person who had been bound to the same place for a long time, and of course, as an artist with curious eyes, I really wanted to have a new set of experiences. But then, I realised I had less than enough money. What a universal problem I faced! So I looked for a scholarship and a good one came into my radar; the Fulbright Scholarship for study in the US. Luckily enough, I was selected as a recipient of that scholarship in the fall of 2002, and went to America the following summer.

If I had not gotten this scholarship, I might have looked for other opportunities in Europe, for financial reasons. But I did not want to look for opportunities in Asia or other continents. My whole world had been Korea. Korean culture is rooted in Eastern philosophy and customs, but in this globally pervasive Western pop culture, Korea is not an exception. So with mixed feelings, I wanted to experience Western culture thoroughly and I am glad that I studied in the US. The studio critique was much more open and democratic and helped me a lot in developing my art and in growing as a mature person. In addition, I became fluent in English and I found a gallery to represent my work in New York. So, based on a reflection about my past, I am definitely happy with the time I spent in the US.

Figure 31. Sangbin IM, People-MoMA, *2009, lambda print, 80 × 182.9 cm (top), 34.3 × 182.9 cm (bottom)*

Before leaving to start your studies in the US, did you have a preconception about what you might find there that was different from the kind of world you inhabited in Korea?

Before I left Korea, nothing was very clear. I had a very loose preconception of what I might find in the US. To me, exploring the unknown was more important than setting up specific goals to achieve. I was just bored of my routine environment back then. It was not the superiority in the educational system or the quality of life that mattered to me but difference, freshness, and the newness of 'non-Korea'. I just wanted to make the most of a completely new place. It took many years of graduate and doctorate study, during which I worked hard to clarify my uncertainties. I was young enough to take such a gamble.

Your doctorate focused on art education yet you have maintained quite a steady flow of exhibitions over the years. What brought you to education? How did artist-friends of yours react to your decision to read for a doctorate in art education?

In my mind, art practice and art education can be happy, lifelong companions, and more desirably, they should! However, I have noticed many myths disseminated by artists in opposition to the pedagogical notion of art. This problem is discussed in

detail in my dissertation, *The Generative Impact of Online Critiques on Individual Art Practice*, submitted in the spring of 2011 at Teachers College, Columbia University.

In short, some people like to mystify or separate doing art from other activities, as follows. Firstly, they assume that too much reading makes artists negligent of the physical practice of art and also makes them appear like they are lamely trying to cover up their art with rhetoric. Secondly, they believe art practice is a sole priority, which requires exceptional devotion of one's entire energy and time. This line of thought regards teaching as subsidiary. Thirdly, they envision artistic passion and creative agony as an image of a humble and reclusive artist distanced from the world. So, according to them, artists should be eccentric and ignorant of society. On the other hand, others seem to overemphasise the business side of art. They consider success as social fame and financial success in the art market. So, according to them, education is only meaningful when it helps artists to succeed financially.

Either way, art may lose its rich layers of contextual meanings in the world. I argue that an individual who puts art practice or business at the centre of life to the exclusion of other artistic activities should be open to challenge. Art and art education should not lose their pedagogical relationship. Art does not exist alone and it manifests itself in various contexts in the world. The meaning of art is not fixed but varies on the basis of the different ways we make sense of it, but the so-called art world and art market condition art in various ways.

Without education, how in the world can we constantly redefine what art is, how to do it, and why it is meaningful? Some people regard art-making as a kind of competition. Art can be a competition, but it should not have to be that way all the time. Art is life, and it is always educational. Artistic development and personal growth in the world are achieved by creatively doing art and critically reflecting on it. This whole process is educational. With such a broad definition of art education and constant research on the relationships between artist, student and teacher, art can finally be freed from the misconceptions of art purists, art marketers and the misguided general public.

Some artists prefer to make art when they are alone in their studios. For them, teaching, meeting people or even eating may be considered as a waste of time. Other artists are wise enough to make their teaching help them develop their art as well. To me, education is an excellent way to develop art holistically. Of course, I understand my artist-friends' different perspectives and mixed feelings on my doctoral pursuit. Some friends even tease me and say that my degree is all about getting a teaching job. Yet, is getting a job fatal to artists? Art is a totality in life, and I believe that my artistic life has benefitted enormously from art education.

Can you be more specific about this? How did your studies in art education contribute to your growth as an artist?

My dissertation at Teachers College stemmed from my interest in the studio critique. I did not grasp the significance of studio critiques until I entered university. Even

though I went to art middle and high school, studio critiques were rare in the art classes. They were almost only employed for evaluation purposes. In Korea, most art schools do not take portfolios as in the West. Instead, they tell students to come to class and make art under the same conditions. Sungshin University, where I am a professor, is generous enough to give students five hours. Most other universities in Korea give three or four hours for the whole process of art-making. This so-called 'art' is not really art at all since students are expected to make art that is based on provided questions, images or objects. Skilful hands are what matter in this type of exam. In Korea, most high school students go to private art institutions to prepare for the entrance exam. Rather than creating art with free spirits, they are forced and trained to follow rigid standards.

This type of exam has its pros and cons. Due to this exam, a number of Korean undergraduate students have a high level of visual representational skills. On the other hand, due to the amount of pressure felt by training for the exam, middle and high school students do not have enough opportunities to create their own art. Moreover, their discussions, if any, are tailored towards succeeding in the entrance exam. However, when they enter the university, they are finally free from their exams, so they start searching for what they would really like to paint. At this point, some of them are stressed out and feel lost in the middle of nowhere due to their previous non-creative education.

Art education needs studio critiques at all ages. As time goes by, young children's thinking becomes more sophisticated and their creative minds start to develop slowly. In my research on higher art education, a number of art schools put emphasis on art practice along with critical dialogue. Studio critique is good at directing attention to a diversity of world views and different ways of understanding works of art. The studio critique is also good at nurturing critical reflective thinking on art in a dialectic way and at helping artists understand and develop their art and personally grow.

In reality, the studio critique varies in quality and many teachers and students assume that it is only meant to evaluate art. I argue that the studio critique is neither a competition to crown winners nor a survival guide. Very little research has been conducted on studio critique. I spent years researching studio critique and realised that it can happen anywhere. It can even work in the mind of a single person if you implement a variety of methods. When I am alone in my studio, my background in education better equips me with a variety of critical perspectives. This helps me understand my art better in order to make responsible and meaningful decisions about my art all the time. I partly thank art education for developing the fullness of my mind.

In terms of available time in a typical day of yours, do you ever feel that teaching or art practice is becoming too dominant? Do you feel torn between these two disciplines?

I am the dean of the Painting department at Sungshin University in Seoul, Korea. Sungshin has the second largest art department in Korea. This means that there

Figure 32. Sangbin IM, Louvre Museum 2, *2012, lambda print, 128.3 × 237.4 cm*

are many teachers, classes and undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students. These days, full-time professors in Korea are required to teach more classes than professors used to in the past. This means that I need to teach many classes and also do administrative work for the department.

Let's suppose that there exists a right ratio between art-making and teaching for the benefit of their maximum synergy. If so, as a dean I may have been spending way too much time at school than I should have. If I can cut down my time spent at school in half, I imagine that it would be the perfect balance. However, you can never know what the right amount of teaching is and you cannot control this once you are in the institution like a university.

We know that a great artist can be a bad teacher, and that a great teacher can be a bad artist. If I am a great artist and also a great teacher, then my life is truly blessed! Obviously, I work hard as an artist and luckily enough, I love teaching. Ironically, my health has also gotten much better since I started teaching. If you are a full-time artist you have no duties tomorrow and you push your body to the maximum limit. That was exactly my case. I did not go to bed until I was satisfied with my work. This meant that my usual bedtime started way after sunrise in the morning. I was solitary and without proper exercise or nutrition all the time. But now, I am a changed man. I go to bed earlier because I regularly go to school, usually 3 days per week. While teaching, my hands, neck, and spine take a full rest. Somehow, talking about art is often easier than physically working on art. In addition, listening to what students have to say about their works is so refreshing most of the time.

My teaching gives me some time-off from the studio. This helps to produce a nice cocktail of things or bibimbap (Korean food in which a variety of ingredients is

mixed). Monism meeting pluralism is healthier than dualism. The tension that exists between practice and teaching or practice and theory could be a force that stimulates a greater harmony. The golden ratio, the best recipe of the two activities, differs from person to person.

You've discussed the overlaps between art practice and education at some length. Let's discuss your art-work and pedagogies one by one, starting with practice. What have been your key preoccupations as an artist?

At a very young age, I had already made up my mind to be an artist. From the age of three and throughout my elementary school days, I regularly attended art institutions. Many art teachers urged me to apply for art middle school, so I ended up going to art middle and high school before entering the art department at Seoul National University. After graduation, I envisioned pursuing my study abroad, so I went to art school at Yale University where I received an MFA in the department of Painting and Printmaking. Afterwards, my interest in the sociological notions of the artist, art and the art world led me to pursue a doctoral degree at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York.

In recent years, my main projects have been People Project, Museum Project, and Cityscape Project. These projects express a combination of my fascination and anxiety surrounding the spectacle of the modern megalomaniac city, institutions, or other cultural sites; places that are driven and constructed by capitalistic desires or visions, that stage and condition the way people live, work, and enjoy life. As this fascination suggests, I am a person who likes to live and work in cosmopolitan cities such as New York and Seoul, while being somewhat critical of them. In other words, I appreciate the contemporary spectacle, as provocative and problematic as it is. As an artist, this is what I desire to portray via my artistic vision and my experience of the world today.

As a painter, my approach to photography is different from that of many traditional photographers. My interest is not photo *taking* or capturing, but photo *making* or construction. For instance, my photographs are not taken at one go, but made of numerous fragmented images, like the accumulation of brushstrokes in a painting. My concern is not the manipulation of the original, but a construction based on photographs of real objects to create a visualisation of my world. Moreover, my photographs have a painterly surface due to the fact that I employ layers of actual brushstrokes onto the photographic images. Likewise, I have actively incorporated the language of painting into photography. While some people seem to think of me as a photographer, I see myself as an artist who uses a hybrid of painting and photography.

How important are these different artistic media during the teaching process? As a teacher, what kinds of pedagogical models do you employ?

My pedagogy is student-centred and aims for the 'lifelong self-learner', which helps to construct a lifelong relationship between continuous art practice and studio

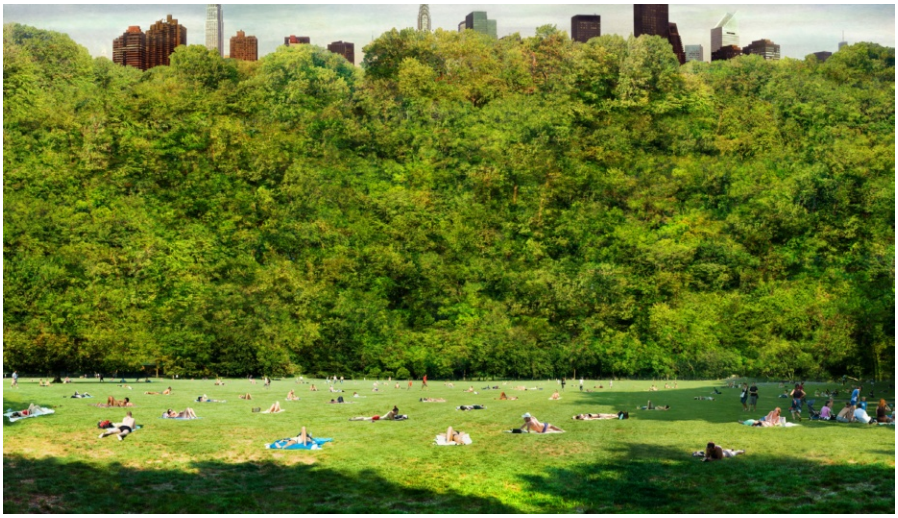

Figure 33. Sangbin IM, Central Park 1, *2007, lambda print, 177.8 × 101.6 cm*

critique. In my teaching, I constantly try to develop and implement new ways of critiquing artworks. This helps students seek the ways to overcome creative difficulties and also helps them develop their art and personally grow. Secondly, I search for art research methodologies that are right for individual students to help them explore new venues, generate a variety of insights about their art and to guide them as they practice and research art in everyday life. Thirdly, I actively introduce a variety of media as a set of tools for students to utilise. We know that art is always a reflection of its time. It can never exist or have any meaning away from it. Therefore, in this media-saturated society, students need to know about technology to be able to truly express it in art. Media, whether traditional or new, are a means to an end. We need to know all the tools in the box to build a house. Fourthly, I mentor students to find their artistic voice as well as their vocation.

In addition, my pedagogy aims at legitimising artist research as a valid quest for artistic knowledge. Artistic research fuses the researcher and the researched as an artistic life fuses art-making and teaching art, practice and theory. As previously explained, for this highly individualised fusion to take place, we need to make full use of the studio critique. However, in real life, studio critiques also have limitations. In order to overcome these limitations, I have explored ways of diversifying the settings to generate various perspectives on artworks and to help artists both subjectify and objectify their art. I have also actively proposed models of the studio critique that have evolved from my personal experiences and teaching practice. Those models include individual critique, small and large group critique, relay critique, role-playing critique, random association critique, flip chart critique,

artist statement critique, presentation critique, virtual show critique and so on. Based on my practice of these models, I have also categorised types of critiques: study-referred, presentation-centred, preference-generated, composition-oriented, socio-cultural, artwork-directed and advice-based critique.

You speak of methods of art education that combine different categories of studio critique and art practice, and you have also referred to your own hybrid artistic work. If the education of artists is based on assumptions about what it means (or should mean) to be an artist, do you think that art education in academies or universities today reflects this hybrid quality? Do you think we should start to rethink the way we train artists today?

My dissertation in art education made me reflect about myself as an artist-researcher as opposed to an artist-technician. In my research on studio critiques, I found several benefits. Firstly, it helped me distinguish between subjective and objective engagement with my art and how to find the right balance between the two. Secondly, it helped me develop a keen mind about art. Thirdly, it made me pay attention not only to my art but also to its presentation. Fourthly, it directed my attention not only to my art but also to the art market. Last of all, it led me to experiment with and promote various formats of the studio critique as art pedagogies. Accordingly, I argue that the studio critique promotes different ways of thinking about art. It creates meaning for individuals, helps elaborate the presentation of art and enriches pedagogical dialogues in art education.

Artists should be mentors and mentees at the same time not only for other artists but also for themselves. Artists are not mere technicians. They are holistic beings who synergise practice and theory. To train an artist is to fuse art, artist, and life together. An artistic life as a way of living does not only take place in the studio. It also takes place in the street or at a café where people converse with each other or when I am alone immersed in my chain of thoughts or acts. As in hobbies, art education is a necessary part of artistic life that enriches art-making as well. I graduated from an art school but an artistic life continues throughout one's life.

We know that context, whether historical, personal or socio-cultural, makes art rich and meaningful, especially when it comes to contemporary art. It is time for us to understand the term 'artist' in a holistic way. If artists are artists only during art-making, they are merely engineers of a mechanical process. Art education is one of the most important factors that make art genuinely artistic and holistic. For instance, without a glass to hold water, it is hard to drink water. Even though we can, we do not have to drink water without a glass all the time. Studio critique may be a small part of education, but it plays an important role in transforming the glass into a variety of shapes and sizes.

To me, studio critique is an important part of art education. An artist should be much more than a person who is incapable of doing things other than making an art object. Art education should focus on training a person to become a holistic artist

who lives a full life. If not, only a few artists can survive and others will disappear or remain unhappy. We need a variety of standards to evaluate success. We need to think of artists as complex and hybrid individuals. Being an artist is a means to an end after all. It is not about the insistence on purity or about the desire to succeed in the market. It is to rethink and review the world in ever more enriching ways.

12. ART AS AN ECOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

I'd like to begin by asking you about your formation as an artist and researcher. Where did you study art, and which artists, authors or teachers would you single out as being most influential on your career and ideas?

I was first trained in industrial design. Today, I have a doctorate in Communication and Semiotics from the Pontificate Catholic University of São Paulo and a Master's degree in Arts from the Federal University of Campinas in São Paulo. I work as an artist, videomaker and researcher, and have been participating in collective and individual exhibitions, lectures and workshops since the 1990s. I think it's important to mention that I only began my work with images and video installations in 2006.

My return to academics was a way of expanding my research and rethinking the huge network of interwoven connections in the art world. In my opinion, the research artist seeks a multiplicity of perspectives and other conceptual foci, activating his or her work and the expansion of critical knowledge. We know that the vision of artists who go into academics has its specificities. The very difficulties they experience reveal a rhizomatic thinking-process that is often hard to understand. Understanding this non-linear and non-narrative way of thinking has become fundamental, for it was where I began to reflect on the idea of the ecology of knowledge developed by Boaventura Sousa Santos. It's a theory based on plurality, it's where knowledge from the most varied of sources meets with the objective of ushering in new forms of thinking.

At the beginning of my work, in the 1990s, one can clearly see the influence of Brazilian neo-concrete artists Lygia Clark and Hélio Oiticica. The work I produced was about objects that could permit the establishment of malleable and constructive relations, and, as such, I devoted myself to the elaboration of works structured on the folding of flexible materials (canvas, felt and rubber). These works in a permanent state of modification relied on the ephemeral quality of their forms. The material took shape when handled, as it allowed itself to be attached and moved around. I chose felt because of its density and the ability to structure the folds. In this way, the flat space of the felt took on depth, transforming pieces of cloth into soft three-dimensional objects. The order was to handle the surfaces and the verb was to fold. During this period, the instability of soft works of art brought the concept of mobility versus immobility to my work, and this began to be a recurring subject in my research. From felt and rubber I moved on to flexible tubes, only to make my way to inflatables and water later.

There was a deeper question in this experimentation with materials, in the manipulation and relations. The question was, how can something that cannot be modelled be modelled? How can pieces of felt or rubber be modelled? How can water be modelled? How can giant pieces of plastic be modelled? Everything was possible through the interplay of tensions and the balance generated.

The issue of movement was already part of my earlier work. In the next stage, the interplay of tensions presented by the soft and unstable structures ended up being substituted by the image in movement. In 2006, the video-installations began, and these, through projections on the ground, moved across the hard surface of the ground, generating virtual holes. From this moment forward the ground became mobile and unstable, and surface became a matter of interpretation. I can say that through the dynamic process of experimentation along with technological evolution, the entry of technology into my work was inevitable.

The next step in this perpetual motion machine was the choice of water as material. Water, as an asset of life, drew me onto the surface of the ground and then to its place

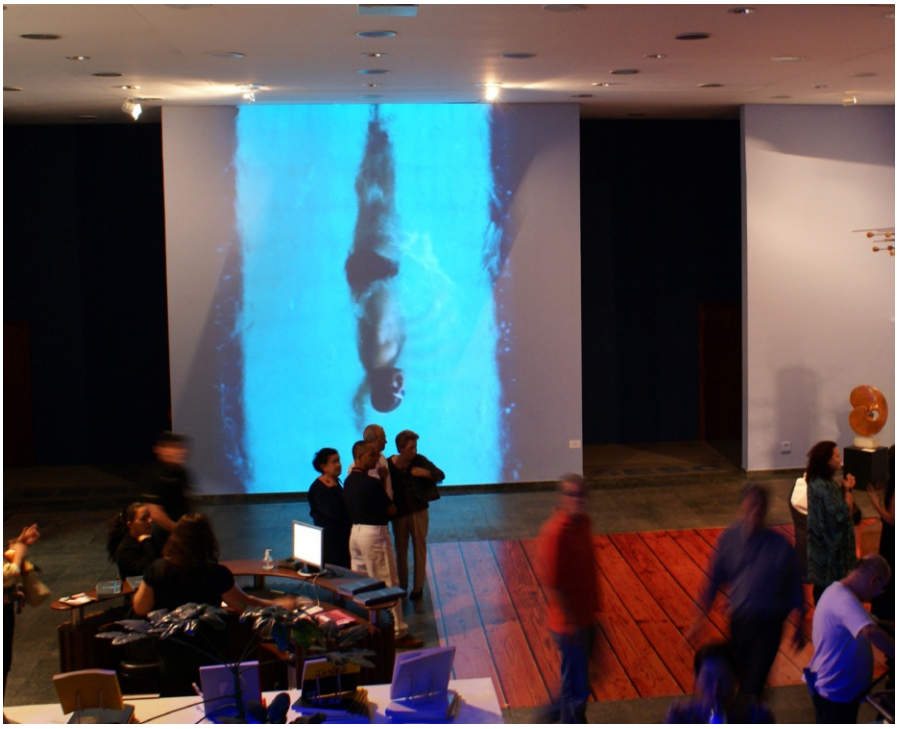

Figure 34. Sonia Guggisberg, Swimmer, *2009, series* (I)mobilidade, *looped video installation, Exposição Tempo 'buscar', SESC Piracicaba, Piracicaba, São Paulo (Photo: Sonia Guggisberg)*

of origin – in other words, into the earth, where underground reserves are found. At this time I produced the video installation *Nascente* (Source). With the projection of a source in a water mirror inside the former vault of the Banco do Brasil Cultural Centre, I presented a reflection on the relationship between natural springs and the country's financial reserves. In this way, political weight was given to the work.

At this time it was impossible to ignore the desire to investigate the city's underground areas. As such, I turned my attention to the city, moving from the aquifer to urban space. A paradox led me to develop the project *(I)mobilidade* ((I)mobility, 2007–2010), in which a series of video installations were carried out. In them, swimmers in pools have their movements contained by confinement, by a contrary force, a situation with no way out. They swim to exhaustion without going anywhere, they swim against the current or remain stuck and confined. The proposal consists of a reflection on the immobility of the citizen and the sad state of the socio-cultural condition of the contemporary world.

Next, with the concept of (I)mobility still in mind, I began researching the undoing of urban space through demolitions, its re-design and what this means for citizens. Not without reason, I incorporated photography and video images into the works, but these resources did not change the concepts guiding the research.

In addition to the names cited, the artists who most influenced me were Richard Serra, Robert Smithson and Christo. If I think about questions of images and different narratives, I would also name Bill Viola, Sophie Calle, Francis Alÿs and Olafur Eliasson. Of course there are many other important artists I'm not citing, but those I mentioned have made an impression on me since I began producing.

In recent years, I've begun to think about new possibilities for documentary video and its extensions, the subject of my doctorate. My academic advisor, Christine Greiner (a researcher in Bodymedia theory), was fundamental in supporting me in my research and in the discussion and expansion of my works in political terms. My research became more focused not only in this sense, but also in the realities captured by the camera, in the construction of clippings, in technological and sound manipulation, and in aesthetic and sign-related issues.

The objective of the thesis was to analyse the process of documenting memories and testimony, using different languages, presenting experiments that would test what the research proposes as a performative documentation of knowledge. The theoretical mesh dealt with a mosaic of theories, crossing a number of epistemological borders in an interdisciplinary manner. In order to justify the discussion, I brought together authors such as Boaventura Souza Santos, Arlindo Machado, Christine Greiner, Diana Taylor, Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, Henri Atlan and Gilles Lipovetsky. The main themes discussed refer to documentation, translation and the constitution of images, and the meaning of terms such as witness, archive and memory.

The main hypothesis is of a practical theoretical nature, based on the concept of the ecology of knowledge, extended to the universe of the media and performance. The corpus of the thesis consists of the very works created as an integral part of the

research. They are the documentary *Subsolos* (about what lies underground below São Paulo's Paulista Avenue); the video installation *Cachoeiras Urbanas* (Urban Waterfalls), which liquefies the structures of the city in a continuous movement of scenes whose violence is expressed in terms of image and sound; *Castelo de Cartas* (Castle of Cards), which constructs testimony on disintegration in the city in a mosaic of nine simultaneous screens; and the *Sistemas Eco*s (Eco Systems), which elaborates a collective proposal of sharing of artistic vocabularies and original works conceived by a group of guest artists. These experiences were the main result of the research.

Figure 35. Sonia Guggisberg, No Horizon, *2015, photograph, 80 × 120 cm*

What, in your view, are the main challenges that an artist faces in São Paulo? How have you tried to overcome these challenges?

São Paulo is a cultural metropolis. It presents a gigantic ecology of exchanges and opportunities, as well as major problems and challenges. With the appeal of a city that is alive around the clock, artists have to understand this movement and learn how to move together with it. We know that advancements in technology resulted in an increase in knowledge and communication, but at the same time brought us a complex system of uninterrupted information. They imposed a new way of life, a non-stop, no-time-to-take-your-breath modus operandi, and they are fed by excess and saturation. The city of São Paulo is a strong example in this sense. It's a

metropolis in which time has been swallowed up by excess. It's worth remembering that the speed of technology, far from the speed of human nature, is a part of our everyday existence, accelerating the logic of socio-cultural life.

I understand that in order to exist alongside this city, it is important to keep in mind new strategies of undertaking actions in work and in personal life. We can say that every neighbourhood is a city and that each interest group is a quasi-ghetto. A way of overcoming this way of life is by building strategies of international exchanges to overcome the local process, overcome the entanglement that the excess of information in transit associated with the problems of the city faces us with.

With regards to the system of culture in Brazil, it is important to say that a project for the private support of culture has been in place for more than twenty years and that this system is very strong in São Paulo. For this, the government created incentive laws in which artists and curators from various different areas seek the financial support of private companies through bureaucratically complex calls for applications. This has become a common and essential procedure in artistic life in order to carry out projects. Through the laws, the companies financing them are able to deduct from their taxes when they sponsor artistic events. Of course this system has also turned into a marketing tool for the companies, but this isn't the place to expand upon this subject right now. In this sense, it's very common for us to find cultural centres within financial institutions. As an example I can cite the banks that run their own cultural centres promoting large-scale exhibitions and events (Banco do Brasil Cultural Centre, Caixa Foundation, Itaú Cultural Institute…).

In my opinion, one of the most important strategies for artists in terms of surviving and adapting in today's world is understanding the need to be a kind of entrepreneur as well. In addition to creating and building their oeuvre, artists need to generate strategies to display their work. There is definitely no comfort zone in a large, complex city like São Paulo. It has become fundamental for artists to delve intensely into their objectives and organise themselves. We know that numbers and spreadsheets can be complicated, but it's a necessity. It's a way of adapting to incentive laws and looking for financial support to expand your work. My *Sistemas Ecos* project, for instance, was carried out through the government's incentive laws and the mobilisation of private funds. Even if it's gratifying for artists to be able to live off their art, in Brazil this is something that's almost impossible, and most have side jobs to improve their income.

The *Sistemas Ecos* project also had an educational dimension. You are not a teacher in the formal, institutional sense, but *Sistemas Ecos* involved artist-tutors working with students on an exhibition that brings together buried narratives, sounds, urban issues and collaborative thinking. Can you tell me how the whole project works in practice?

The conceptual basis of the project is the idea of the ecology of knowledge presented by theoretician Boaventura Souza Santos. The ecology of knowledge is a solution

for the apparent impossibility of co-existence of different forms of knowledge. It means renouncing existing rules on a given subject and proposing another mode of organisation. It's a mediation of distinct areas, a way to administer a system of different singularities. It's also a mode of organisation of thought and of interpretation of differences as a political act. It has to do with reformulating procedures and finding points of convergence for different languages and vocabularies.

Based on this concept and focused on the individual and collective production experience, the *Sistemas Ecos* project arose with the objective of generating a system for the exchange of different forms of artistic know-how. In practice, the project presents multi-disciplinary characteristics, consisting of the intertwining of the EcoLabs (the *Sistemas Ecos*' artistic production laboratories) and the contemporary production of art. Artists from the areas of live cinema, sound sculpture, video installation and photography were invited to participate in the EcoLab groups. The groups worked intensely over the course of a month with the objective of building practical interaction, valued by the transit of various different technologies, seeking to establish connections of exchange and collectively producing works that would reflect the huge metropolis's urban issues. The artists were chosen precisely with the idea of distinct forms of thinking and artistic production in mind. In this sense, the guests, groups and tutors developed new works in various different vocabularies to be included in the exhibition.

Installations were developed collectively in the EcoLab under the tutorship of experienced artists. The other works were interventions or site-specific works, dreamed up exclusively for the exhibition and carried out by other guest artists with individual projects. The occupation of the space was aimed at fostering a direct relationship between the public and contemporary artistic production, in which the public would observe the onset on various different urban issues.

The choice of Victor Civita Square as the site for the project is a crucial part of the proposal, given its uniqueness in São Paulo. It was built in what had previously been a degraded area and has now been given back to the population, with various interesting cultural possibilities on offer. It's worth mentioning that, for the construction of the square, an architectural project was developed that included an enormous suspended wooden deck so that the public could visit the space without having direct contact with the contaminated ground. Along with the production of the project, a building that once served as an incinerator was duly treated, decontaminated and restored and, in late 2008, Victor Civita Square was opened to the public.

Given the fact that art is a potent form of mediation between people and the space they inhabit, it is able to reinvent itself and multiply. This is why I believe that art lends potential to senses when associated with places loaded with meaning. The *Sistemas Ecos* project began with a belief in the potential of this process and in the possibility of bringing other interpretations to the urban and artistic universe. It is, basically, a matter of experiencing an ecological system of connections, proving itself able to expand realities in terms of creation and production.

What do you think students take away with them from *Sistemas Ecos*?

In terms of community and space, *Sistemas Ecos*' partnership with Victor Civita Square has been an important example of integration. I consider the vocation of the space to be ideal for the purposes of the project, for in addition to its historical significance, the square is a meeting point open to the public, features rooms specially prepared for workshops, and has good indoor and outdoor exhibition spaces. It is a collective and multicultural environment of social exchange and learning. It is a place where individuals may relate to their surroundings and to their city and understand what is being shown. The *Sistemas Ecos* project is a system, a network of relations, as is the square, which is why it is a part of public space.

EcoLab consists of stages of meeting and discussion not only for the intertwining of ideas but also in recognition of gaps in research, seeking joint solutions for the production of works of art. As such, the workshops constitute a field of research in constant movement in which the networks of relations and information lend impulse to collective experiences while at the same time widening individual knowledge.

Based on a proposal that brings together numerous areas of study and traverses different circuits, the EcoLab develops technological and experimental works providing a sort of aesthetic biodiversity. The works of tutor artists with their groups and of guest artists are set up side by side with the same technical conditions, size and quality. It is an opportunity and a challenge for the groups. It is a design aimed at seeking to stimulate not only the cohabitation of different artistic languages, but also dialogue between different generations.

It's not simply a workshop that can be summed up in the experience of a few days. The development and production of works of art is seen with great interest and has brought good learning opportunities not only in the execution of the work but in the entire process, up to and including conclusion and the exhibition. I think it's important to stress that the students are not simply students but rather artists of different ages, interested in different forms of expression. The participants share their visions of the city, local history and their personal production in order to come up with propositions. They are part of the process with the idea of generating an environment conducive to expanding their artistic knowledge and that brings them closer to the experience of a more experienced artist in a given area.

How can an artist-teacher working on a collaborative piece with a specific community or small group balance his or her own ideas with those of the people working with him or her? What would you consider to be the signs of an authentic artistic collaboration?

The interweaving of formats and different artistic visions is not only a strategy for the production and expansion of knowledge, but also makes the continuous emergence of other languages and other forms of thinking about and building art possible. We believe that based on a procedure of interpretation and knowledge exchange,

Figure 36. Sonia Guggisberg, EcoLab, *2014 (Photo: Sonia Guggisberg)*

it is possible to identify common issues, but also counterpoints and intertwining differences of art production systems while also looking at social and political issues.

Gathering archives, inquiring propositions and questioning them in a collective manner is a way of devoting oneself to the construction of a different reality, of a new gesture, even if this gesture is unable to make a full, entire truth emerge. In its attempt to show a positioning on artistic production, *Sistemas Ecos* presents an ecology of different languages in order to propose a reflection, a construction and a space for discussion. It is a question of investing in a hybrid proposition, instead of simply insisting on the eternal repetition of existing systems. The project does not intend to channel only political issues, but also to point out, signal and elicit attitudes and reflections, working with socio-cultural difficulties through the production of works of art.

The issue of authenticity is not a matter that worries the tutor-artists, as this is a game in which all hands are shown. All understand that the tutor is fundamental in order to guarantee the maturation and fulfilment of the final work. The dynamics are different in each group, but all agree with the rules of the game, bring their proposals and share ideas. Normally the project begins out of the tutor's research, and the tutor opens it up to the group, accepting collaboration and interaction. I consider

this part of the project perhaps the most interesting. Tutoring by artists with an established career is a challenge for everyone, and this process is understood with great responsibility by the participants, for they know that they'll have their works displayed along with the other guest artists.

What roles do communities and localities play in your video projections and installations? How do you think your work communicates with them?

I believe that elaborating upon issues in art and bringing answers to the public also means extending possibilities of sharing visions, stimulating reflection and building thought. As I see it, art doesn't get stuck in concepts, it doesn't allow itself to stop the movement or the development of discussions that permeate society. On the contrary, in fulfilment of its political role, in due proportion, it can denounce destructive schemes that penalise society, it can destabilise corrupt socio-political structures that work against the real development of society, and it has the potential to operate freely, with the ability to disclose actions that function as mediators of social problems. Art fulfils its role when it continues to violate organised structures, generating strategies, building autonomous compositions and presenting tools through which society may rethink itself.

I present my answers in video installations and site-specific works, aware that every work of art is an open testimony that transits and expands through the public. I can say that these works have been welcomed with great interest and curiosity, which reassures me as to the fulfilment of their role.

I believe you also presented a few of these personal works in *Sistemas Ecos*. Can you expand a little about this?

In 2013 I presented two works, *Mercúrio* (Mercury) and *Samarina*, in *Sistemas Ecos*. *Samarina* (Last Dream) is part of a series of video installations based on my observation of the urban redesigning of the city of São Paulo.

Samarina is a work whose images were captured during a demolition job and shows the end of a family history. It presents a personal situation, but one that is nevertheless common in a city like São Paulo. The video focuses on the movement of the smoke and dust caused by the demolition, the remains of the remains. The dust is the final fragment of the demolition and floats in the air until everything is over. It's footage that literally shows the end not just of yet another piece of real estate in the city, but the crumbling of the history that was built there. The soundtrack was made using sounds from the demolition, but in the background we hear the voice of a child singing old songs. The sounds of the collapsing of the building's walls and structure are presented alongside the sincere voice of a child insistently playing a guitar, evoking the destruction of the childhood dreams that have definitively come to an end.

Mercúrio arose out of research on land contaminated by waste deposited where Victor Civita Square now is. The waste is made up of chemical elements that gradually

infiltrated into the ground as a result of the operation of the city's incinerator over the course of forty years. The objective was to bring visibility to the issue of ground contamination, which we know exists but we don't see. This contamination, which is different from that of visible refuse, cannot be confined in a given space. At times diluted and often invisible, it seeps into the soil but also into living beings without them noticing, and in the long term can cause illnesses and deformations.

For this work, I placed a certain quantity of mercury into a wooden children's educational game and took a series of photographs. The images were enlarged, cut out and taped onto the wood to form a big puzzle on the floor of the exhibition space. The result was an eight-by-four-metre work in which you can observe the simulation of the virgin mercury, a highly contaminating metal, creeping in between the pieces of wood.

In 2014, I produced the work *Lost Sounds* as part of *Sistemas Ecos*. Conceived as an ecology of sounds and noise, *Lost Sounds* presents the result of extensive research on the local history of the incinerator. Its objective is to recreate passages about the day-to-day experience of the burning of waste. The work brings a sound experience to the public, an opportunity to activate memory through sounds and to reconstruct a possible local history. The sounds represent the remains of what was incinerated, the buried ashes, seeking to reconstruct the memory of what took place. The old trees are the real connection with the contaminated ground and its past, which is why the work was conceived for that space. Six speakers with independent channels and a technological system that organises all of the sounds in a specific way were hung from an old tree, which not only touches the contaminated ground, but grows from and lives on it. Sounds of machines, noises of fire, sounds of bodies but also of hospitals, of walking and of various different movements form an ecology of sounds. The result, a sound history, can be compared to a body of hidden voices.

13. TEACHER AT DESSAU AND ARTIST IN THE WORLD

You studied fine art in the US but then returned to Germany and became involved in teaching there. Can you expand about these formative years in your life? What were the factors that led you to get involved in higher education?

I started to study fine arts at the Fachhochschule of Design at Aachen in Germany. Trained as a designer and as a fine artist my studies lasted about five years and were full of interesting experiences—about drawing, painting, sculpture and design. Then I was given an opportunity to go to America on a Fulbright scholarship and continued studying for one and a half years. I had special interest in Native American people and was happy to go to Oklahoma to do a Master of Fine Arts in painting there.

Figure 37. Lisa M. Stybor, KEMAH, at work*, 2014, photograph taken in Turkey*

There were several factors that led me to teaching in higher education. I thought that teaching could give me the freedom and independence I needed to develop my own themes and interests as a painter. Besides I come from a family of teachers: my father, brother and aunt were all teachers or founder/director of an institution. So I grew up with the joys and problems of teaching. In fact, I was already teaching before I obtained my professorship, but my students then were kids, blind or disabled people or youngsters who needed a portfolio to study fine arts at an academy.

In the early 1990s you started teaching at the University of Applied Sciences in Dessau and stayed there for many years. What was it like to teach in a place so closely associated with the most famous art school of the twentieth century, the Bauhaus?

It was a joy, an adventure, a challenge, a responsibility and an honour!

I had to create and develop new courses for design and architecture students. Ways had to be found to bring students of both fields close to fine arts so that they could better understand the problems and challenges of their profession. I wanted them to open up and to leave behind the limits and borders of their former education, to reach 'new shores'.

It was a great challenge to contribute to the buildup of a new University. What kind of school would be appropriate for today? What could we learn from the Bauhaus?

Also it was a chance for me to discover East Germany. I grew up in the Western part of the country and my family did not have any connection to the East. I only knew the Bauhaus from photos, but these showed another reality. Today Dessau is a very small town in a rural area, so I was very curious about its actual reality, about the Bauhaus building itself, about the people in East Germany, about the surrounding landscape and the culture. It was a great honour for me to teach in the school that followed the Bauhaus, where Johannes Itten, Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Paul Klee and many other great artists and architects had taught before. There was a promise in the air that suggested that we could learn especially from them, and from the beginning questions came up like: What was the spirit of the Bauhaus? and: What was the secret of the enormous success of this school?

In the beginning I used to travel to Dessau every weekend from Aachen by train, but soon I understood that I had to move and live there if I wanted to discover the situation and to develop my own way of teaching, if we really wanted to create a new school. So I moved to Dessau in 1993 and lived there for about seven years.

At that time the Bauhaus was an ideal for me. When I was in the US in 1987/88 I had followed a course about the Bauhaus. I was lucky to come across a very engaged and knowledgable art historian professor, who later became a close friend. I discovered that the Bauhaus was a very radical school in its ideas, a place where teachers and artists broke with tradition wherever they thought it was necessary. They found completely new ways of expression in art education and were able to combine this knowledge with problems and tasks of their time. I admired their approach;

it was very brave. There was a hope that the new school also would develop such strong energies and that perhaps also we were able to start a dynamic movement, which somehow would have a deep effect on society.

Yet today, twenty years after the new start, it is clear that there are big differences between both schools.

First of all, there are differences in structure. As a design department, our school is a small part of a much bigger university of applied sciences (as is the architecture department). We are not independent or private and decisions in our department are often made on a democratic basis.

My school did not become an art school; it became a design school. This means for example that art is not at the centre of teaching like it was at the Bauhaus school. There everything started with fine arts and later in their education, students were led into their professions.

Our school is managed by a group of colleagues who are mainly designers (not architects or artists). And this makes a big difference. For example, unlike the Bauhaus, there isn't as much courage to take risks in experimenting. There is, like so often in contemporary society, "NO TIME!"—and a greater desire for security, vanity and power. There is more angst. But if a student wants to become a strong designer or architect, first he/she has to learn to lose fear. If you do not learn this early in your studies, you will probably never learn it.

One can learn this while studying fine arts. I am happy that at least in the first ten years of teaching I was able to communicate this and to reach many students. BE BRAVE! One of them—from the first students' group—just recently got a professorship, which made all of us proud of her.

In my department there are no architects. The architects have their own department. Despite the fact that people often talk about multidisciplinarity, common projects between both departments in reality have hardly happened in recent years. In the first years I simultaneously worked in both departments. This meant one day more of teaching every week and it was extra work for years. With the change to the Bachelor and Master system this was no longer possible.

In the beginning I taught my field of teaching "Colour, Plane and Space" as duty in the first four basic semesters of the design course. About ten years later it was reduced by colleagues and the dean to one compulsory semester in the whole bachelor design course, on the basis of the change to the Bachelor and Master system. The students do not learn any more the thinking processes and the language of fine arts. Today fine art is no longer important in my school. Too much time is taken up by many different subjects, especially by learning how to handle computer programmes. There is not much time left in a week for students to experiment with fine arts and basic artistic ideas. Design education seems to have changed its focus from artistic to engineering skills.

In my eyes this is a real loss. The development of original ideas out of the students' own identity is going to be lost. And it has another consequence: many colleagues split design and fine arts and see them as two different fields … here is design and

there are the fine arts. This means that I often teach students who want to become 'just' designers, students, who do not have much interest in the fine arts.

I feel closer to the thinking of the Bauhaus. For me design is a profession, which is strongly connected with fine arts because fine arts are its basis. I see design as a specialisation of fine arts, as one possible 'outside' of an 'inside' (another 'outside' is architecture). To teach the fine arts does not only mean to communicate different kinds of techniques like the exploration and use of line, plane, colour and space. Fine arts in their essence are for me a way of thinking, a movement towards life. Through art one acquires a special sensibility with which one can see, perceive, feel and understand society, individuals, nature, culture in a more complex and deeper way. And when students learn this early in their studies, they will keep this sensitivity throughout life in their profession and in general, and it does not matter whether the student will later become a designer or an architect.

This former school here in Dessau, the Bauhaus, made it possible to look far back and far ahead. It showed students how to be powerful and courageous, how to cross borders and to find new ways. 'New ways' does not mean just an invention of products, which new techniques or materials make possible. 'New ways' means a completely new approach in thinking and emotion towards the world. The Bauhaus was a small, powerful, extreme, courageous and radical school, independent and free. With the Bauhaus in front of my eyes, I realise that the new design school had a good start, but became like many other design schools in Germany today. In my opinion the new school could have developed in a much stronger way; it remained far behind its potential and unfortunately I do not see that the essential ideas of the Bauhaus have been sustained.

You are comparing your school to other design schools in your country, and it would be good to talk at this stage about how you think art education in Germany has changed over the last few decades. Have you noticed any new trends in the teaching of art in higher education in Germany?

It is difficult to speak about the 'whole' country. I think it basically depends on the individual school, on the department and also on the individual teacher. But I have to say that the turn to the Bachelor/Master system in universities and academies in Germany seems to have changed many things. My impression is that today the situation is not as good as it was before. Now there is often much more stress because of a lack of time and especially at Bachelor's level it often seems that the quality achieved is not as high as in former years. Besides, today study seems to be less free; the students ultimately are less autonomous.

Relating to my school: with the change to the Bachelor/Master system our students rely much more on computers and do not learn any more to go deeply into the fine arts. This has far-reaching consequences: a special training of sensitivity, of observation, memorising, reflection, thinking in images and developing one's own imagination is missing now. All this seems to have been lost somewhere on the way

in recent years. Instead of opening eyes, hands, brain, memory, perception, sensibility and fantasy and instead of learning to experience, to shape and touch things with your own hands, students are now asked to do a lot of theoretical 'research', to 'look around'. And so they develop completely different ideas to the kind of ideas they developed in former years; they often become too abstract and forget about their body, senses and emotions. So they often do not go deeply enough into a problem or they do not have their own, strong visual ideas. To think in a holistic way is now unfamiliar and strange.

This development fills me with sorrow. Where is the time needed to reflect in depth? Where is a sensitive and differentiated perception? Where is courage and an independent way of thinking? Where is free and open space to develop important ideas and questions? Where is the interest in one's own artistic identity, a visual language? Is this no longer important in these times of globalisation? Do we all want to produce and use the same products in the world in the future? Do we want to be all the same subjects who have just learned to function? Where is individuality? Where is life?

You said that the quality of art education depends to some extent on the individual teacher. As a professor of art, what do you think have been the key artistic ideas or visions that you have aimed to pass on to your students? Were there any specific circumstances that have made the achievement of these aims more challenging?

Being one of the first professors in the design department in 1993 I had to develop my own key artistic ideas. It was a maturing process—the maturing of my own art, of my ideas, of what the profile of our new school could be and also of what it means to become a 'good' teacher for these special students. I already had taught in design and fine art departments at other universities before, at Aachen and Düsseldorf in Germany and in Oklahoma in the U.S. Coming from these experiences questions came to mind, like: What kind of school can our school become? Which important art principles and experiences should design or architecture students get to know? But also: What makes a good teacher? And even: What makes a good teacher especially in this place and at this time, being born as a German after World War II?

There was a very complex background, from which I finally developed my teaching approach. I was lucky enough to teach simultaneously in the design and in the architecture departments during the first ten years. My fields were artistic foundations like colour, line, plane and space. Students needed a basic knowledge of craft like drawing, painting, composition and installation, but as prospective designers they also needed sensibility, independence, confidence in making assessments about art and design and self-confidence gained through many experiments, reflections and experiences, so they would become autonomous and 'masters' who could take over responsibility. My students needed an open mind, great sensitivity in perception and expression, a strong imagination, knowledge in working with different materials,

a knowledge of art history, curiosity towards themselves, their own bodies, their childhood – all of that combined with a curiosity about the world of today, empathy for problems of other people and finally a deep interest in culture, fine arts, literature, music and dance. And they needed to BE BRAVE. My way of teaching became a holistic approach.

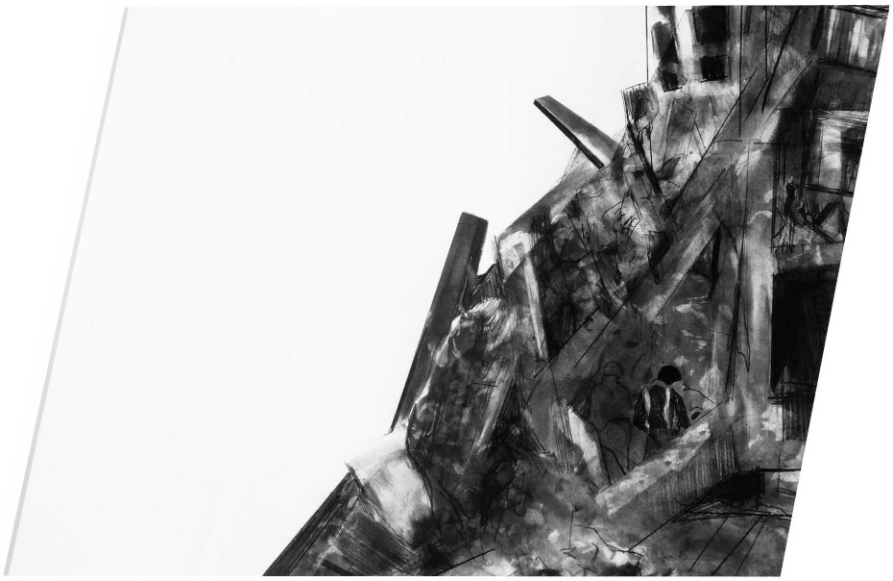

Figure 38. Lisa M. Stybor, IN THE RUINS, *2013, graphite on cardboard, ca. 50 × 70 cm, Italy*

Despite being heavily dedicated to your teaching commitments at Dessau, you have also maintained your own artistic practice throughout all these years. What kind of balance did you achieve between the disciplines of art practice and teaching? Did you ever feel that one of them was not leaving sufficient space or time for the other to develop sufficiently?

Throughout almost all those years it was not possible for me to work as an artist during the semester. Teaching gives you a lot, but it also takes a lot of energy and time, and I wanted to do it as intense and well as I could. So I balanced my two professions splitting a year more or less in four parts: two semesters of teaching and two periods of creating art in between, the latter enlivened by my interest in foreign cultures and natural spaces.

I liked this change very much. It allowed me to be very intense in the work that I was doing at a specific moment, and at the same time it gave me enough distance. I needed this distance to develop my art and to reflect about what I had ‘produced’.

And teaching led me back to the 'real' world, close to human beings, problems and questions, and taught me to become very flexible, inventive and empathic.

During my first years the situation at Dessau was comparable to working in a free and empty field. There weren't many tools and rarely any computers in the beginning. You had to learn and invent so much, with nothing in your hands; you almost had to become a magician. The times shortly after the Wall fell weren't easy. Some people—students and also teachers—went back after staying at Dessau for just a short time. But for me it was a great experience in life, like being on a 'foreign star'. I saw houses which looked like the houses of my childhood in my hometown in West Germany. The gardens had the same fruits like our garden at home. And questions came up like … perhaps people here are similar in many ways to me, a person from the West? What do we share, and where are we different?

But the step one takes to become a teacher in higher education is not easy. It is a decision one takes for life. To become a successful artist you usually have to start very early to follow the art market. When you become a teacher, you will often be 'swallowed' by the University for years and whether the time which is left for your art is sufficient to develop your own work and to exhibit—this is a difficult question and probably depends on each individual situation. Whether my artwork will be honoured during my lifetime or not, I do not know, but this was the risk I took when I chose to become a teacher. I just know that I taught with my best energies, with knowledge, experience and love to create strong design and architecture students, and I reached many of them.

Today I am very thankful that I got an opportunity to teach at Dessau and to be an artist, to become a witness and also a *Gestalter* (creator of forms) after the Berlin Wall fell, at this small but famous place in East Germany. My time here enriched my life incredibly and shaped me. And in the coming years I will do my best to complete my work as a travelling artist in the world.

A while ago, you mentioned your interest in foreign cultures. I know that you travel to Italy quite often, also to produce new art-works there. How has this different context affected your work?

Travelling was always important to me. While studying in America I realised for the first time that the view from another country or even another continent can completely change your understanding of your own identity.

I already went to Italy while studying at Aachen. When I travelled to the south, I always had this feeling of strong vitality, warmth and life. With my growing interest in culture in general and especially due to my own roots in European culture my travels led me to Sicily, France and Greece and further on to Egypt, around the whole Mediterranean Sea, to Northern Africa, Canada and finally to Turkey, the area of Anatolia, where Europe was born and where the Neolithic revolution took place. But, apart from this interest in the Mediterranean Sea, I regularly started making short journeys to Iceland around twenty years ago. This change of life—landscape,

temperature, energy and vegetation—between South and North is a very important experience for me and it is essential for my art.

Figure 39. Lisa M. Stybor, HOUSE, *2013, graphite on cardboard, ca. 50 × 70 cm, Italy*

Do you feel that your teaching is informed by your own work as an artist?

Yes, I think so, but the reverse is also valid. My teaching and my own artwork are very deeply connected. I even think that one area grew because of new perceptions, experiences and reflections in the other field. I am quite sure that my own art just developed in the way it did, because I became an art teacher in a special context, in the design and architecture school at Dessau after the Berlin Wall fell. And I became the teacher I am because I worked so much as a fine artist in other countries and contexts in the world.

Before I started teaching, my thoughts as an artist always revolved around my own world and former experiences. As a teacher I had to leave 'my' world and I had to learn to listen… to students, society, nature, problems, art, architecture, culture etc. By doing this I could develop empathy, the ability to change positions very quickly and to see themes, figures and problems from very different points of view. Teaching compelled me to open up my mind and my emotions, and it made me even more curious and sensitive. I started to read many books in other fields, especially architectural texts, but also literature in general. My interest towards music and language grew. Teaching enormously enriched me as an artist, and the fine arts

again helped me to find my way in and survive this school. Having the possibility simultaneously to make art and to teach for about twenty-three years made me who I am. I am sure that without one of them I would be today a completely different Lisa Stybor.

Do your students ever ask questions about your art?

In the first years of teaching I never showed my work, and students didn't ask. I tried to express my aims, way and experiences with words on an abstract level, without my own images. But ever since my field of teaching has been reduced to such little time, I sometimes show my own work and explain the background in detail. At the same time, I show alternatives and other possibilities.

But it would be much better just to use the spoken word, because the possibility that students start to copy their teacher is very real. To copy—this is done so often today and it is one reason why many design products in the world are so similar to each other. Students often do not learn any more to be original. Colleagues say that "There is not enough time!". But this is a self-made problem. It is possible to change.

Each time has to find its own shapes and expressions. Copying only makes the world poorer in its diversity, and the idea of the individual person is going to be lost. It would be much better to leave more time for reflection, experiments and a deeper, holistic understanding of the situation, of human beings, of things and environments—to give more time to BECOME BRAVE!

14. I DO NOT FOLLOW ANY RULES

Do you consider yourself to be primarily an artist, a teacher or a combination of the two: an artist-teacher?

When I was a student of Art Education and the Czech language at the Faculty of Education at the Palacky University in Olomouc, I was convinced that I would never become a teacher and that I would always dedicate my time solely to art practice. But, given that at that time in Czechoslovakia there was a totalitarian communist regime and I stood against it, I could neither teach nor present myself as an artist. Therefore I engaged myself in the underground artist movement around the magazine *Vokno*. When the communist dictatorship, which persecuted my family, finally fell in 1989, I started to teach in a state art school. Since 1990 I started to show my paintings and textiles in galleries and cultural centres in our country and also abroad. Since that time I have engaged myself both as an artist and also as a teacher.

The school I teach in offers afternoon classes, and students come in their free time once a week for three hours. Some of them start when they are five years old, my oldest students are twenty. They register for a whole school year, at the end of which they get a grade and most of the students attend for seven to ten years. It is run by the Ministry of Education and there is a network of these schools in the whole country. There are 487 of them, while in Prague alone there are 35. The school focuses on music, dance, theatre and the visual arts. In the visual arts programme we teach basics of painting and drawing, graphic art, pottery, textile design, object art, action art, land art and other experimental work. The classes are called Surface creation, Spatial design, Art expression and Creative expression.

The content of the teaching is entirely dependent on the personality of the teacher, so he or she has absolute freedom in the teaching methods and content. This enables me to be very creative with my students and I do all kinds of art: from the standard media (painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics) to the alternative approaches such as performance art, land art, object art and conceptual art.

So does this mean that the school has no programme as such?

In 2012 the School Education Programme was created on the basis of an edict issued by the Ministry of Education, which allows each school to adjust its programme according to its individual needs and focus. Every year, I personally prepare a new project focused on a different theme. For example, during the school year 2014/2015 I focused on the Prague theatre SEMAFOR, which has left an impact on many generations since its establishment in 1959. We created paintings inspired by the

songs of Jiri Suchy, whose poetry is very imaginative. I adapt chosen techniques and materials to the subject. As a teacher I am free to choose my themes and how I develop each theme. There is no need for any sort of official approval.

How would you describe your approach to teaching art? What does teaching mean to you and how would you describe the ideal relationship between a teacher and her students?

I choose themes that are artistically inspiring, themes that reflect my pacifist and ecological worldview. I work on them according to the demands of each age group. During the summer break I create a teaching plan, and then add to it during the school year as I need to. I look for inspiration in the works of contemporary artists such as Ines Seidel, Miroco Machiko, Daniel Richter, Jonathan Meese, the works of street artists and others. Teaching is very enriching for me: the lesson planning, the choice of themes, links to the contemporary art scene, and especially the various techniques and processes of art.

My relationship with the students is very friendly, they take me as their friend. I respect the students' expression and I am available as an advisor, they trust me. We are one big family, because I am close to most of their parents. Every week I teach about ninety different students.

Is there anything that an art teacher can't teach her students?

As a teacher I do not try to teach my students something, but I try to enable them through artistic means to establish a contact with the world. I try to develop their imagination and creativity, love for nature and people and to make them aware of the idea that "the Earth is our Mother. We must protect her and she will protect us" (Rebecca Floyd).

Are your students familiar with your work as an artist? Do any students try to imitate you?

I frequently have exhibitions and I invite my students. Sometimes I exhibit together with some of my students. I do not present my work during classes so students do not imitate me. I teach them lots of different techniques so that they can find out what they would like to do in their own work.

How important is art-making to you? How would you describe the themes that have dominated your work over the years and how were these themes affected by political censorship?

When I started to paint in the 1970s, I was rather closed in my inner world, attached to the symbolism of the late nineteenth century, which I loved for its otherworldly spirituality. For an artist with a sensitive soul, life in a totalitarian regime with all

Figure 40. Iva Vodrážková, Broken-hearted, *1988, oils, 110 × 60 cm*

freedoms constrained meant resisting consumer society and official structures. The official art of that time was based on socialist realism and everything was under the control of the secret police (STB). Religion and spirituality were suppressed and labeled as Western imperialist tendencies. Any artist who did not follow the path of socialist realism was persecuted, banned from exhibiting and publishing. Art was divided into 'Official' and 'Banned'. I took my place in the 'Banned art' group and in fact my name appeared in a book published in 2000 which lists sixty visual artists born in the 1950s and 1960s who were unable to exhibit their work.

At the time I was being followed by the STB, which did not mean I was isolated. Rather, it meant that I was a part of the underground movement with people who had created their own culture, apartment galleries and home universities. Our home at the centre of Prague was one such apartment. At that time I painted with oil colours on canvas and started to create textile site objects, similar to ancient procession banners. I was interested in the art of indigenous people and in my work I recycled old textiles and sewed new objects out of them.

After 1990, I started to show my paintings and textiles in galleries and cultural centres in our country and also abroad. Since that time I have engaged myself as an artist and as a teacher. When the borders of Czechoslovakia opened, I was able to travel, and in 1993 I visited the USA for the first time and got in touch with Hopi Indians. I was also influenced by the 'Woman circle' movement, brought to Prague by the shaman Rebecca Floyd. She started a group here called 'The Well/ *Studna*', which practised women's rituals and focused on ecology. That meant using natural materials and topics connected with nature preservation. During this time, I produced paintings such as: *I am a Part of a Cut-Down Tree*, *To Touch the Earth*, *The Spirit of the Forest*, *Birds in Fire*, and others.

Figure 41. Iva Vodrážková, Wakan Tanka, *1993, textile, 160 × 90 cm*

These autobiographical details you are talking about seem to mirror your own family background, imbued as it was with art, university life but also political persecution. In what ways do you think your family background influenced your own development as an artist?

I grew up with my parents and my brother in the house of my grandfather, the sculptor Julius Pelikan. One side of the house was a sculpture studio and the other

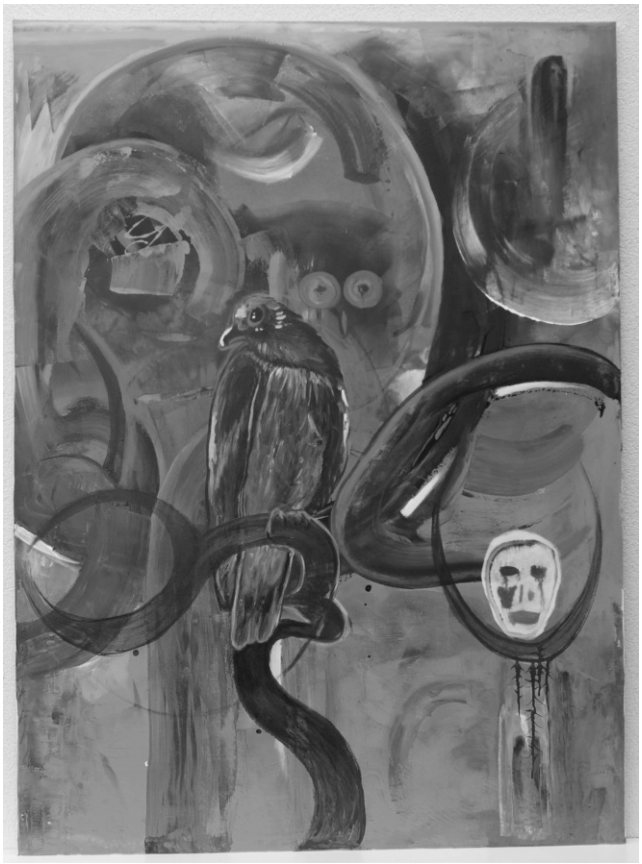

Figure 42. Iva Vodrážková, Symbols forest, *2014, acrylics, 140 × 95 cm*

side where we lived was like a museum, because all the walls were decorated with the paintings of known Moravian painters and folklorists. This environment of course had a great influence on me, but my grandfather never made me work with clay or introduced me to art. Until the age of eighteen, under the influence of my parents, I was a competitive skier. The greatest influence on my artistic development was the housekeeper of my grandfather, whose name was Hanicka. My grandmother had perished in the concentration camp at Auschwitz and so my grandfather hired a housekeeper to run his house and she would often also help him in his studio. This woman was my guardian angel and she taught me many handicrafts, she told me stories and also read to me about the mysteries of life. She was a devout Christian and secretly took me with her to church. She was the person who fuelled my imagination and this fed into my artistic practice.

What about your father? Did he resist the regime?

As a young student of medicine my father joined the Communist Party before the war. He was interested in surrealism and read André Breton's books in French. He joined the anti-Nazi resistance movement in 1939, was arrested in 1940 and imprisoned for five years in Austria in the town of Stein. After the war he believed the world must change. He became a doctor and belonged to the reformist stream in the Communist party in the 1960s. He disagreed with the invasion of the Warsaw Pact armies in Czechoslovakia in 1968. For that he was fired from his job as a Professor at the Medical Faculty at Palacky University in Olomouc and senior consultant of the Third Internal Clinic. His passport and driver's license were confiscated and he was sent to pension early at the age of fifty-four. He found it very hard to bear the idea that he was not able to publish his scholarly works any more. He was unable to deal with this persecution and suffered so much that he died of stroke in 1980, aged sixty-four.

Apart from your family, were there any artists, writers, activists or movements in the Czech Republic which left a significant impact on your artistic or educational practices?

Literature was a great influence on my artistic development. In the second half of the 1970s, books that used to be prohibited by the regime started to be published. I was influenced very much by the work of Franz Kafka, Franz Werfel, Otakar Brezina, Jakub Deml, Josef Vachal and the translations of existentialist literature. As for painting, I was influenced by the surrealism of Czech painters like Jindrich Styrsky, Toyen, Frantisek Muzika, Alois Wachsman, Mikulas Medek, Jan Zrzavy and Frantisek Sima.

In the 1970s there was the political agenda of 'normalisation' (which meant the repression of freedom gained in the 1960s) and all these artists were prohibited again, so I was sourcing only prohibited art. Books were copied on typewriters and exhibitions were organised in people's apartments. I could not care less about the official culture.

You have clearly been very committed to your artistic work for decades. How would you define your creative process?

Creation for me is a discovery and opening of hidden thoughts. It is a relaxing and rewarding kind of work. I do not follow any rules, I trust intuition, experience gained from my studies and I search for self-expression and experimentation. In the first stage of the painting process, I do underpainting, which arises from a random approach. I continue by creating a form suggested by the underpainting until I obtain the image I unconsciously want to create. At times I keep painting for a long time, redoing it over and over again, looking for its real shape. But sometimes it happens that I do the underpainting and the painting is done. And I am amazed at how easy it is.

15. AN ARCHEOLOGY OF THE FUTURE PAST

Underneath the Surface of Appearance

You studied fine arts in the US and later decided to go into teaching. You also earned yourself a PhD in art education from Charles University in Prague in 2008 and you have taught teacher-training courses. Recently, you explained this move to me by stating that "a teaching career was easier to survive on". What made you turn to education? Do you *need* to teach?

I grew up in a family whose ancestors were civic-minded people, pioneers and 'scholar farmers' who settled in America from various parts of Europe. There was an unwritten imperative for me to 'do' something meaningful in life. My father was an academic and several of my relatives were involved in education. In their own ways they instilled in me a love for learning. As a child I was an avid reader like my parents. I journeyed to the Yukon, rafted the Amazon, solved mysteries, and became as self-willed and independently determined as my ancestors were. So I followed in their footsteps, meandering into the adventure of learning. Teaching for me became a natural part of that cycle.

At the age of five, I won an award for a drawing in school and was given a seat at the head of the class, where I learned that art gave me a certain kind of power that made me 'special'. What I remember is that I always loved to draw. I was the art star in classes until one year a teacher made me paint over a tree I was painting blue to make it the way it was 'supposed' to be. I stopped drawing after that. In some ways, my desire to teach art was coded with the memory of this incident and the desire to not repeat it for another child. I remember being in my thirties when I was painting and one day rediscovered my blue tree! I was so excited! At that moment I found the healing power of art. Because when I was drawing for myself, I was transported to a place where there was nothing else that mattered but the world I entered into. What the act of drawing was creating for me perceptually, intellectually and emotionally became the signs of my own language of discovery. It was a place where I felt safe and that I loved. Creating art is still like that for me. I love it! As a teacher, I wanted to open the space for others to experience their own visual language.

When I started my career I wanted to be a practising visual artist. It was a huge disconnect for me after I graduated with a BFA in printmaking that my art training didn't earn me a living. After working some time in graphic design on newspapers and magazines, I decided to return to art school for a Master's degree in

art education. To be honest, at that time I was refused entry because the committee told me I was a studio artist. I had to appeal their decision and convince them why I would make a good teacher. I actually finished my degree instead in Whole Systems Design. Over time, I saw that what I really wanted to do was change the way the educational system worked and bring art into focus as a core subject. For this reason, I started working with teachers. Eventually I went after a PhD as a good tool to do that.

It was easier to make a living teaching than working jobs that gave me financial support but were soulless. But I have to say I really enjoy teaching art. I like connecting to people of all ages and connecting them to themselves through art. It's a kind of alchemy I love. And teaching art allows me to stay creative. It took me years to see that this was also part of being an artist! It's not easy to stay true to an inner calling in art though, and I admire my friends who have stayed practising artists. But they don't have an easy time of it. So yes, in this sense, I need to teach! But I mean this 'need' as the need to be creative. Needing to be creative, my teaching became its own artistry!

In what ways did the meaning of 'teaching' change for you over the years?

My ideas of teaching have changed but education has also changed. Because I reject the conditioning approach to education while still holding high standards of accomplishment, I know that I give students something unique. I take the time to connect to and open the person's own learning process. I wanted to engage people in exploring visuality in more open and creative ways and it disturbed me how art was sidelined and taught in schools. I tried to break down those kinds of inner and outer barriers and open the space for something authentic to happen. Creating experiences where a learner could discover art as their own language was always my common concern.

From working in Montessori schools, I recognise the need to follow and guide the individual's path and let them lead the way into their own discoveries. Now that I am experienced working with all ages and levels of art in education internationally, I've learned to let the experience unfold in its own way. I don't put the method or the results first over the needs of the learner. Instead, I try to let people experience visuality and then guide individuals to come into an encounter with art that is meaningful for them. That was essentially the work of my doctorate—engaging people with their process of meaning-making from visual culture.

Today, I am more comfortable being myself instead of playing a role of 'being' a teacher. In reinventing myself through the years, I followed the things I did as inspired impulses. It wasn't always conscious. Art was an intuitive calling.

You have been a Senior Lecturer at the Anglo-American University in Prague, but you have worked as academic, teacher or consultant in a variety of other contexts: Seattle, Beijing, Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya. What

Figure 43. Teresa Tipton, Before waking, *1994, terracotta on rabbit skin glue treated paper*

have been the commonalities and marked differences that you experienced in the art education sector in these contexts?

Perhaps because of my upbringing, I was never satisfied to settle with mediocrity in myself or others. I kept looking for kernels of inspiration. I generally know what works in a classroom setting regardless of the age level or intention of the learning experience, but I'm open to experiment and try something new. More and more, the standardised curriculum method of education feels forced and ineffective. I want more creative approaches to learning as an open-ended, community process—and not just for the consumption and production of information or its assessment. After working in Montessori environments for so many years, I aim for a more authentic interaction when we come together for a 'learning experience'.

I think schools mystify the educational experience and then narrowly define it, destroying its potential – like the childhood teacher who told me trees aren't blue.

The 'political correctness' approach in the USA made the practical aspects of teaching art in a public school much more difficult. I remember when we were told nudes like Michelangelo's "David" or religious art couldn't be shown to elementary students because the images were 'inappropriate'. That eliminates quite a lot of art! In spite of large-scale public advocacy, a few years later, part of the art programme was cut in order to fund $100,000 to purchase calculators for each student to use

instead of teaching mental Math. I became disgusted with the whole system. In 1994, I left the USA to study art in Greece where I was awarded a scholarship from the Olivetti Foundation and travelled to Italy on an art history tour. It was here that my passion for being an artist developed in a new direction. After that, I started working in private, international schools.

In Dar es Salaam, I really brought together all of my knowledge to create a new elementary art programme in one of Africa's largest private schools. At the time, I was given a 'carte blanche' and an enormous budget to work with. In the three years I was there, I transformed the whole school and curriculum through art. Even my principal changed her mind about the need for a specialist art teacher. In Beijing, I expanded an existing art programme with this model. In relocating to Czech Republic, I found that enormous space was given to art in and out of schools, with less taboos. Even though they had fewer financial resources to work with, the art being produced was more exciting. Eventually, I started helping design new preschools, where the most important teaching really begins. Being aware of the 'sensitive periods' in a child's development, I could convincingly communicate how art benefits learners. My work beyond this time has focused more on the theoretical and discursive aspects of cultural critique, educational reform, and advocacy for the arts.

What all of these diversities have in common is that I wanted to make a difference in the lives of others through art. At some point, I felt it was soul work. As an artist, I wanted to share the joy I experienced creating. As a teacher, I wanted to touch the part of each person that is uniquely and innately creative. I am absolutely sure it exists in everyone – somewhere! Over time, I saw that I was able to guide and lead with my insight, skills, gifts, and experience. I could inspire others to follow their own path in life and touch their own calling by engaging with that part of someone that holds their own truth. Now I see it as a form of artistic coaching. First I did this with youth and then later with young adults; then teachers and professors through the more theoretical, intellectual side of art. Recently I have been drawn to teach art again in schools where there is the potential for the greatest impact. I wanted to find a balance between these different modalities of knowing, learning, and doing and catalyse the next generations of artists, art participants and their supports.

What drove my curiosity in the research side of my work was realising that most people I met not only didn't like contemporary art, they didn't know what to say about it. Many people still believe that the Renaissance was the artistic pinnacle. My doctoral work was devoted to finding out *how coding systems operate* so that anyone could talk about contemporary art. This is a fundamental research question for me. I wanted to engage people in different ways of experiencing art today. In opening up to diverse kinds of knowledge from contemporary arts practices, I changed my own beliefs about art, too. Personally, I still believe that what can help us solve our problems today is teaching people how to touch and use their own creativity.

Figure 44. Teresa Tipton, Asleep in the Eye of the Moon, *2012, pastel drawing*

It's interesting that you discuss your teaching, research and creative experiences at one go. What does the combination of research, teaching and art practice mean to you? Have your ideas about the overlaps between these three fields been influenced by any key texts or authors?

Underlying my research and practice is an affirmation of the need for *re-enlightenment* about the meaning and purpose of engaging in the creative process. Unlike past enlightenments, this change does not draw on the logic of binary oppositions and exclusions. It derives, in particular, from an awareness of the unique environment of each individual's thoughts – a terrain that is endless, surprising, and partially unnameable in its depths. To embark upon a place that is unnamable requires a different kind of compass, one that is internal, and that must read its own landmarks, must know itself as a sentient awareness of the inner stirrings,

promptings and desires of something more subliminal than it is conscious and be willing to convey its communication.

In a way, this combination has become my creative practice. The art practice as research model is reflexive in a way that is not solely production-based. For me it means that research is a form of art; the practice of experiencing art is a form of research; and making art is also research. Practising my research findings by teaching meta-cognition through visuality is also a creative practice. But I don't want to stay only in the realm of academic writing for a creative practice. It's a kind of betrayal that tormented me for years. If you look at the international leaders in art education today, most of them aren't producing artists. Or never were. Maintaining a life in teaching and theorising art education can take the actual production of art out of the equation and one becomes a spectator or 'researcher' of what other people produce and comment on its analysis. One has to be totally committed to art otherwise one ends up doing something else and wasting its potential. I came to terms with this dilemma by engaging people in experiences of art as a form of my creative practice. It's a spatial form of culture. But I still have to produce art materially or I suffer an inner malaise that can't be satiated by any other source than by doing it.

On the other hand, we need people who know how to be artists as teachers to educate and guide the next generations of artists—to create new visuality and encourage cultural participation. Art can continue to reproduce itself in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, beliefs, images and statements just by engaging with it. Art experiences inspire other kinds of expressions and ideas in other realms of life. That's why I call myself a researching teaching artist. Art as research involves all of these things. Because art is a visual science, ultimately for me, art is all about re*search* – (re)-*searching*... Marie Fulková of Charles University in Prague influenced me a lot in this realm.

John Berger influenced me a lot and made me consider these overlaps. From *Ways of Seeing* to his later novels and essay, *And Our Faces, My Heart Brief As Photos.* Writers like Laurens van der Post and Naomi Shibab Nye's *Words under the Words*, brought me into a different kind of experiential storytelling. David Bohm's *Thought as a System* and Donald Favareau's, *The Neurosemiosis of Thinking* were pin-code for me. From Paulo Freire's *A Liberation Pedagogy* to Gustavo Esteva's *A Liberation from Pedagogy,* I'm drawn to provocative contemporary critics and artists like Marina Abramović, Jimmie Durham, Sebastião Salgado, Suzanne Wenger, Zbigniew Libera, Josep-Maria Martin, Oliver Ressler, Liu Xia, and David Černý. Art collectives Marie Claire, Pode Bal, Toro-Lab, Crew Collective, and Artuur. Artists in Czech Republic who significantly influenced me are Iva Vodrazková and Pavla Jonsonnová. Julian Stallabrass's essays such as *Good-bye to all that* and David Peat's *Blackfoot Physics***.** At the moment it's Slavoj Žižek's *Violence.*

In some ways, today I am more critical about the way art education has increasingly lost ground to the economic agenda in education to produce entrepreneurial management for globalised business through micromanaged assessment standards. After one hundred years of advocacy, research, and scientific evidence of merit of

visual knowledge as thinking and language, art is still not a core subject in schools! For an antidote to this, I'm inspired by Gaztambide-Fernández's (2013) article, *Why the arts don't do anything*. Great!

You also work in different media like drawing and photography. What attracts you to these media? What do you feel you need to express through your own work as an artist? What does fine art practice 'do' for you that critical analysis and projects in art classes don't?

I have always thought in images. Physiologically we are born thinking in images before we learn to think with words. But I like to communicate with both. Many images I saw through inner or outer eyes. Images also come to me in dreams or in a sudden flash of perception, as if the image is presenting itself as a mirage of a future self. I also like to meet and talk with people, and I like travelling. And I'm curious. I like walking, so carrying a camera, pencil and a sketchbook are more immediate and are malleable. Many ideas for me are borne walking in the solitude of nature. My eyes capture images as scenes or reflections that stop me or return later as flirts. Nature isn't a landscape for me, it's a living communication system. Before I had a digital camera, I was developing my own film and worked in a darkroom producing prints. I like seeing into surfaces, reflections, and layering upon them, compositing.

Images and poems can appear to me from intense emotion and feelings about something happening in the world that I sense and feel before I know what it is about. In this way, images and the creative aspect of words have always been numinous to me. They arrive as an 'aha', a flash of visual insight with their own knowledge and wisdom. I had classical drawing training in art school and even as a child, I marvelled at pencil drawings and prints. I like the kind of detail that drawing media can evoke. It's immediate. It's low cost technology which is readily accessible and portable. Through the act of drawing and painting, images emerge through an alchemical space that transforms form as well as transitioning through form. I like to combine drawing and painting media. Each work of art evolves through layers of perception as well as media, arriving intact or in some cases, appearing as a momentary still in a state of ongoing, constant movement. Some images I finished years after they were begun. The whole process is rather audiovisual.

Even though my creative practice became more immaterial, the act of making art for me is an act of survival—of essence. Whether it is a physical scene or an emotional ripple moving through the body, through the act of making art, I am engaged in the visual encoding of that which emerges through me through the language of art. What I want to express in my works is attention to the complex intersections between these various states—of mind, of being, of feeling, of experiencing in life, and how they create us just as we create them, and to marvel at them—to think more deeply about the meaning of situations and experiences that 'in' form us. This is both a mythic as well as a personal process for me. Art enriches the experiences that touch me—what I look at, see, feel, think about, imagine, dream and desire. I want to open a window

Figure 45. Teresa Tipton, Grass*, 2009, photograph*

into our innermost chambers of our deepest selves by engaging in visualisation, invention, dreaming, and designing. Because my soul needs it, and my heart needs it.

Workshops accompanied your exhibition *Dreaming in the Light* in 2013 at |art|Space in Prague. How are these workshops and similar projects in gallery education that you have conducted related to your own work as an artist?

The idea for my last exhibition *Dreaming in the Light* came to me in a dream. I was in a room full of my art and it appeared in a certain way that compelled me to produce it. Through drawing and painting, I seek to find the meaning of how something can transform. This is true for me in art as it is in program and curriculum development or educational design. I see what is possible. Offering free public workshops opened a space for interaction around the art and transformed passive looking to an active state. The idea of the audience borrowing images from the artist and transforming

them into their own by collaging colour Xerox copies of the images, came from a collaboration with a talented emerging curator, Natasha Kirshina, whose own work in a previous exhibition, *Borrowed Instructions*, inspired me.

I wanted to change the concept of the white cube by breaking up the space of the traditional viewing of an art exhibition. By using transparent holographic fabric of different colours draped over the art along the walls, the experience of looking at the art engaged the viewer instead with a kind of visual poetry. When the light reflects off the fabric at different angles, it changes colour, a metaphor for the inner archeology of transformation. I wanted people to look at what exists in front of them in a new light. In some cases, the fabric had to be lifted to see the art more clearly—enacting the concept of looking underneath something for another view. Natasha put gooseneck lamps on the floor illuminating parts of the space and like the public workshops, were tools to heighten the psychological experience.

This kind of design opens up a spatial form of culture. These intersections don't produce just objects or an audience for an exhibition or a documented conceptualisation. They are engaged processes that evoke changes in awareness, in perceptions, in cognitions. They impact the responses of people experiencing art. My work involving gallery education is a synthesis of these interests—to produce experiences that create changes in awareness and develop skills in meta-cognition. I want people to be able to think about their thinking about art, to observe how thought functions, how it is influenced, and engage in processes that are not solely thoughts. Changing cognition to a meta-level is also a form of creative practice. It's rather inter-dimensional. It's a form of advocacy and intervention.

Your idea of transforming passive looking into a more active form of behaviour may be seen as one of the most critical challenges faced by educators today, especially art educators. In your opinion, what is the most urgent problem we need to deal with in art education today?

There is a gap between educational systems and cultural production processes and how they translate pedagogically. For me the most urgent problem is one of inclusion—not just as a problem of difference or nationality but of *art inclusion* as a core subject of study in all levels of schooling. The division in education between non-creative and creative subjects is arbitrary and polemical, and reinforces itself rhetorically, making its own difference. It's inauthentic. We don't need to educate students to be something. They already are something. Let's start where they are, not where we think they need to go.

What has happened in the last ten years is that opportunities for fine arts study and practice have become more limited while the hyperbole for creativity has exponentially increased. Post-secondary art schools are turning to design and architecture. Working in the creative sector has become more hierarchical and requires more precise knowledge of entrepreneurship. So preparing a required set of outcomes for art, like any other language—i.e. cognitively, psychologically,

experientially, perceptually and materially—is especially needed now that skills from visual knowledge are technologically more complex and educationally watered down. Instead, we have new fast-track 'designer degrees' that support the business use of digital technologies in industry, advertising, entertainment and virtual reality. We have lost the preparation necessary for developing the aesthetic potential of new media.

While the use of digital technologies has been a democratising force, using technology still needs teaching manual skills, critical thinking and informed study about how visuality functions through reception, diverse cultural interfaces, brain functioning, and personal interaction. Underneath the push for design thinking needs to be a basic working knowledge of cultural production and collaborative production processes in contemporary visual practices. When business recognises the value of what art produces economically and is willing to invest in visual education as they do with management and entrepreneurship, we will begin to see a shift and give more value to visual education.

Art education as a whole has really failed to confront—and change—the systems that marginalise its practice. Instead, it has fought to survive by reproducing an existing model of art and fitting itself into current school systems. The real 'power' in art today is through the diversity of practices through which artists, cultural producers and creative practitioners impact people and how creative industries contribute to social, cultural, and economic development in communities today. Let's make pedagogy in art for schools flow around what these individuals and groups are doing, what is working internationally and study it. We need an arts education pipeline to do this.

REFERENCE

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16. PRESENCE AND ABSENCE IN ART EDUCATION

A Total Experience

You first studied art at the American University of Beirut (AUB) in Lebanon and then furthered your studies at Harvard University in the US. How did these different environments influence your aspirations as a young artist and teacher?

I come from a long line of educators from both sides of the family. As a young student I used to enjoy putting complex ideas in a form that was comprehensible to fellow students who needed to understand and more likely to those students who did not want to do the required rigorous work and preferred to get the ideas on a silver platter, so to speak. As a young person and as early as the age of ten I also began experimenting, playfully at first and then more seriously, with budding

Figure 46. Afaf Zurayk, Untitled, *2015, coloured graphite and coloured charcoal on canvas, 100 × 100 cm*

artistic projects that helped me to express myself in ways that were different from my regular interactions with friends and family.

I joined the Fine Arts Department at AUB with the sole aim of learning how to nurture and develop this magical process of self-expression. The department then was rather small and aimed at giving us a liberal education without too much specialisation but with an overview of being acquainted with various artistic forms and media. We had only a semester course of the Survey of Art History in which we covered material from prehistorical times to Warhol in three months. This may sound as an unlikely influence for me. The truth is that during this quick survey I became conscious of the nature of art as 'search'. If it had been a more in-depth course I doubt that I would have been able to sense the sweeping quality that defined art for me. At the end of my senior year I experienced a crisis during which I felt myself to be too young, too naïve, and lacking the necessary experience to paint truly relevant and profound paintings. At the same time, my interest in the burning questions of art as expressed in art historical research and art theory became of paramount importance for me.

I thus applied to Harvard University to study Islamic Art and I spent a year there, after which I obtained the MA degree in that field. The experience of Harvard, coupled with the growing pains of finding myself in another culture and in a more demanding academic environment both in training and expectations, was life-changing for me. It shaped my thinking for years to come and made me even more aware of the importance of knowing the history of art and culture for producing mature and relevant works of art. The sense of art as a search was deepened and refined by exposure to the best theoretical writing and by being put in a position to define myself in relation to the most sophisticated thinking in the field.

I returned to Lebanon a very different person. I began my long education to become an educator myself. I first taught art history and began formulating my teaching method as a series of questions together with the regular survey information that was required in the courses I taught. I spent almost seven years developing my teaching techniques and leaving my artistic self time to mature and gain the necessary experience for the making of paintings that aimed at being profound and expressive both conceptually and stylistically. I was able to begin to do that a few years after the civil war started and am still attempting to do so.

Back when you still attended university as a student, would it have been 'normal' for a typical, young art student in Lebanon to attend such institutions? Did you feel privileged in any way?

I come from a small community in Lebanon where education is of singular and primary importance. The necessity for education was stressed in the immediate and extended family as well as in the schools attended. As graduates in the late 60s and early 70s we were filled with faith and optimism that we could affect change in the world. That is, our education empowered us with values that proved to be of

utmost significance whether we decided to travel and explore, work or continue our education.

The most important value was that we always had, and were required to make, choices. Further, that we were responsible for the choices we made and were expected to map our lives to reflect the best qualities resulting from our education. In that respect, we were privileged as students. We were not expected to have a sense of entitlement. The world owed us nothing and we were expected to contribute to its growth. All these values were not a general norm and I consider them as a source of pride and freedom.

The socio-economic conditions that prevented some 'typical' art students in Lebanon from pursuing higher education were real and prevalent. The loss there, for me, does not lie only in the lack of educational opportunities but also in the lack of the spread of the values mentioned above. For me, this lack was a major cause for much civil unrest in Lebanon where the values of a relatively small, but effective, educational community could not be instilled throughout.

You have taught art in colleges and universities in both countries, in Beirut and Washington to be precise. What led you to start a teaching career?

After I returned to Lebanon from Harvard I knew that if I wanted to continue my life in art (whether research or studio practice) I needed to be associated with an academic institution. Curatorial work or work in art criticism was scarce or even non-existent in Beirut at the time. I wanted to return to Beirut and not remain in the US because I felt I needed the time to process all that I had learnt in the US and Harvard and to prepare myself for another leap after a few years.

What I discovered in teaching art history to undergraduate studio art majors was that teaching not only presented me with much needed unstructured time but also allowed me to interact positively and creatively with the students. Teaching was a dialogue. The unstructured time proved to be a time for introspection and reflection that determined my own artistic direction.

When I started teaching painting and drawing in the same college (Lebanese American University which then was known as Beirut University College) in 1978, I rented a small studio where my first serious attempts at painting were made. During that time I welcomed visits to the studio by my students and we had long and involved discussions on the nature and quality of art-making in Lebanon and beyond. This proved to be the beginning of my realisation that teaching required the exchange of ideas, which was fundamental in the transmission of knowledge.

The opportunity to teach studio art made clear to me the interconnectedness of artist and teacher and the invaluable dimensions each undertaking provided the other. By 1983 when I left Lebanon for Washington I had acquired the experience and the depth of understanding that allowed me later to also engage with American art students in a manner that helped us develop both as individuals and as artists.

I consider my teaching career in art to be a privilege because through it I met, interacted, and became life-long friends with people from such varied backgrounds and so many different walks of life. It no doubt enriched my own art, allowing me to paint as I do, with love and appreciation for both our diversity and commonality.

How would you compare the theoretical and institutional models of art education you have experienced in each of these contexts? Are academic expectations and aspirations similar in both contexts?

Both institutions encouraged me to think rationally as well as expressively. They both gave me the tools to ask questions rather than to memorise or accept given answers and/or solutions. However the scale and nature of learning were different in each institution.

At AUB I was studying the practice of art whereas at Harvard I studied its history. These different, though interrelated, fields necessitated approaches that were subject-specific but connected. The student body at Harvard was highly accomplished and the Fine Arts Department was large and built around the Fogg Art Museum. We were expected to produce analytic work of very high calibre even in our first year of study and the emphasis was always on creative and original thinking that was the fruit of deliberate and painstaking research.

The Fine Arts department at AUB was rather small and the classes were attended by many students as elective courses. The art majors were expected to conduct their own independent conceptual and studio experimentations and to discuss them with the faculty. There were no modern art museums in Lebanon at the time and students rarely had the opportunity to travel abroad and be exposed to the latest in art, music or theatre. For all these reasons we were much less accomplished than the Harvard students, but this of course was also due to the fact that most courses were at an undergraduate level. The art faculty at AUB had to adjust their expectations to allow us to grow and mature at a pace that was congruent with our less advantageous situation.

Though very different in scale and cultural/political contexts those two institutions challenged me to explore my own creativity and to begin the long journey of synthesis that became essential for my work both as an artist and as an art educator. Seeing my work reflected in the values of each institution helped to both ground and test me in thinking them through independently.

Some people think that we cannot really teach art. We teach skills, techniques, studio habits. At best, we might nurture good attitudes towards the subject. In your view, what exactly are you teaching during your practical art sessions with students?

In my teaching I plan my course so that the student acquires a ‘total’ art experience with every project. By ‘total’ I mean the fusion of imaginative concept with skills

and techniques. The depth of these experiences is cumulative so that by the end of the course students have dealt with a variety of art experiences both in depth and in breadth.

The art experience starts with introspection and reflection. I guide the students in their thinking by asking them many questions to both clarify and delve deeper into the issues at hand. References to other artists dealing with similar issues are necessary and students are required to research their chosen subject as it had been dealt with in artworks across history. Also students are guided to research their subjects as expressed in other art forms such as music and literature no matter in which culture or epoch they appear. Students are then asked to start formulating their images and working out their compositions yet always leaving room for the spontaneous and the accidental as they start painting. The teaching of skills and techniques goes hand in hand with the teaching of 'thinking' and 'imagining' as I strongly believe that together they form the art experience; teaching only skills or only 'thinking' is to concentrate on just a part rather than on the totality of a creative undertaking.

In my view this experience is transformative because of the demands it puts both on the students' creativity and skill involvement. I believe this is ultimately the aim of an education in art where the student is transformed both in insightful abilities and in the accumulation of a variety of skills and techniques.

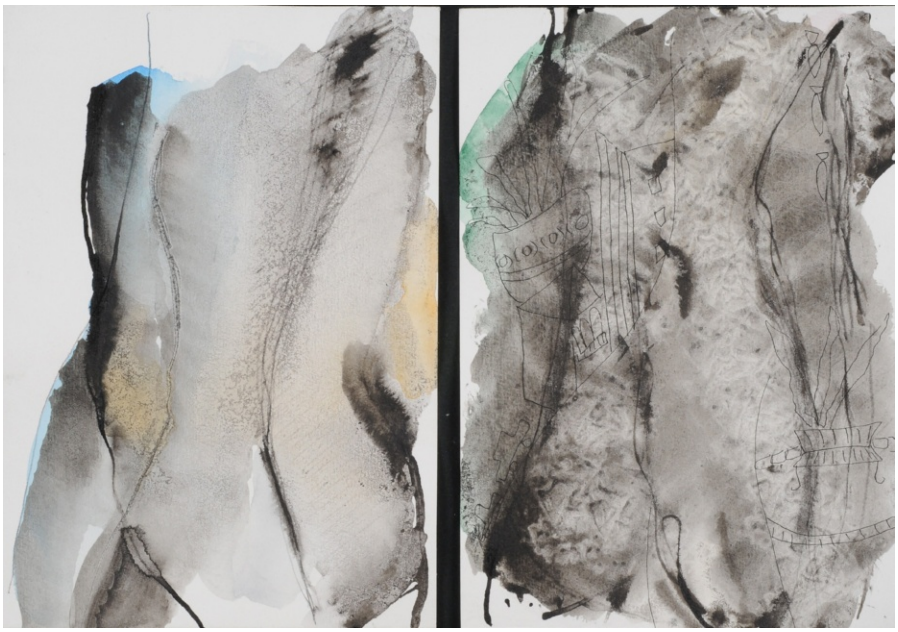

Figure 47. Afaf Zurayk, Untitled, *2009, mixed media on paper, 21 × 14.8 cm (each)*

Having said that, I think artists form themselves whether they attend university or art college or not. By crystallising the 'total art experience' I may be only making their task comprehensible at this early stage. I may be only allowing them the experience of discovery, of understanding, and of resolving a burning issue. This may be just an initiation into the process of "searching" or genuine self-discovery and expression that is at the core of the artistic experience.

Throughout your life, your teaching has been complemented by a steady art practice and exhibitions in many different places. How did your own art practice develop throughout this period?

I decided to pursue art professionally when the civil war in Lebanon began. I felt then, as I still do now, that art affirms life. Through art practice I not only tried to understand my feelings and reactions to what was happening around me but I tried to create and build worlds that rose above the clamour of the absurdity and irreverence of the violence I was witnessing. To do that well I turned to poetry and to music, relying on the interconnectedness and layering of all experience and thinking. I painted in series, of paintings that were essentially questions that I asked myself in months of questioning and attempted to resolve through images that seemed to form themselves. This was a highly subjective process.

Central to my questions and searches was a reliance on 'imagination' and on 'imagining' rather than on the reality that deafened my experience of life. Through imagination I was able to create and thus to understand psychological realities that had proved to be opaque and difficult to fathom. I was able also to allow myself the privilege to experience and comprehend emotions and states that were until then prohibited by social and other norms. My perceptions took form on canvas and paper, and sometimes on inanimate objects such as driftwood. Art liberated me and helped me to affirm life both in my work and in my person.

Living in Washington for almost twenty-five years in a state fluctuating between exile and a sense of belonging helped to free me intellectually and emotionally from what I had once considered to be truths. The inner growth that ensued helped me to deal with my subject matter and imagery with a new complexity that opened previously closed doors of emotional experience.

How did the conflict in Lebanon affect you as a teacher?

Art for me is the affirmation of the life force and the belief in protecting all that builds and constructs. The conflict in Lebanon brought home the fragility and the precious nature of life. As a teacher of art it was imperative for me to stress the value of creativity in the face of so much terror and bloodshed. It was very difficult at times because we were all experiencing very fundamental fears: of staying alive, of having loved ones remain unhurt, of witnessing the slow disappearance of our intrinsic value system and way of life. Once, during a period of intense fighting, as

we were discussing how Cézanne modulated his apples a student announced that a kindergarten nearby was just bombed and many children were dead or injured. Both the students and I, faced once again with the drama of war, found both inspiration and faith in the reds, purples and oranges and the incredible uplifting vision behind them. I had to remain focused and transmit to the students the importance of what we were experiencing in the classroom both for its own sake and as a stabilising force amidst the social and political upheavals we were witnessing.

The most difficult challenge was an overriding feeling of fatalism and of indifference. The students pushed me to be even more demanding of them since their closeness to death made us all acutely aware of the necessity to continue believing in the beauty of expression and the uplifting nature of art. They were also very prepared to see the importance of creativity to solve issues that were not directly linked to their art-making. In this we all trained ourselves to think 'out of the box', approaching issues always with a fresh vision and a different and more creative interpretation than was expected of us.

Figure 48. Afaf Zurayk, Portrait, *2000, ink on paper, 30 × 21 cm*

Is there a risk that an art educator with a strong artistic identity and powerful experiences such as these you have described could teach art in a way that echoes her own art practice too much? If so, how does one avoid this kind of pedagogy? How do you avoid imitation?

The methodology I use in my teaching is one that can be described as 'presence and absence'. I am very present to my students both as an artist and as a person. I confront them with this presence not to make them uncomfortable but to offer them a set of ideas, principles, and visions against which they can perceive themselves and map their potential as artists.

As strongly as I present myself in this manner I make myself absent by asking questions that illuminate the students' own concerns and put their own ideas and aspirations at the forefront of our exchange. To do this successfully I have to spend a considerable amount of time reflecting on what the students are attempting to express and realise in their own artwork. With this reflection, both in its quality and time, my teaching attempts to remain in tune with the students' aspirations and to maintain a depth that ensures a positive transformation within the student.

There is no doubt in my mind that the best education is obtained by being exposed to someone with a marked identity and a strong theoretical and stylistic position within the field. The way I avoid imitation is by firstly becoming an interlocutor and secondly by continuously doubting and questioning provocatively, even though I have attained an independent artistic identity. Further, I try to be non-judgmental and open to contradiction allowing the students to roam mentally, emotionally, visually and technically before they even begin working on their painting. I also try to create the best physical and psychological spaces through which students search within themselves for guidelines that help their growth and maturity. I urge students to listen to music individually and to try to find their own voice within their selections. In this way I encourage their development separately from my own as I have also found my own voice through the process of deep and involved listening and identifying.

So the questions you ask them help you reveal more information about your students?

It is not information that I am after when I question my students. I question them to understand their individual thought-processes and their specific concerns that result from very individualised and personal experiences. It is through these question-and-response sessions that I find myself able to guide the students in formulating imagery that is at once respectful and representative of these thought-processes. The ultimate aim of my classes is to produce artwork that is honest, sincere, and true to the students' state of mind at the time. To do that well, I find I need to sift through many mental and emotional layers before arriving at a place from which the student can begin to paint. After the painting is underway the questions become

more technical and stylistic while always maintaining a balance with the flow of content in the whole painting.

Having taught in widely different social and cultural contexts I find that the role of imagination is paramount both in posing the questions and in understanding the responses. It was a great help for me to become familiar with the daily preoccupations of students from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds both in Lebanon and in Washington. Before I gained this familiarity I felt that I was probing in the dark.

Learning to ask questions is a prerogative for learning. I hope that by being exposed to my questions the students will learn how to pose their own questions in the future thus guide themselves towards the making of art that is worthwhile and genuine.

After completing their studies with you, do many of your students in Beirut develop a fully-fledged artistic career? Do any of them follow your path into teaching?

I have had a few students who chose to pursue painting and teaching. They were older students who came back to study art after earning other degrees or being married and raising children.

Many students choose to study fine arts because it emphasises creative thinking. The undergraduate degree for them is only a training ground through which they prepare for work in other related fields such as design or animation and for further study in architecture. The lack of employment possibilities in a small country like Lebanon forces students to move away from the difficult path of a fully-fledged artistic career and to settle for careers that offer them adequate living possibilities. The nature of art as a high-risk, high-reward profession makes them wary and they opt for more stable professions both economically as well as socially. Some students take art courses as electives as they pursue their studies in medicine, engineering and the social sciences. For these the opportunity to explore and discover with creativity becomes not only necessary but welcome.

17. PHOTOGRAPHY AS A LAYER OF MEMORY

Let's start with a question about your formative years. What role did art play in your own education as a child and teenager?

I had an analogue camera as a child, so I enjoyed those experimental amateur beginnings where I discovered that the things I take a picture of won't necessarily look the same way on film, and that the camera is an instrument I can work with, manipulate and abuse. This tension was something that interested me greatly, but I didn't dare to call myself a photographer or to enrol at the photography department at Prague's Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts. This was also because I was always interested in related subjects, the possibilities of installation, mounting and so on, and so I enrolled at the Academy of Art, Architecture and Design, where I studied under professor Adéla Matasová, whose main focus was spatial art. Besides, the school had no photography department at the time. It was

Figure 49. Alena Kotzmannová, Body Copy I, *from the* Temporary Person *series, 1998, black-and-white photographs on canvas in plastic overlay, 80 × 120 cm*

initiated by Pavel Štecha, who came there after I had spent two years at the Studio of Alternative Techniques, and so I immediately began thinking about switching to the new department, which I eventually did.

Your studies in photography led to exhibitions in many different international venues over the years. You then read for and successfully completed a PhD at the Department of Art Education at Charles University, also in Prague, focusing on photography and the sea. What attracted you to education? Can you tell me a little about your research at Charles University?

I was inspired to get a PhD after a personal meeting with associate professor Marie Fulková, who introduced me to diverse methods of research, in particular art-based research. I intuitively sensed that my approach to teaching was based on these methods, and so I wanted to increase my professionalism in this field. The institutional platform of the newly opened field headed by Fulková at Charles University's Faculty of Education was like a calling to me. Another reason was my desire to see a different point of view—I was looking at the world as an artist, and I felt that a teacher and researcher must by necessity take a different perspective. The interrelationships between art and science have been of central importance to my work and have always interested me. At the Faculty of Education, I had access tomaterials that I would never have at an art school. I think that each university lives a little bit in a 'bubble' made of its sources, and it is good to connect them to one another. In this sense, I also gained a lot from my study exchange at the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa and, even more so, at the Faculdade de Belas-Artes da Universidade de Lisboa, where I made the acquaintance of professor Maria João Gamito, who opened my eyes to new horizons and presented me with different literary and professional sources.

The subject of my doctoral thesis was "The Phenomenon of the Sea—the Sea as Photographed and Described in Selected Art Forms". I understand people's relationship to the sea as one of the fundamental sources of artistic inspiration throughout history. Without being directly aware of it, it has been a persistent but at the same time constantly changing part of our existence. The sea is an important cultural code and a strong symbol. I consciously chose the subject of my thesis in reference to individual imagination. The text was constructed as a multi-directional trajectory whose individual layers overlap, add contexts, and encourage the reader to move freely through the text instead of expecting a linear reading. The actual research was based on an analysis of seven of my own artworks, including photographic series, video installations, public installations, and an educational website. For each work, I provided my personal viewpoint and designed educational projects that I subsequently realised with a group of students. The main aim was to encourage the students to analyse my works of art and to

use targeted educational projects to subsequently focus on the development of the students' individual imagination, and to open up their perception of art in general. I thus tried to look at my artworks objectively—from the position of teacher and researcher. In some cases, the boundaries between teaching and art were blurred or erased altogether.

In my research, I applied the methodologies of qualitative research to the practice of making art, specifically a combination of these methodological approaches. Significant sources of inspiration included phenomenological approaches, action research, the concept of a/r/tography, and the reflective concept of Donald A. Schön.

What do you consider to be the highlights of your artistic career up to now?

I am most grateful for the experiences I had during my time abroad on study exchanges or during residencies, and from travelling in general. The possibility of detaching myself from the domestic scene and working elsewhere has always inspired new ideas and helped me to get out of entrenched ways of thinking and working. Foreign sojourns that have influenced me include the Germinations X studio in Delphi, my residency at ISCP in New York City, a photographic internship in Mexico and recently the expedition 'Frontiers of Solitude' across the Arctic Circle. As a citizen of a land-locked country, my yearning for distant horizons has more than once encouraged me to travel to the "edge of Europe", to explore the entire Iberian peninsula, and to live like a nomad on the ocean shore. Even today, I still draw inspiration from Portugal's regional maritime museums. On the home front, I am grateful for having twice been nominated for the Jindřich Chalupecký Award for artists aged 35 and younger.

Figure 50. Alena Kotzmannová, # 12, *from the* Classic series*, 2001–2004, black-and-white photograph on Baryta paper, 10.5 × 24.5 cm*

Figure 51. Alena Kotzmannová, Magnet, *2010, black-and-white photograph on Baryta paper, 10.5 × 24.5 cm*

What draws you to photography as a medium? How has your approach to the medium changed over the years?

I use photography not as a tool for capturing the world, but for constructing 'artificial worlds'. For me it's a language, a material for constructing feelings, stories and fictions.

This has probably been evolving ever since I made one of the first series that I consider of fundamental importance for me, which is *Dočasná osoba* (Temporary Person, 1998–1999), made just before the new millennium. In fact, it was my graduation work. I needed to define for myself what it would have looked like if the year 2000 had brought any of the things that we used to read about in sci-fi and fantasy stories or that some people imagined on their own. I figured that even though we travel into space, it doesn't mean that we haven't already been living in a society of infiltrated beings. With a certain sense of hyperbole, the photographs from this series looked towards the future and the phenomenon of UFOs. I was intrigued by the fact that with some photographs (made using analogue film without digital manipulation) people were not sure and did not believe that one could photograph something that feels like it comes from a different era. After this series, I realised that I was interested in the possibilities offered by this approach to photography,

which allowed me to erase or even deny time. It basically goes against our traditional perception of photography as a documentary record of a particular place and time. I see photographs as a 'frozen' present, but one permeated with drops of the past and the future.

And so, after 2000 I made the series *Klasika* (Classic, 2001–2004), which looks to the past instead. It consists of seventy black-and-white photographs divided into four chapters, taken primarily in Prague as well as other European destinations. The final chapter contains photographs from New York City. I worked with a specially adapted analogue camera using panoramic film, again without digital manipulation. My aim was for the photographs to recall the atmosphere of the 1920s and 30s (the 'Golden Age of Czech photography'), but at the same time for them to be so confusing that the viewer would be unsure as where to place them in time—the past or the present. Essentially, I was interested in discovering the extent to which it is possible to force the camera's mechanical eye to look at the present through the eyes of a different historical era.

I digress a bit, but I believe that this approach is similar to Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which also turns on its head the traditional idea that art freezes time and turns it into an unchanging moment—the picture changes and reality remains unchanging. Although today we are flooded by photographic images, and digital photography has become such a mass medium that we have lost our faith in the trustworthiness of the captured moment, I am still fascinated by the fact that when I look at a photograph about which I know when and where it was made, it can remind me of a completely different time and place. For me, photography is a layer of memory that evokes another layer that can lead us to a completely different picture.

I wonder whether you also think of teaching as 'another layer' in your artistic life. Where have you taught art and what pedagogical models have you employed? What do you think about the teaching of art in Czech academies?

In 2006, I had the opportunity to found the "Possibilities of Contemporary Photography" studio at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen, which I ran until 2009. At Prague's Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU), I have led several one-semester workshops in the school's photo studio. I taught at the Austrian School in Prague (ÖGP) from 2003 to 2009, and also collaborated with the school's students as part of my PhD research. I am currently in my sixth year of teaching visual arts at the private Study International Abroad (SIT) school for foreign students in Prague.

In summarising the methodological approaches that have influenced me, I would in particular emphasise the concept of a/r/tography, which was designed and developed by Rita Irwin in collaboration with her colleagues from the University of British Columbia. This approach understands the different roles of artist, researcher, and teacher as three equal points of view through which to study artistic activities as an area of research.

This conceptual metaphor is based on multiple sources, including Deleuze's concept of *rhizomes*, the postmodern ideas of Jacques Derrida, and Nicolas Bourriaud's relational aesthetics. My actual research, however, works with a combination of these concepts in an unbounded 'timeless' space in which new relationships are formed among theories, forms and contents, with the aim of grasping new meanings.

One of Prague's leading art schools, the Academy of Fine Arts (AVU), is currently experiencing much discussion surrounding the hiring of new faculty. Old and respected teachers are being replaced by younger artists who are taking over as the heads of the school's various studios and departments. The choice of Tomáš Vaněk of the middle generation of artists as the school's new rector promises the birth of a new era. But the teaching of art by artists also means that 'how to teach art' is a question of utmost importance. Once again, we can see that not every good artist is also a good teacher—and vice versa. I nevertheless feel that the professionalisation of teachers at Czech art schools has been a more frequently addressed topic lately. Before, it was enough to hire an established artist, whereas today artists are learning more in their field, and so they can apply their scientific and methodological knowledge in their teaching as well.

Is there anything that your artistic work gives you personally and professionally that teaching doesn't?

For me as an artist, it is the absolute personal freedom that I get from art—I am responsible only for myself. It is different with teaching: instruction must be comprehensible and have the potential of being applied by the students.

Do you ever feel that by making instruction "comprehensible", as you say, teachers may sometimes present art to their students as a 'skill'? How can teaching avoid making art just another didactic activity?

That is a difficult and currently much debated question. For instance, the recently published Czech book *Umělec, vila a bazén* (Artist, Villa, and Pool, Bartková et al., 2014) contains interviews with experts on how art is taught at art schools today. However, the impression it gives is that the dozens of teachers and theorists failed to find any relevant answer to the question. We can nevertheless take one example: How does one teach someone to write poetry? Is it even possible? First we teach students to use the language and its rules, then we familiarise them with the work of other poets—that is, we provide them with inspiration—and then we let them create. But didn't all that studying do harm to the original lofty 'kiss of the muse'? I think that not all excellent poets necessarily had to study at a literary academy, and this goes for art in general. It is important to support art as a special ability for looking at the world in an unusual way, and to conceive educational institutions as a foundation, a kind of field that has been ploughed in advance but whose actual harvest is up to the individual gardener.

Keeping your metaphors of field, harvest and gardener in mind, would you say that art teachers who are also practising artists sometimes run the risk of imposing their own strong artistic identities onto their students? How can they avoid this?

That risk definitely exists. Based on my experience, I believe that teachers must be researchers in the sense of discovering and awakening their students' talent. They must help their students to 'find themselves'. They should have a strong enough personality to be a role model, but their art should not become a model that the students 'copy'. Teachers have to show possibilities without presenting specific solutions. That is one reason why I called the new studio at the University of West Bohemia "Possibilities of Contemporary Photography". Students have to come up with a specific solution of their own. Figuratively speaking, when I teach, I only begin a sentence and let the others complete it. But I also place an emphasis on a deeper exploration; no skimming the surface. The thinking process is often more important than the actual result. Of course, I cannot force my students to do this. I expect a certain dose of natural curiosity, but this is something I don't encounter in every student.

What you are saying about art students and processes of self-discovery could probably be applied to most other teaching contexts. I'd also like to know whether you think that young artists or art students in Prague face any challenges that are more specific to your region.

There is a strong tradition of modernism as well as an inferiority complex associated with existing on the periphery of the art world. But this can also be an advantage, because it makes us realise that everything rests on the determination to overcome the limitations that our environment creates. Prague is a cosmopolitan city, but it still has a sense of community. Everybody knows everyone else, which some artists can find limiting. Many students go on study exchanges or internships to centres of the art world such as London, New York, Berlin, or Amsterdam. But I see a danger in adopting international 'trends' that, when transferred to the local environment, lose their authenticity, and are ascribed a false level of significance at home when they are already fading on the international scene. But this naturally comes to light only with the benefit of hindsight. Personally, I am interested in artists who follow their intuition and are not afraid of temporary setbacks, and who do not lose themselves in trends or in the local scene. I enjoy art that is timeless.

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18. WANDERING PERIPHERIES, SWITCHING BORDERS

Apart from studying art education at undergraduate and postgraduate levels at the University of Malta you also studied Fine Arts for a number of years at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera in Milan. What drew you to Italy? What did you learn at Brera that you still carry around as part of your artistic and educational baggage?

After completing my first degree in the teaching of art at the University of Malta, I couldn't say that I had a proper art education. Back then, the possibilities for a good artistic formation in Malta were few. Available art diplomas did not have a real vision, let alone a real value, and only a limited number of art teachers were practising artists. The only course at university that offered some art practice was the B.Ed. (Hons) degree in Art Education and this degree only skimmed the surface. Out of university, I started teaching in a secondary school while looking for international courses as well as scholarship opportunities and study loans. Finally, I decided to go for a first degree in Fine Arts as I realised that it was the only way I could dedicate enough time to drawing and painting. Luckily enough, a friend of mine was already studying Fine Arts in Italy, so I could be directly informed of what was going on in Italian academies.

Before heading to Italy, my art-works were based on pure experimentation with materials, different techniques and mixed media. What I was craving for at the time was an in-depth study of drawing and painting. I visited a number of academies before finally deciding to go to Brera. So many things were happening at Brera: abstract work, figure painting, conceptual art, performance and video. I didn't like Milan the first time I stepped out of the train station and it remained so for a couple of years, but I was happy to be amidst this wide-ranging experience of art.

However, I decided to follow the most traditional of approaches: classes which emphasised the study of drawing, figure drawing, and the study of anatomy. I can say I was still obsessed with making up for the lack of time dedicated to drawing and painting in Malta. There, I befriended a group of Albanian students, who came from a very different art educational background. Their methods were embedded in traditional *academia* and most of them already had a superb knowledge of drawing techniques. Thus, we were all engaged in a continuous study of classical sculptures and drawings of old masters. On the other hand, the lecturers always stressed the development of our own ideas into projects and referred to modern and

contemporary artists. At Brera I was engaged in a variety of courses, namely etching, human anatomy, photography, fresco painting, art history and philosophy of art.

The four years at Brera offered ample time for me to reflect on what I had learnt before. Although I was a full-time art student at Brera, I never stopped being a teacher. I kept on questioning the methods and techniques I was learning there and how these could be applied in class when teaching art to students back in Malta. During those four years I managed to evaluate and change some of my teaching methods, and I formulated my own methods of work, which I still put into practice today. These are some points I keep in mind and still suggest to students: the importance of maintaining a regular and disciplined approach to art-making, the importance of reflecting about and questioning artistic processes, persistence, enjoyment, and the importance of being oneself while at work.

You have taught art at various levels of the educational system in Malta. How has your approach to art differed in each context? Have you found any specific level to be more fulfilling than others?

I have taught art at almost all levels of the educational system, from six-year old children to university students and adults. Teaching young children is usually freer and the emphasis is on creativity. Art lessons should be fun. I believe that children should be encouraged to come up with their own ideas after being engaged in thinking processes. With young children, I stress the exploration of materials and techniques and not learning how to draw particular objects. Lessons explore the world around them and are based on positive reinforcement, not mistakes. When something in the pupil's work isn't working well, I tend to ask questions to guide the pupil. Artists' works are used as starting points or references during the lessons. Any theories (perspective, colour, contrast etc) are given indirectly, most of the time highlighted as the need arises.

I tend to start getting into the technicalities of drawing and painting by the age of twelve, when according to Victor Lowenfeld, children are going through the pseudo-naturalistic stage of drawing. I find that they start to grasp better the idea that objects can be simplified into basic shapes, and their observation skills tend to be better. Creative projects might include both the experimentation and the learning of particular theories and techniques. Year after year I keep building on what has been learnt before. I start to connect more with issues that interest them as well as current affairs and I involve them in discussions where their points of view can be translated into works of art. References to historical art-works, different cultures and contemporary artists are important in the planning of projects for students of this age. A challenging task is to stress the development of ideas. When a theme is given, I find that students, even higher secondary students, tend to hold on to the first idea that comes to mind and hardly question, modify and develop it.

The obsession with precise representation is a reality that I have noticed in students aged fourteen to eighteen. They glorify the ability of representing objects

photographically, sometimes even at the price of sacrificing expressive approaches to a particular subject. I try to keep introducing a variety of artists' work, so that students are encouraged to experiment and find their own way of working.

As long as students are immersed in project work and feel an urge to work, I like to work with all age groups. However, I admit that lately I am finding it more fulfilling to work with older students. The content is more intellectually challenging and one can still feel a great sense of satisfaction in young people when they manage to make a little progress. Working with higher secondary and university students demands high technical qualities from the teacher, who has to be well prepared with a variety of examples for students to refer to. The nature of the workshops I give is diverse: from technical lessons such as drawing the human figure to those focusing on the development of personal projects. In the latter, lessons are based

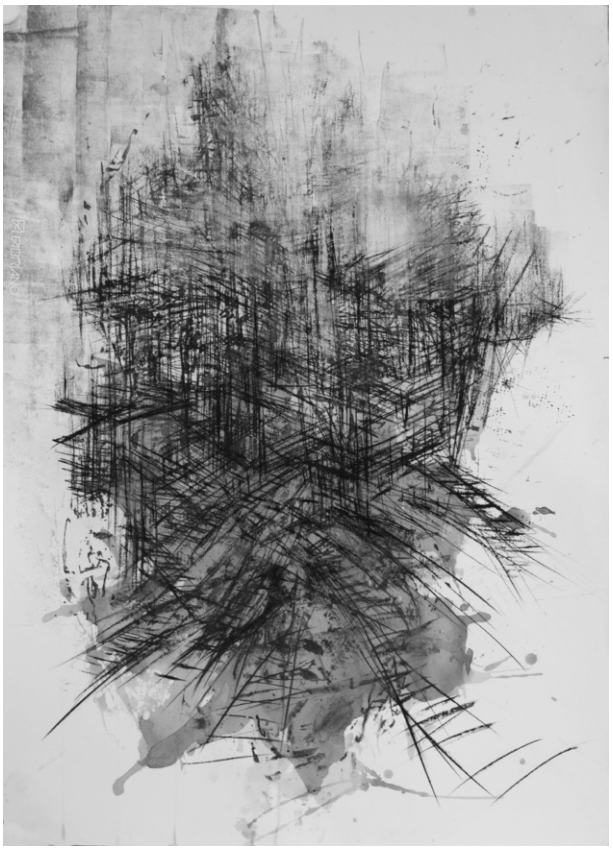

Figure 52. Robert Zahra, Moving Lands series, *2015, acrylic and compressed charcoal on paper, 100 × 70 cm*

more on discussing with students the development of each project with intermittent moments demonstrating particular techniques when the students feel stuck. It all most fulfilling when it reaches the point when the teacher can discuss the topics being researched with the students. We can talk about books, music, art and anything else that make the classroom situation a shared experience.

You are not only a dedicated teacher but you also exhibit your own art-works regularly. How do you balance your time between creative practice and teaching? And how do you prefer to describe yourself to people who don't know you: as an artist, a teacher or a combination of both?

The time allotted to my own studio work depends a lot on my teaching schedule in each term. I divide the year in three terms: two terms for the academic year and the summer term. The first term of the academic year is practically always the most demanding when it comes to teaching. I am a full-time teacher in a higher secondary school and part-time lecturer at university. The second term is usually a little less demanding when it comes to preparation while the summer term is when I can focus more on studio work.

After a full day's work I find it hard to redirect my energies towards my art. I am not the type of person that finds studio practice relaxing – it engages me in a lot of thinking and there are a lot of unsuccessful moments too. Moreover, the teaching profession goes beyond the classroom. Teaching is time-consuming because one needs to be present, both mentally and physically, with the students, all the time. A strategy that I have found particularly successful is to allot specific time for studio practice. During this time I try to communicate with no one, avoid spending unproductive time on the Internet and try to focus on the actual work. Therefore, I try to prepare experiments and research during teaching days and leave the most challenging work for those full days in the studio. There were times in the past when I had to prepare for exhibitions during teaching periods but that meant a lot of sleepless nights, working hard after teaching and using all the time that is usually allotted to other things.

Art teaching and art practice are linked in various ways. When I am fully focused on teaching and lesson planning, I am usually invaded by project ideas. It is very similar to when I am thinking about new projects for my art-work. They both share similar processes of selection of ideas, experimentation and reflection. In teaching, I like to experiment and modify projects, trying new ways of tackling content. I never repeat the same work that I had done with students during the previous academic year. It also depends on the needs of the students of that particular year. Maybe the difference between teaching and studio practice is that in teaching, experimentation is done with more care, as one is dealing with students who need to learn and end up with quality content for their portfolios. I notice that the way I tackle curriculum content in post-secondary school teaching or the choice of content at undergraduate

level always reflects my own methods of working and the themes I am interested in researching.

Artist-teachers are not artists at one time and teachers when they are in the art class. It is a continuum. My art-related work is woven in between daily routines, sometimes it becomes so intertwined that it is just a flow between research for my own practice and what I do for teaching. For me the word 'work' means reading, collecting images, taking photos, sketching and jotting down ideas. When it is adequate, I also tend to find ways of presenting this new research material to students. A good example of this would be the Facebook page of the post-secondary art class I teach, which I use as a digital noticeboard or a blog. Apart from communicating the day-to-day art class news, I post stimulating material related to the subject. It is practically a virtual extension of the classroom. When it comes to content, I never limit myself to the visual art world. I automatically incorporate music and film as sources of inspiration.

With others, I usually present myself as an art teacher – after all, most of my time is spent teaching. I don't like to present myself as an artist when meeting someone for the first time. I usually tend to go for art practitioner or teacher and artist. Actually, I try to avoid labels!

Figure 53. Robert Zahra, Mkejjen *series, 2006, oil, graphite and oil bars on canvas, 150 × 210 cm*

Can you give me a concrete example of a direct link between your paintings, drawings or other creative projects and your teaching? Does your educational philosophy mirror to some extent your own artistic vision?

The way I prepare lessons often reflects my personal ways of tackling work in the studio, and the subjects I research are somehow reflected in the content I prepare. This isn't done intentionally. It comes naturally. One of the greatest challenges faced by art teachers is to avoid influencing students with one's own ideas. The main aim is to let students cultivate their individuality, but in reality a teacher can never be completely neutral in his or her approach. It is inevitable that one's personality and interests are reflected in one's delivery of the syllabus content.

For instance, before I went to Brera, I used to go out to paint the landscape in various parts of Malta. Whilst in Milan, I started showing an interest in the urban environment and as a result produced a number of works, which I eventually showed in an exhibition in Valletta in 2009, *Mkejjen* (Non-places). In the meantime I had sketched several ideas about interventions that I could make in the landscape. These interventions were mostly related to our ab/use of the local environment. One of the projects that was consequently realised was *Red Rubbish*, where I identified public areas that people abused by filling with large amounts of trash, and I then painted the trash in a bright, red colour. The idea was to expose those objects, to make a statement, as the objects had become partially camouflaged by weeds and rubble walls. The goal of my action was to vandalise the vandalised, modifying the *objet trouvé* in the place where it was found. The way I tackle landscape with students also reflects this approach in my own art practice. I usually get students to study the surrounding environment by observing social and environmental aspects. From those observations they develop projects that include their own experience of the place and their own perspective about issues related to the same place.

The art room setup also echoes my personality and mirrors my studio at home. To start with, there's the organisation and the furniture setup. Although there seems to be a lot of clutter at first glance, everything has its own place. However, it is far from a superbly organised laboratory. I tend to spend time reorganising furniture in both contexts, especially in the art class because it is continuously being used by a large number of students. The art room setup is not static. I change it, usually before starting a new project, as it is the nature of the project that dictates how the furniture is arranged. I don't have a teacher's desk that separates my area from that of the students – it's one whole setup. At home, when I am working on a project, my studio becomes something like Francis Bacon's famous studio, maybe a little less confusing! I always use all the space available and the materials to work with are usually all around the place. I work among piles of paper on my computer desk, sheets I am drawing on and books amongst other materials. The clutter makes me somehow feel freer in my studio and less inhibited in my work. However, I do feel

Figure 54. Robert Zahra, Red Rubbish—Intervention No. 3, *2010, red enamel paints and found objects*

the need to put everything in order after a few days because I cannot really work for long periods of time in such a situation!

Is there any sense of fulfilment that studio practice gives you and that you don't obtain through teaching?

Both situations offer some sort of fulfilment, in their own specific ways. I like to be with people, working with students, other teachers and creating projects. This is what I find fulfilling at the workplace. Teaching is very dynamic. Studio practice, on the other hand, offers time to develop myself. It is a continuous self-evaluation, working on my own ideas, trying them out and reflecting on them. The subjects that I tackle engage me in research even in other fields. I find this enticing, as I am continuously learning and developing my general knowledge. In the studio I lose track of time. I decide to work for an hour and eventually end up spending several hours there instead. I am lost in search of different possibilities.

The problem with studio practice is that sometimes results are not satisfactory. It is difficult to predict how a day's work is going to turn out. There is no fixed pattern. At times I produce a lot of good work in a matter of hours and sometimes I spend a day working without any satisfactory results at the end. Despite all this,

there is some intrinsic motivation that keeps me craving for those moments in the studio.

Do you learn anything about art or life through the actual process of teaching art?

Art is different from most other subjects taught in schools. A small number of students in an art class, the continuously changing use of the art room and the exercises based on hands-on experiences are just a few factors that make art so different. It is also a subject based mostly on a one-to-one approach, where the teacher helps students individually. This makes it easier and more possible for the teacher to build a good relationship with students. The practice-based nature of the lessons also offer possibilities for students to communicate and be involved in conversations while working. My art class is almost never silent, as I prefer to have this sense of community in it. I feel that it creates a sense of belonging. Listening to their opinions and actively taking part in such discussions keeps me close to the students' world and their way of thinking. This is a very healthy process in my opinion, as I truly believe that by understanding their world and the way they tackle it, I am in a better position to create projects directly related to them.

As time passes by, the age gap between each year's new students and myself is getting bigger. After a number of years teaching in a post-secondary school, I noticed that new students come with new challenges. I can identify some differences between the first group of higher secondary students I taught six years ago and this year's group. One difficulty that I am encountering at the moment is the use of smartphones because students are becoming so highly dependent on these devices. Their ways of thinking, their ways of recording what they observe and their ways of using references and looking up sources for their artworks are quite different from how students did these same things a couple of years ago. I am still struggling to understand their world, even though I make use of their same technological devices. Although I believe that one has to adapt to these new situations and present the syllabus content in ways that students can identify with, I must admit that for today's teacher this is quite a challenging feat.

At the same time, we can see that students' use of new technologies and the internet have opened up new horizons for them, including educational horizons. This brings me back to your reply to my first question, when you said that there was a lack of vision in the education of fine artists in your youth. Do you feel that the situation in Malta is any different for art students today?

We have experienced positive changes in the education of young artists or art students in recent years. Until the beginning of the twenty-first century, a Maltese art student could only opt to join a course for art teachers at the University of Malta or go to the School of Art in Valletta if he or she wanted to do some art practice.

Otherwise, there was the possibility of studying for a degree in art history but that was more theoretical. Since then, the art education course at the university has changed and offers students a more comprehensive exposure to contemporary art and new ideas. Besides, the introduction of new art courses at the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) offers more opportunities and raises awareness about the importance of art education, especially among young people. I still think that the education of those who study art only in Malta is too limited—the country is too small and young artists need to travel and spend some time abroad. Through the Internet, it is possible to make new contacts and some young artists in Malta are quite successful in this respect, but it is important to be aware of the fact that the smallness of our environment can be alienating.

Something else that has developed locally in recent years is the increase in state support for new artistic projects and initiatives. Before I left Malta for Italy, funding for the arts was virtually inexistent. Emerging artists now occasionally obtain important commissions and are actually considering a full-time artistic career. This was inconceivable for me in my youth. Alternative ways of developing and using one's skills and knowledge are available today. Young artists today are becoming bolder and taking more risks than people of their age fifteen or twenty years ago, though emerging artists now have the advantage of being connected to the rest of the world in a way that was not possible before.

19. EXCAVATING THE BLUEPRINT

You describe yourself as an artist, an art therapist and an art educator. How did this come about? Which of these three roles appeared first in your life and how do you divide your time between them?

Ever since I was a child, I liked exploring materials and asking questions. As an adolescent, art helped me overcome challenging times. From my therapist's perspective, I can say that art-making has been a central path to finding who I am—a path to being.

My BA studies at Oranim Academic College exposed me to a completely unknown world of art and education, and the connection between them. One of my teachers actually studied at the Bauhaus, others had a deep interest in teaching in a new revived country. It was a perfect school for me, since I wanted to connect education and art, though at the time did not perceive myself, yet, as an artist.

Being a fresh art teacher, I initiated a large art studio in our community centre, which was also available for our next-door neighbours from the Muslim Bedouin village. I had the privilege of trying out my educational ideas and choosing my colleagues. It was fascinating to realise how much richness and joy could be produced in a well-organised open-studio environment—where participants explored their own personal path, choosing their materials, subject-matter and workplace.

We were six art teachers who emphasised genuine processes and we developed group-based personal tutoring methods for all ages and cultures. Thus, the open-studio method, having personal tutorials, generated sincere creative expressions. It became obvious that if a person, regardless of his/her age and artistic knowledge, receives a reflection of his/her interests—s/he will eventually flourish like a plant in sunlight. Additionally, it was evident that such a teaching environment dramatically reduces aggressive behaviours, mockery and cynicism. This experience taught me that if a person has a place in the world, less vandalism and violence would occur.

During that time, I was trying to figure out my own artistic language in a rented studio. I was contemplating how to integrate my cultural heritage and the complex and rich environment of the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern atmosphere and influences present in my world since childhood. This quest was very different from the widespread American influence on the local artistic world. From this perspective, I felt lonely.

In the 1980s, fascinated by the notion of creativity, I found that the syllabus closest to my interests was the Art Therapy MA programme. It was a wonderful, enriching process, which provided me with a profound understanding of my deepest

motivations. I learned to trust the process of art, and became even more aware of the spiritual qualities of matter. It gave me the legitimation to play steadily and express myself as an adult, utilising all my artistic aspects: creator, educator and therapist. All these facets flourished in an open studio setting, which is the fundamental way I teach art and work as a therapist. Since then, the studio has become my co-educator-therapist. It is an extension environment, facilitating all I do for others and myself.

The common denominator of these parallel and joined paths is manifested in a huge manual called *The Spirit of Matter* (Orbach & Galkin, 1997), mapping a hundred art exercises as part of a six-stage journey. Each exercise is richly analysed from all technical, emotional and social aspects. It is widely used by all the helping professions, artists and educators. It will be published in English in 2016 as an e-book.

You currently hold a teaching post at Oranim College in northern Israel. How did the formative years you have just outlined influence your teaching methods?

I learned about asking questions, playing and curiosity, mostly through observing my late father. As an exceptionally creative biochemist, he often said to us: "A carpenter creates a chair every day—I try to invent a way of sitting".

My BA degree at Oranim exposed me to a completely unknown, almost utopian world of art and education. I consider this chapter of my life to be the foundation of my formal education. Until then, most of the time I felt like a fish out of water in school. Even art lectures at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem seemed like sleepily citing others. Intellectual stimulation and creativity was not part of the deal, so I left the prestigious university and came to this northern idealistic college.

The staff of the Oranim Art Department included excellent, devoted educators with a Kibbutz educational background, as well as artists. My Ceramics teacher studied at the Bauhaus, thus I would fanaticise what it would be like to have Paul Klee as your teacher. They were all deeply involved in art and culture. One of them, the late Arie Rothman, an etching master and a phenomenal drawing teacher, became my role model with his deep humanistic understanding and compassion towards our struggles.

It was a perfect school for me, since I saw myself more as a creative person than an artist, and did not think I would actually become one. I was interested in following my vague impression that art has something to do with individual growth, thus I was deeply curious about adult creativity. How did they lose it on the way?

For the first time as a student, my teachers were actually interested in our art and our thoughts. I was not intellectually and spiritually lonely anymore. I could finally breathe within a wonderful group of students searching for their own path.

In my teachings and as a therapist, I still hold basic concepts I believed in way back in the 1970s, and was even more certain of them observing my own teachers. For example, I believe that observing, caring and knowing your students is the prime path to a meaningful education. The person is more significant than the art product.

It is quite easy to believe in the idea that the roots of education are found in a process of curiosity, goodness, a safe place and mirrored reflection in an open art studio environment. Since every person is unique in his/her own way, his/her inner journey can be as deep as s/he is capable of. Competition is tougher but only you can become more you.

This brings me to the idea of the quest for one's spiritual blueprint. Searching for and identifying the genuine qualities of one's blueprint eventually conveys a more authentic life and art. It creates an inner calmer home, and envy becomes less significant. Thus, as I see it today, in art education and in therapy, this is what we should aim at.

Carefully noticing and observing the blueprint of one's students is deeply effective. Thus, it can also serve as a social tool for a more open-minded society. I truly believe that education is a wonderful, humanistic key, vital to a more generous society. At its best, it conveys kindness, curiosity and compassion. This is possible in all parts of society.

Artists, art therapists and art educators all have 'clients'. How would you distinguish between these three kinds of client? What different professional relationships do you develop with them?

Using art with students, with artists, and with all ages of clients in therapy, I seek the principal phenomenon of the spiritual blueprint. I find this phenomenon to be an accurate foundation and the deepest common denominator of my different overlapping professions.

What is this spiritual blueprint? Every human being has a typical set of actions, likes and dislikes that make him/her him/herself. When assembled and marked on materials, all these movements, orders, activities and attractions leave a genuine visual blueprint of the creator. It is an alchemic process where matter commutes into spirit. It is the fundamental visualisation of the soul, mind and feelings. These archetype patterns, seeds of humankind, were inherited from our ancestors and culture. At the same time, they are also our unique combination of us as one of a kind.

Although a human being is bound to follow the archetypal process of children's drawings going through the specific developmental stages, each person has his/her uniqueness within this universal outline. If you set one child's drawings, sculptures and toys on the floor chronologically from childhood till adulthood, there will be basic characteristics that mark a collection of parameters accompanying us throughout our lives. Naturally, we develop and enrich our artwork, but a child whose deep interest is in composition from the start, will make this evident later in his/her life. Alternatively, if a child loves details, they will be there when s/he grows up.

My students are usually surprised to observe their own kindergarten drawings. Their main artistic qualities are frozen in the past waiting to be unfolded, named and acknowledged as part of them in the present.

Why do we need to explore this phenomenon? My observation is that if a young artist-to-be cognitively recognises his/her basic actions, materials, images and so on, then s/he will have a deep rich well for his/her creation. It is an anchor of his/her inner self. Recognising parts of it supports the lonely times in the studio. It is a safe place within. Moreover, in naming the parameters, they become more present, thus more approachable and conscious in the artistic process. The blueprint will vary and become enriched if a child continues creating freely.

This is an extremely useful phenomenological tool for art teachers. If they develop a habit of naming and identifying each of their students' parameters, this will enable them to provide accurate, relevant tutoring to each and every one of them. They would actually see their students.

Finding and naming the blueprint serves me differently during the therapy process. The aims are different. As a therapist, my aim is to walk together with my client, assisting him/her as s/he explores his/her emotional obstacles. This process is done mostly through art-making, but my responsibility and concern are his/her

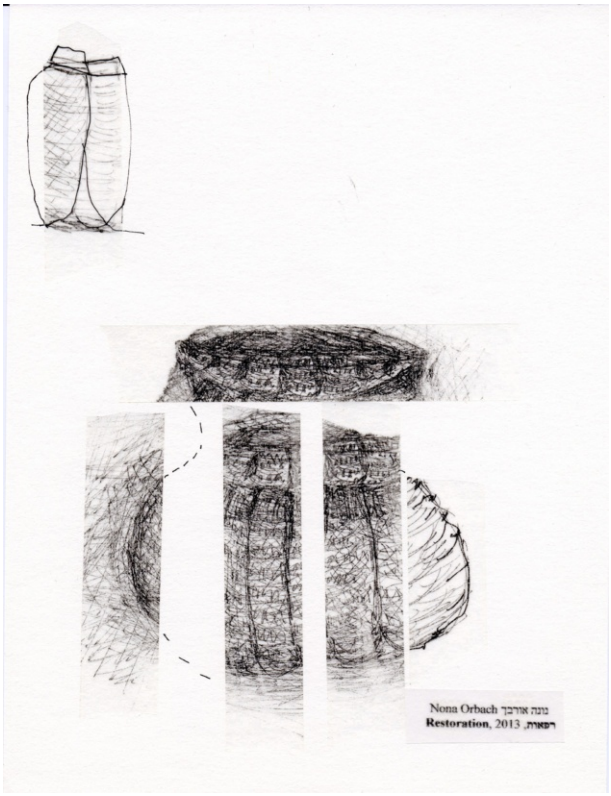

Figure 55. Nona Orbach, Restoration 1, *2013, collage on paper*

well-being and health and not good art. Here art serves as a vehicle for health and the soul.

As for students, my aim is to teach them about the lonely times in the studio and how to overcome artistic blocks. Naturally, emotional aspects arise. We can talk about it a bit, but I am not responsible for that. The difference is in the kind of responsibility.

You also like to compare yourself to an archaeologist when you talk about your multimedia, artistic work. What do you feel you are seeking during these artistic 'excavations' and how is this archaeological work related to your region?

I grasp the process of art-making as a possible path to better understanding what our purpose on this planet is. In the privacy of the studio, I try to find the meaning of life through media, actions, and written words. It is an intimate, lonely and fragile quest. I am continuously playing with tools as I did as a child, inventing inner worlds, which I hope correspond with the art world.

In every backyard in Israel, you can find the remains of someone who lived there before. A mosaic, a coin, a bone. Since I was a little girl, I have been daydreaming about people living on this earth before. Through these remains, I would vaguely sense these people from different times and cultures. I imagined what they wore, their tools, their houses and the sound of their languages.

Furthermore, my founders who came from Russia to Palestine in 1882 filled my imagination with images. Older uncles told intriguing stories about them. In our tiny village, we also studied about them in school as we had about the Egyptian pyramids, hieroglyphs and the Romans. Various eras and cultures mixed in my mind. Visiting my family in Jerusalem included a trip to the archeological collection at the Israel Museum. I waited anxiously to meet the tiny clay Goddesses every summer.

At the age of eight, I also wondered if there was a heaven. The notion that my parents will die one day was devastating.

On a hot summer day, playing Five Stones on the cool floor, I said aloud the word 'I' and grasped it fully. There is only one I in the world! I had an image of my skin as a bag holding this Me within. I instantly comprehended that one day I will also be leftover bones. Lonely and sad I went on playing, trying to compete with myself and erase these frightening thoughts.

Unknowingly, my first artistic project was burying a notebook in our orchard with all the history and knowledge of the world. I imagined future people would find it one day and know what was here, and who I was. It seems I had created my first archaeology-related-installation. I could describe myself as a tiny bead on a lengthy neckless of time, a long and rich history before and after me.

It is only natural then that in the late 1990s I invented the virtual conceptual archeological site named Tel-Nona. It is where I mentally and spiritually still dig for finds. I am simultaneously the mound being dug, the digger, the methods and the findings. It is my ongoing adult playground. I feel free to invent or find different

cultures that have the foundations of all my life parts and knowledge. Through archetypes, both personal and collective, I can relate to different aspects of my creation as well as to artistic philosophical issues. My personal archetypes resonate with collective ones. It is an endless excavation zone—virtual, spiritual, physical, emotional and playful.

I am part of a Mediterranean heritage of cultures, many lost and unknown to us. At the same time, I am also part of the contemporary art world. I connect the dots of the mysterious past and the unknown future. I am in search of the blueprint of our existence, trying to relate to the timeline of art and history that brought me here at this time.

Bodies of artworks are still unfolding at Tel-Nona. It is an endless, rich, conceptual platform for my inner research as a human being and as an artist. There is a complex world of an archaic journey to our deepest and archetypal essence dormant since our birth and from the day men drew on cave walls. Our personal archetypes overlap the collective ones.

As I perceive history, it is merely a coincidence that an earthquake, fire or war did not destroy the Coliseum or Michelangelo's sculptures. Thus, I believe there must have been many more artefacts that vanished due to human stupidity or the powers of nature. Since my childhood, queries and feelings of loss have filled my imagination about the ancient library of Alexandria. What was lost forever? What did Aristotle's second book contain? What did Sappho's eight hundred poems sound like? Over the last few years I have been reviving the ancient library metaphorically through my tiny perspective as an ongoing Internet art project. I have also invented a character named Mound Hacker who leaves ostracons at archeological sites, mapping them on Google Earth. The ostracons lead through a link to the blog mentioned above, for people to think about our stupidity as we destroy our own knowledge.

These two bodies of conceptual art-works, which were exhibited in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, are a metaphor and an example of how we build huge complexes of knowledge and easily lose them. On the other hand, with the notion that humankind reinvents ideas, and the thought that knowledge does not really die, I propose these bodies of art.

I am grateful to the coincidence of artistic freedom we have these days. I can play as I wish, searching within my world, but at the same time belonging even more to my anonymous artist ancestors. I admire the clay masters of Mesopotamia, the scribes at Alexandria library, the Etruscans and brave Phoenicians sailing the Mediterranean with the merchandise and exchanging goods and knowledge.

How do you think have the historical, political and cultural dynamics in Israel affected your professional identity or identities?

I do not know how is it to be other than a Jewish Israeli woman. But throughout my life, even as a little girl, I sensed 'spirits' of 'others' from past times all around me through cultural leftovers such as coins and mosaic fragments I was told were

Figure 56. Nona Orbach, Restoration 3, *2013, collage on paper*

Roman. When I was four years old, we climbed a huge vessel at Haifa Port, which took us to America. My father was going to work on his PhD in Washington DC and my mother was afraid to fly.

I still remember the shining silver dolphins he pointed at as they were chasing our huge ship. We sailed for two weeks in vast waters, and I closely followed our approach to each and every harbour. At first, the horizon would crumble, next there were mountains, after that we could vaguely see houses. Different shouts and sounds were heard at each harbour as the massive ropes tied us to the deck. Following that came smells and tastes. Sailing around Mediterranean harbours, I unknowingly experienced cultural richness and diversity through all my senses. I sensed I was surrounded by many others who were unlike me. They believed in Gods that were different from my father's.

We did this journey again when I was twelve. Therefore, when I say 'Mediterranean', it is deeply rooted within me through these intense expeditions,

although I could not have grasped it then. When I learned some history and the history of my family, it always went back to the same point, we are not alone here, we never have been. We are a part and an outcome of many cultures.

For a long time these vague wonders stood in contrast to the Israeli culture of building a new home for the Jewish people after two thousand years of Diaspora and the Holocaust. There was a notion that we had come to an empty place with almost no one living here, only desert and thorns. However, I do recall my uncle citing Ruben Lehrer who had emigrated from Russia in 1882 saying: "We must find a way to get along with the Arabs around us. They are like the earth and sky". Years later, when all my older uncles died, and I asked my cousins, no one remembered such an idea expressed in our family. As the years pass by and our dream of a solution of peace gets further away from us, and viciousness and terror are all around, it is discouraging. Thoughts of personal safety repeatedly cross our minds. This is true of my students as well. Our optimism was deeply wounded when Rabin was assassinated.

Therefore, I am trying to assist future art teachers on their journeys, so they will support their children in finding their voices within their own communities. Recognising the blueprint of any creator is fundamental to any art process. This is even more so in a multicultural society where conflicts, hatred and fear are part of one's existence. A good art teacher in a school can make a big difference for many children, helping them to grow with less hatred and more open-mindedness.

We have a lot of work to do.

You have just referred to the future art teachers you teach. What kind of university course do they follow? How important is art practice within this course?

The degree in Art Education at Oranim is four years long and art classes combine traditional courses in various media with more innovative workshops that encourage students to think beyond the medium. The students also follow school-based workshops and theoretical courses in art history, contemporary art, local multicultural art, philosophy and critical thought. The department also has special activities, new initiatives and cooperative projects that take place both within and outside the campus, in the department's gallery and in art events in Israel and overseas. The staff includes experienced experts in pedagogy, artists, researchers and curators who are active in the local and international scenes. The academic staff accompanies the young artist-teachers during their journey, in which personal expression is translated into a more global activity.

What are these artist-teachers' perceptions about their social standing and future prospects? How much does ethnicity affect their understanding of themselves as artists and/or teachers?

Most of the art and education students at Oranim are women. Being an artist in Israel means that you need to provide for yourself. Teachers' salaries are not high,

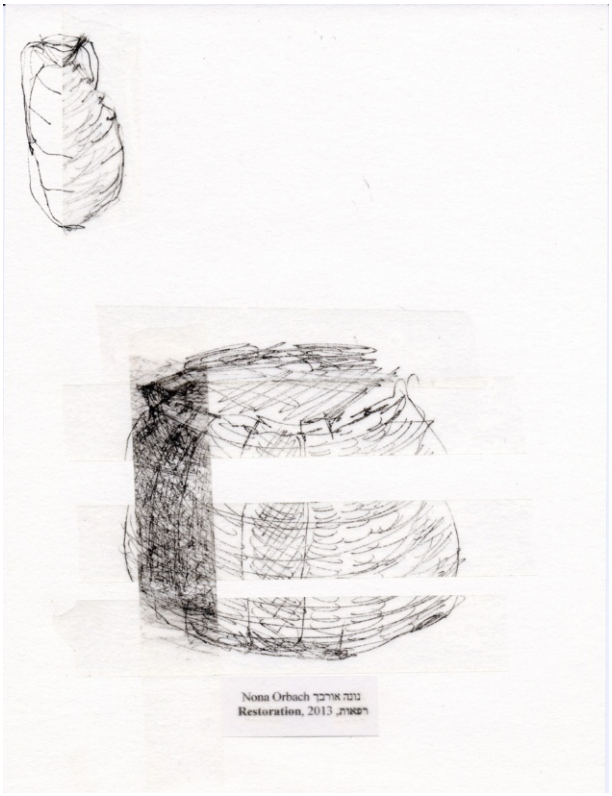

Figure 57. Nona Orbach, Restoration 7, *2013, collage on paper*

but still there are those who choose this profession. A few of our students want to become artists, while others are more interested in community issues, politics, gender and education. A few are interested in continuing their studies in art therapy. In my courses, twenty-five percent of the students are Christians, Druze and Muslims, while the others are Jews. For most of them, this is the first time they have studied together in a multicultural environment.

Generally speaking, Jewish students would have studied art in high school or different private or community courses, and would have been exposed to exhibitions. As for the Arab students, my impression is that this is usually their first encounter with the contemporary art world. This is a very interesting phenomenon. Most Arab students I have taught began painting and drawing as little girls, discovering it as a way to pursue their inner world, mostly on their own. Perhaps it is an unconscious window searching for their personal identity. Moreover, drawing naturalistically is praised a lot, thus, they usually have quite good drawing abilities. Many of them

draw portraits of their family members, animals and close surroundings. I assume it also serves as a nonverbal path to receive acceptance and praise for their artistic work, especially if they portray their elders.

Nevertheless, when they begin their studies, they soon realise that there is much more to art, and they encounter obstacles. Belonging to a traditional society, they are torn between a large family and community-based behaviours on one hand, and their personal urge to express themselves as young individual women on the other. These conflicts surface when they are exposed to a secular world of art expressions, which can sometimes be rude or conceptual, and thus distant from the exercise of drawing a portrait diligently. We try to assist them, and eventually they do discover artistic ways of expressing their heritage in contemporary ways. In fact, Arab art students are a unique growing population in our college. Moreover, quite a few of them have become well-established in the local art scene.

Naturally, those who have more support from their families thrive as artists and teachers. Those who pursue teaching are deeply motivated to share their new knowledge with others within their communities. The ones who are art-driven are given opportunities in our college, such as a studio and support in making connections with galleries. They are all pioneers in their societies and create deep changes for the next generation.

For this reason, the process of learning and identifying their personal blueprint is a meaningful tool for all of them. They can move closer, to who they are individually, and combine, if necessary, their tradition and heritage. The conflict is metamorphosed into an interesting cultural bridge that links their ancestors' memory and archetypes with their own uniqueness.

REFERENCE

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20. NOT ONLY A DRY RUN

Helping Budding Teachers Come to Terms with Art Education

You have had quite a varied career, having started your studies in art education at the Institut für Kunsterzieher der Staatlichen Kunstakademie Düsseldorf/ Münster. You then decided to work exclusively as an artist and in fact you had an extremely successful career, showing your work in major exhibitions and important venues in Germany and beyond. After some years, you got involved again in teacher education first at Cologne, then at Braunschweig and you are now a Professor of Art Education at Karlsruhe. What led to these shifts in your career?

Figure 58. Joachim Kettel, Memory, *1999, diverse objects*

In the different schools I attended during my childhood, teachers repeatedly encouraged me to develop linguistic, acting as well as visual-artistic skills. Already in kindergarten, I was allowed to play the part of the prince. If there was any event at school, the headmaster would take me out of class and I was able to make posters that were then hung in the school community, or I'd be asked to participate in the model construction of the new school. At that time I built structures that looked very much like modern, white, cardboard church models. As I grew older, I furnished my first small room with a black bin full of alcoholic drinks for guests and hung a glass frame on the wall of my basement room with fly studies, which I drew with black and blue pens. Since I did not go to the pub like my classmates but preferred to stay alone, I would go to the fields to find something useful which I brought back to my room to draw. My art teacher in Hanover-Langenhagen supported me in all my efforts and introduced me to the art world with the Galerie Holtmann, which at that time had a CEBIT Exhibition (group Zero: Mack, Piene, Uecker) on the roof. Next up was Brusberg, the most important private gallery in Hanover. In addition I was interested in exhibitions taking place at the Kunstverein, at the Kestner-Gesellschaft in Hanover, and also at the Sprengel Museum, which I visited regularly. I came to know Joseph Beuys personally at the Kunstverein Hanover, then on class excursions related to the Dokumenta in Kassel. At that time I used to wear a military vest that I'd bought at a flea market, at the back of which Beuys had put his autograph. I proudly wore this jacket at school, and others simply called me "Beuys". Over the weekend I would go with some other students to my art teacher George Mika's large farmland, where he had converted an old cottage into his house. I went to the Lister Meile in Hanover and looked at the plastic experiments of sculptors from Bremen, like Otto Almstadt. Hanover was then the leading German city in the placement of art in public spaces. I bought art books, encyclopaedias and exhibition catalogues because my rather uneducated parents had none of these kinds of books on their bookshelves. I had a Wilhelm Busch album and I become engrossed with his pen drawings. My heart beat faster when I saw for the first time the many wonderful children's books in the school library.

I immensely enjoyed studying Art Education but as a painter and sculptor, I am self-taught because I chose to study printmaking in Gunther Keusen's class. Keusen had a wide-ranging interest in art and literature, and after spending time in the printing workshop we often attended literary colloquia and then went to the pub until late at night to discuss things. In his class everything was possible, all forms of art and performance had a place there. With his long hours of colloquia Gunther strengthened our perseverance and skills of self-reflection while in the workshop you had to get your hands dirty and we made wonderful experiments. Keusen didn't threaten us with expulsion as Norbert Tadeusz did if students also decided to study a second subject at university.

I stayed on at school for one or two semesters longer because job prospects were poor. Fortunately, at that point I won an important German newcomer award, which catapulted me into the art world. After that, I couldn't deliver works as quickly as

they wanted to buy or exhibit them. After my first state examination in Art and German that I had to take both at the Art Academy and at the University of Münster, I decided to begin a clerkship in Düsseldorf. The circumstances were not ideal because I had to work for exhibitions and simultaneously criss-crossed Germany by car and a trailer, so I decided after nearly ten months to stop the clerkship and the second phase of teacher training in Germany, and to throw myself once again fully into my art practice. My girlfriend at the time and present wife Karin was from Münster but was drawn to the art-city of Cologne, which at that time was famous for its German and European galleries. Here I had a wonderful large studio in the backyard while Karin could operate a ceramics workshop in the front building. I had more exhibitions and received more awards and scholarships, including an award for Young Art at Art Cologne, at that time the most important addition to the Art Basel fair in Europe. All these experiences provided me with a good reputation in art circles. In those years I lived well off my art and I could even afford to commission Alistair Overbruck and Boris Becker as professional photographers to document all my work. Art, especially contemporary art, successfully pushed by influential gallerists like Max Hetzler, Gisela Capitain, Michael Werner, Monika Sprüth, Paul Maenz, and Rudolf Zwirner, boomed in Cologne. I was accepted as a member of the prestigious German Artist Union. It was around this time that I started teaching at Braunschweig and the artist Siegfried Neuenhausen, who was living in my hometown Hanover, asked me whether I could imagine myself as a member of the DKB on the board of the International Society for Fine Arts (IGBK) and the German National Committee of the International Association of Artists (IAA). At first I had strong reservations and did not feel this challenge, yet at the same time I wanted to familiarise myself with the complicated scene. I was drawn to the collegial atmosphere and the feelings of mutual support one gets from shared ideals and volunteer work. I considered myself lucky, a founding member of the European Council of Artists, a European interdisciplinary organisation of cultural workers, representing their rights as an NGO. The IGBK became a power generator which offered me new possibilities of self-awareness and my horizons expanded. I became aware of fruitful, international projects at the interface of art and pedagogy.

The booming 1980s were slowly followed by a slump in the international art market with consequences for all the parties involved, especially for the artists themselves. I had to find a way of coping economically. In the 1990s I graduated from my previously-interrupted training in Cologne and completed it successfully with the second state examination. My interest in education policy issues had since strengthened and I loved teaching classes at school and preparing lessons despite the lack of time. This was a real alternative to my studio work. Soon after, I received an invitation to teach a foundation class as a visiting professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Braunschweig. In the basic class I supervised the development of their artistic expressions, but then it grew to incorporate collaborative practices and reflections about art in the overall social context.

Figure 59. Joachim Kettel, Memory, *1999, diverse objects*

Along the years, were there any professors or artists along the way who influenced your approach to art education?

Various people influenced my ways of doing things at different times of my life. My art teachers during my school years made a significant impact on the further development of my talents while the many discussions about artistic issues that I had later with my fellow students at the Art Academy were also influential. My professionalisation as a freelance artist owed much to exchanges with artists, girlfriends, gallerists, museum and art association directors and even art critics. My cooperation with the German Association of Artists, the IGBK, IAA and the ECA have also strongly influenced me at an international level. I gained new perspectives in different schools during my second phase of teacher training and in my time as a teacher of Art and German. I was especially impressed by the environment I worked in as a visiting professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Braunschweig and there I also undertook collaborations with art education. I participated in teacher training programmes which brought me into contact with Reimar Stielow and Dieter Warzecha and this made me start to think more rigorously about issues of

art education. I was fascinated by the intensity of artistic and academic work at Braunschweig and decided that I'd remain involved in this type of environment even after the end of my period of teaching as a visiting professor. So the idea of a doctoral thesis that revolved around questions of self-referentiality in art education started to develop, though in reality it had already interested me as a teacher of Art and German. Things that had previously appeared unconnected to me started to fall into place in my mind. I always regretted the lack of political awareness and reflection on the part of fellow artists, and was shocked by their very fixed set of intellectual themes that were often restricted to imported ideas. This was followed by intense confrontations and exhibition projects with my colleagues in the interdisciplinary group of artists "the artificial joint" (*das künstliche gelenk*).

You've just mentioned the importance of political awareness and an openness to new themes. As an artist, you have produced paintings, drawings, sculptures and installations that are imbued with a strong sense of poetry and magic. How would you describe the central ideas and highlights of your artistic career?

Firstly, I wanted to connect with the poetry and magic of picture books, especially the work of German illustrator Wilhelm Busch. I also felt a connection with places of my childhood like meadows and woodlands, ponds and rivers, ancient monastic parks, but also fallow land and building areas, transition zones, railway embankments and allotments. I was similarly attracted to places in the wider landscape, which we'd sometimes drive by during Sunday excursions, places with streams and hydro kinetic constructions with considerable narrative content. I then delved into German studies and an intense literary exploration of romantic art and the theory of poetry: from Goethe to Fichte, Schelling, Schlegel, Novalis, Eichendorff and Thomas Bernhard.

I've had many personal highlights as an artist. These highlights have included the possibility of spending time doing intense artistic work in the studio and pouring out new work, exhibition planning, and producing successful exhibition set-ups in museums, galleries and art associations. Such personal highlights are complemented by positive feedback from colleagues, art critics and the interested public as well as art prizes and scholarships, which led me to other places of work and new challenges. I've also appreciated the possibility of spending time in solitude. For instance, I got a one year grant from the Barkenhoff Foundation in the studio of Heinrich Vogler in Worpswede and a one year scholarship at the Künstlerstätte Schloss Bleckede/Elbe.

During an email exchange we had prior to this interview, you told me that art educators must be artistic practitioners and also 'artists' in the wider, existential sense expressed in philosopher Wilhelm Schmid's understanding of *Lebenskunst* or "the art of living". Can you expand on this?

Yes, art teachers have to be artists in the narrower and in the broader sense. They need their artistic crafts to be able to think artistically. Art educators without artistic practice

are like fishermen without a boat. They lack basic preconditions that help them to initiate artistic processes, motivate, guide and especially to accompany students through moments of crisis, which always form part of any artistic research and all design processes. But they must also be able to stay at arm's length from their own preferences in order to allow students to develop in their own ways. Art education is first and foremost an artistic process. Teaching-learning situations in and through art nurture artistic thoughts, actions and processes. Here, art is method, medium and content. I cannot learn to swim in the dry sand, but only in the water. I can talk about swimming, but this does not necessarily mean that I have also learned how to swim. It remains only a dry run. Unfortunately, teaching art is often only a dry run, especially when teachers cannot feel at first hand the medium of water that carries them. Students as well as their teachers remain unaffected by this kind of teaching.

The same applies to the art of living. I refer here to deep aesthetic experiences, experiences of art and artistic experiences in the wider sense, skills of perception and thinking skills, alternative ways of looking beyond realism and refusing to subject ourselves to things uncritically. Such experiences help us to appreciate multidimensional meanings of things and to allow our curiosity to evolve beyond utilitarian constraints. This is what enriches our life. We learn to distinguish qualities and become aware of hitherto unsuspected relationships.

How do your classes in art education at Karlsruhe reflect this philosophy of the art of living? What kinds of artistic and pedagogical attitudes and habits do you expect prospective teachers of art to have with their own students?

The art of living is an integral part of an artistic art education. Students learn to deal with aesthetic and artistic design issues and also to mould their own personalities in an intensive constructive, remodelling process. They first need to go through a period during which they suspend their own ideas about the reception and production of art, then they need to find an artistic research topic with a view to diving deep into it as they learn to swim. My teaching at Karlsruhe focuses on an extensive interweaving of theory and practice in workshop-based or project-based teaching-learning settings. In addition to intensive, individual artistic work in their private or university studios or places like schools and museums outside the university, students gather experiences in study groups, and while conducting research in artistic or scientific research and design processes, which are characterised by an inductive approach using experimental methods. These experiences help budding teachers to come to terms with the contradictions of pedagogical and artistic thought and help them to ground their own educational methodologies.

What about practice-based forms of educational research? Do you encourage students to conduct such forms of research?

The basis of the concept of artistic art education is an inductive or experimental approach to art. Students at Karlsruhe learn through research and this is closely

linked to an understanding of research theories. In my university teaching I try to weave theoretical and practical aspects of the course into each other. Artistic research conducted in their own artistic practice certainly bears a structural similarity to scientific and educational scientific research. However, artistic research is like the exploration of foreign territory in that it is open, dynamic and complex, leading us beyond operational teaching-learning objectives in order to experience open, interminable and unpredictable situations. In my seminars about didactic research I make my students aware of the fact that they are themselves researchers in teaching-learning processes in university and school contexts, during which they stimulate, perform and then evaluate. Some of my students decide after their final exam to proceed with a further master's degree in Education Sciences (*Bildungswissenschaft*), in which they have to invent and carry out a research project in a school or extracurricular context. At this point, as an advertising leaflet for the master's programme in our department states, they shift from a "spectator model of knowledge" to an "artist model", which reveals the active production of knowledge which simultaneously supports individual educational processes.

A recent graduate examined these processes as part of his very successful research topic "performative image actions of young people". He researched digital media usage, design processes, use of mobile phone and internet activity of his pupils, who he teaches in the afternoon in an arts studio class. Another former student of my institute, who first completed two state exams followed by her master's degree,

Figure 60. Joachim Kettel, Untitled, *2014, mixed technique, 80 × 60 cm, Civitella*

now works at the leading German drugstore company *dm* whose staff headquarters is in Karlsruhe. She designs concepts for their personnel training by means of the principles of arts education, which she experienced directly at our art institute. The same is true for our student teachers who learn early in their studies that a research-based artistic approach represents the blueprint for their pedagogical and didactic methods.

How has art education changed in recent years in Germany? Have there been any significant policy changes at a national or regional level that have affected the field?

The art education debate in Germany has changed immensely over the past twenty years. During my own studies, the subject was ruled by old-fashioned doctrines which were largely educationally grounded and disciplined, while the cognitive processes of artistic thinking were largely ignored. Colleagues such as Helga Kämpf-Jansen (Aesthetic Research), Gerd Selle (Aesthetic Education), Reimar Stielow and Günther Regel (Arts Education) contributed to an opening with respect to a body-oriented, process-oriented and action-oriented, aesthetic form of arts education that has been taken further by younger colleagues. At a theoretical level, the influences of imaging science and of anthropological art historians in art education and current discourse are unmistakable, though quite controversial. However, all this takes place largely on a purely theoretical level which has still barely reached the reality of classrooms in primary schools and secondary schools, where deductive, imitative, formalistic and reductionist didactic practices are still largely the rule of the day.

When I organised my first congress in 1997—which was also one of the first congresses for art education in Germany in the 1990s—on the teaching of art ("Teaching Arts: Artistic skills and art education processes – New subject-oriented approaches in art and art education in Germany and Europe"), the Federation of German Art Teachers (BDK) was still sleeping in a deep slumber. Its national congresses came only later, when colleagues grew slowly through these activities of artists and art educators and realised they must also move. At this stage a decisive impetus for artistic education (künstlerische Bildung) was set and then further deepened in the congresses that I and/or Carl-Peter Buschkühle were responsible for later on.

Since then art as a subject and life orientation became an indispensable part of the art education landscape. I could rely on a rich repertoire of experiments conducted during almost ten years as an art teacher in different schools in the Cologne area, and an equally long practice as a visual artist. My congresses always took place in cooperation with the most important German artists' organisations, represented at the International Society of Fine Arts (IGBK, Berlin) and the German National Committee of the IAA (International Association of Arts), whose board member and spokesperson I was for many years. This created pressure on the organisations of art educators in Germany. Some years ago Gert Selle wrote about the 'disturbing'

relationship between art education and contemporary art, highlighting the general ignorance of contemporary artistic practices prevalent in art education. The discourse then was still conducted within the premises of an aesthetic education. In 1994, while Gert Selle experimented with his students at Oldenburg University in the Geisel valley, a huge abandoned coal mining area between Leipzig and Halle, I organised the IGBK project "Imaginary Hotel Leipzig" in which international artists could make context-specific artistic statements in a large cotton spinnery, reflecting Joseph Beuys' expanded concept of art, which was rather strange for art educators since they still attached themselves to traditional art forms. German art education discourse consists of a series of local individual discourses on the whole, sometimes used against the expanded concept of art and contemporary art as a source and motor of self and world perception. The newest education plan (2016) of the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg, where I have been working as a representative of the conception of artistic education, has oriented itself in the direction of "image competence". According to those who represent this notion of image competence, the school subject that has been called *Bildende Kunst* (Art Education) up to now should now be renamed *Bildendes Bild* (Image Education). Now it is up to the upcoming art teachers to subvert and deconstruct the enlarged image concept in order to continue developing artistic thought.

Apart from the fact that we now no longer talk of the subject 'art education' but call it 'image education', the scope of the guiding principles of the subject appear so far-reaching that the system risks overburdening the work of art educators with politically correct thought and maxims that reduce the content of the subject to a submissive performance of ethical public statements. In addition to their substantive arbitrariness, social and political justifications could lead to a further instrumentalisation of the subject.

21. CONCEPTUALIST AS EDUCATOR/EDUCATOR AS CONCEPTUALIST

Where did you study art and art education and what influence did your own education have on the kind of educator and artist you are today?

Where I went to school had everything to do with my development as an artist and teacher. Every teacher I had since my primary school years, whether they were an artist or not, had an impact on the way that I came to understand schooling, learning, work, and the presentation of that work. These four things are now the principle elements and modes of working in my artistic practice.

During my early college years I attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) where I rigorously studied painting and drawing. Because of SAIC's unique 'open' curriculum, undergraduate students were not required to declare a major area of study in order to get a Bachelor of Fine Arts. This made it possible for me to take courses in performance art, video, sound art, writing, theory, research, sculpture, art history, media studies, psychoanalysis, fractal geometry, botany, animal behaviour, medieval literature, and even a specialised course on the complete works of the Romantic author Jane Austen.

The openness of curricular possibilities in those developmental years proved to be important later in my ideas about what it means to obtain an education, what it means to facilitate access to knowledge, and how art can participate in that important exchange. This was primarily because at SAIC I wasn't bound to notions of media-specificity and therefore when I came out of art school I was already thinking cross-disciplinarily. I came to understand 'making' as something that occurred simultaneously through the mind and hand. This way of thinking about art freed me to practice through materiality (such as the plastic arts like painting and drawing) and also through dematerialisation and conceptual art forms (such as relationships, theory, action, writing, and pedagogy). This openness of curriculum encouraged me to only be anchored to traditions by choice.

After completing the studio course-of-study at SAIC I received a letter from their art education department advertising a one-year teaching certification option for recent graduates. When I received the letter I was already administering and teaching at Galeria Rompecabezas, a community arts centre in a predominately Latino/a suburb immediately outside of Chicago. It seemed like an easy decision to go back and get certified as a teacher even though I didn't really know what I was getting myself into.

Because of the expedited nature of my teacher-training program I would say that I didn't actually see myself as a teacher until I was already teaching in a Chicago Public School. I felt very 'fresh' coming out of teacher-school. Even with the hindsight of now being in the teacher-training business, I wouldn't trade the fast track I took to becoming a teacher for a more methodical experience. My students, their parents, my colleagues, and my administrators have always been my greatest teachers. In many ways, working in a public school as an art teacher was like going to graduate school. The ongoing conversation that emerged amongst the many stakeholders and collaborators of my public school teaching days cannot be stressed enough in the narrative of how I came to understand the role of teaching within my art practice. Among many other things I came to engage with the materiality of time, space, and relationality in not only the pedagogical task but also in the collective creative endeavour of living a life together with others in schools. Thinking about teaching as a creative practice became my primary mode of operation during the seven years that I taught in the Chicago Public Schools, not because I was interested in the art (or refinement) of teaching, but because I became interested in how schooling and education could be made increasingly pliable.

While teaching at the public schools I met Charles Garoian, formerly the director of the School of Visual Arts at Penn State University. He invited me to take everything that I was working on at the high school and filter it through graduate studies at Penn State. My family and I accepted his invitation and four years later I had completed my PhD in art education. I firmly believe that there are few places where I would have been able to complete this degree other than Penn State. It was through the support that I received from the people at Penn State that I was able to think about my teaching as art practice and then leverage that into a research practice. Now, my teaching, art, and research blend into each other more than ever.

You teach art education at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. How would you describe your approach to the profession of the art educator? What kind of teachers do you aim to produce? Do you think that art teachers in your area face specific challenges that the courses you teach prepare them for?

As I just mentioned I've become increasingly interested in the 'pliability' that I came upon while I was a high school art teacher. I'm now interested in how people who find themselves in an institution—particularly an institution that feels restricted and oppressive (e.g. schools)—can 'play' with the parameters and materiality of that situation in order to tease out its potentiality (for good and for bad). This is a topic that comes up with my students frequently, but it actually doesn't start with pliability. It starts with institutional literacy. The question that arises first is "how can we read our situation in order to decipher its codes, its power dynamics, its histories, and its modes of working?" It may be self-evident why these questions are critical, but what we end up talking about is how to become institutionally literate as a means to create change and even to perform irreverence for the sake of art and maybe even

for the sake of the institution. At that point 'art' becomes important not as a means to aestheticise, rather as a means to circulate within a world of ideas, information, power, and communication. Art is then understood as a way to connect with the world for the sake of whichever conversations are important to the individual.

When you ask this question about "what kind of teachers do I aim to produce" I'm struck by how disinterested I am in producing any 'kind' of teacher. In conversations with my students—whether they lean more towards being artists or whether they lean more towards being educators—I find that they urgently want to connect with their world. They feel a responsibility to exist ethically and to perform goodness in the world. As complicated as those two things are, I like to meet my students right at that moment of urgency. I want to find out what kind of teacher they want to be and then I want to help put them on a path that could potentially get them there. From the very beginning, even with my least experienced art education students, I ask them to reflect on all the teachers they've had over the years. It turns out they have a wealth of ideas in their memories about what 'good' teaching is and what models they want to follow or be critical of. The only question I would ask in response to their ideal model for teaching is: how much more complicated should the model that you are actively constructing be? That is a relatively easy question because as soon as it is posed the students begin to reflect on how polished their idea of a 'good' teacher is and how situationality and circumstances make the task of imagining a 'good' teacher a much more nuanced exercise. It's funny because I'm not doing the 'heavy lifting' for them. In other words, I'm not really 'teaching' them anything. They are thinking about the complexities of what it means to be teachers by themselves by simply reflecting on all the teaching they've seen and experienced in their lives. My job is then only to provide articulation to a professional field that these students intuitively know through their flesh and in their gut. I trust the storehouse of information and memories that each student brings with them to get us through some very thick conversations and to prepare them to actively learn how to continuously make their own teaching practice pliable. This is how I try to position teaching as an artistic practice, as a practice of pliability.

I trust my students a lot and sometimes that doesn't produce the necessary results immediately, but I subscribe to Geoffrey Ulmer's (1986) idea of "detonation" (p. 340) and how learning and recognition is frequently set off by something else, something far away from the original moment that is colloquially identified as the "teachable moment". You know that feeling when a current experience sets off a prior moment of learning. You're like, "oh! So that's what that meant!" I trust that moment and I recognise that my contribution is just one part in an aggregate composed of many of those moments that I'll never be around to see as they detonate, fuse, and transform into their own 'thing'.

In the same spirit that Duchamp (1964/2013) declared that the artist "doesn't count" (p. 30) and that the artist "doesn't know" (p. 31) what future life his or her work will have, I'm okay with not seeing the fruits of my labour. In fact, there

is something about being removed from the moment of fruition that feels slightly more cosmic to me. I recognise this as not only my place in the greater scheme of things, but also as an indicator of how the 'greater scheme of things' continuously makes in-roads in my life, learning, and practice. As the Uruguayan conceptualist Luis Camnitzer (2014) so eloquently put it,

> This means that the mission of a good teacher or a good artist is to help society to make them unnecessary, because those who are presently consumers of education or of art should be equipped to learn or create on their own, without intermediaries. Pedagogy…in that sense, is not a training device but an enabling tool, a way of helping viewers reach certain conclusions, and ultimately helping people access creation on their own without any assistance. (p. 95)

You are a Mexican-American educator who considers his own artistic work to be simultaneously a teaching practice. In a sense this makes you doubly hybrid. How does this affect your professional and artistic identities?

This is a great question because of what it implies. My experience being the son of Mexican immigrants in the United States is one of the single most embodied things that I carry. What I mean by that is that the Mexican-American hybrid experience is so integrated in who I am that I can feel it in my skin, and not just the colour of my skin. I feel the grace, mercy and amnesty that has been extended to me when others may have had privilege and pedigree extended to them. I've always needed help and thank God that—in crucial moments, such as certain school moments—I received that help! I know that there were many times in my life that I received that help because I was a minority and on the margins in terms of class, race, culture, language, and educational achievement. In comparison to my peers I was 'under-resourced' when it came to cultural and institutional capital. I am grateful to all those teachers who were brave enough to put aside the rhetoric of equality for an authentic ethic of acute fairness.

In all the moments where I failed, it usually had something to do with being treated equal, even though I wasn't 'equal'. When I succeeded in school it was because I was treated *unequal*. I know that sounds strange, but what I mean here is that I was given special attention, not as one of many, but rather as just a singular, unique person who had—as every kids does—special needs. I was seen as one person who needed something extra. I was given more favour, more time, and more attention. And perhaps my classmates were also being given this special attention, but it sure felt like it was just me. I was allowed to make jokes and draw pictures and teach my classmates how to do things that were particular to me. Tasks were fitted to my particular needs, and I was given additional encouragement. That's right, I wasn't treated equal. I was given what I specifically needed to succeed and that made all the difference.

I was such a bad student and it wasn't because I was a dumb kid. I loved to learn and I loved to make! I was just not good at school. My parents barely spoke English and they were working so hard that they could not be involved in school 'life' the way that other kid's parents were. It was through the flexibility of several teachers and coaches that I was able to find a place in this world. It was through teachers and mentors who passed me in their classes based on aptitude when I didn't deserve to pass based on achievement; it was through teachers and coaches who gave me an extra boost or put me in leadership positions so that I could learn how to be a leader, when there were other kids who were already able and could step into those leadership positions without needing additional mentorship. These teachers and coaches knew that they were not taking anything away from those better-prepared kids. They knew that they had opportunities in abundance and that their preparation had emerged because they were immersed in a world of opportunity. These teachers knew that this might be my one chance to assume a leadership position. They saw the forks in my road and they gave me the opportunity to take the more challenging route, the more fruitful road, the path less travelled.

These teachers—who saw my difference—and treated me with grace, rather than judgement, taught me that parameters were pliable. They taught me that lines were meant to be blurred. They taught me that making hybrids and feeling comfortable in undefined middle-spaces was a way to generate from unexplored territories. They

Figure 61. Jorge Lucero, No Short Hands in Exile, *2014. Acrylic, store bought canvases, and folded collage*

made those hybrid spaces seem exciting and desirable. I gravitated towards that and perhaps that's why I do this now as an artist. I like to be in the uncertain space. The space that is filled with aptitude and potential, not just achievement.

Do you ever feel that your teaching or research commitments do not leave enough space in your life for your more creative practice?

I'm very fortunate that my teaching and research practices allow for the type of creative work I'm most interested in, that is, institutional pliability. The principle material of my current work is actually the institution, so figuring out how to work within the time, resource, and policy restrictions of my institutional condition allows for a certain conflating of occupation and 'creative work'. When I first began teaching in a school I found myself frustrated that I couldn't 'practice' my art in the same way I was taught in my studio-centric art training (e.g. eight-hour studio sessions). This was due mostly to the time demands of teaching. What I have learned in the last fifteen years within the tight parameters of the academy is that, although the idea that being in the studio is essential to some types of creative practice, it is not required for all creative work. When I realised that I could make work even under the most restrictive circumstances, that's when my practice opened up considerably. If I had to ponder what this studio-centrism has to do with, I would speculate that it has something to do with the way that the academy (and subsequently the art world it produces) associates labour, rigour, and worth as part of a good cycle of productivity. In many ways it's all part of the larger neoliberal ruse that we participate in and, frankly, the tight time restrictions of teaching help to dismantle that.

I'm sure this is merely an art myth, but there is a funny yet inspirational story that I've heard recounted about Picasso several times. Please indulge me telling it as a means to further address the question of 'when does creative work happen?'. Apparently, after having agreed to exhibit with a certain gallerist, Picasso shows up at the space with nothing in hand. Upon being questioned, Picasso retreats to some back room of the gallery with a pen and a stack of blank paper. Not long after, he emerges with an entire suite of drawings that he had just made on the spot in that back room. The gallerist, infuriated that the terms of their agreement were being so flippantly met, scolds Picasso by pointing out the obvious. He tells Picasso that this isn't what they agreed to and that these drawings only took him a few hours to produce. Picasso—in legendary Picasso manner—rips the freshly-made drawings out of the gallerist's hands and begins to storm out of the gallery. As he is leaving, he proclaims, "it took me my whole life to make these works!" This is one of those stories that I purposefully have kept from verifying, since it is the story's utter panache—its dropping-the-microphone-audacity—that opens up permissions for new modes of operation that were previously kept from me.

You said that your work deals with or happens within institutional spaces of education. The physical and administrative setup of schools is often seen today

Figure 62. Jorge Lucero, The UnAmerica: Vexation with misrepresentation or Dos Dolores, *2013–14, folded two dollar bill*

by many as over-restrictive and obsessed with measurable outcomes. How can artists fit into such a context?

In 1966 Allan Kaprow recorded an album called *How to make a happening*. In this eleven step recipe to make works that are supposed to be somewhere between art and life, I am particularly struck by step number eight. Kaprow recites,

> Work with the power around you, not against it. It makes things much easier, and you're interested in getting things done. When you need official approval, go out for it. You can use police help, the mayor, the college dean, the chamber of commerce, the company exec, the rich, and all of your neighbours…It's not a snap, of course, but they're convincible, and once on your side you can almost go to the moon. (1966/2008)

Given our society's current temperament, I have to take Kaprow's advice with a grain of sceptical salt. The police state that we find ourselves in, not only as citizens, but also as public servants, makes Kaprow's ease of conscience easily laughable. At the same time I see what he's getting at. I try to see what I can do and I especially try to see what I can do when I can't do anything. Kaprow doesn't calculate for recalcitrance and violence on behalf of the powers that be, but I think about it a lot.

For me this is where dematerialisation in conceptual art comes in. Unlike most visible works by Kaprow, which never really lose their connection to the weight of aesthetics—even in their most minimal or ritualistic iterations—dematerialised,

conceptualist gestures can sometimes be completely undetectable, absurd to the point of being quickly dismissed, and maybe even counter-productive in a truly anti-hegemonic manner. I identify with what Luis Camnitzer (2007/2009) said when reflecting upon his thirty-plus years as a member of a college faculty. He said,

> I was assigned the role of the eccentric…I was seen as somebody who had fun by adding vinegar to the soup with 'strange and impractical' ideas. I was tolerated only because I was an artist, but I was not accepted as a normal and logical intellectual. (p. 235)

Having the sometimes-marginalised role of the artist within the serious, traditional, and capitalist agenda of schooling can be a gift because there is always a good chance that I will be prejudged as wholly unserious and therefore erroneously deemed as harmless. This type of institutional dismissal—although often times financially harmful to artists who teach—also has led to what I've heard many of my artists-teacher colleagues impishly describe as 'flying under the radar'.

My foregrounding of dematerialised gestures is strongest in my insistence on the value of long, immeasurable durations. I like the time-brackets of the forty-week school year, the four-year high school experience, the fifteen-week semester, the five-year doctoral degree, the six years of primary school, the two and half month summer break, and the life-long friendships that start from the forced serendipity of being in a classroom together. Although I can't name all of its parts I feel confident in the materiality of duration and the relationships enacted over long periods of time that is too difficult to document. This is where I think I can do most of my work, but again it goes back to this idea of "detonation" that I mentioned earlier and how the participants in a learning task (e.g. a school) must muster up trust. I see this long, dematerialised, difficult-to-document, relational, everyday task of being in schools with an entire community as real Socially Engaged Art practice. The politics and finances are real, the tragedies and tensions are inescapable, the grit of being in an intricately, dynamic, and precarious multi-part ecosystem is unavoidably palpable and it challenges its inhabitants to make a hard choice. Inhabitants—who are also the workers—in the reality of a lived, immersive and emergent, unpredictably real, educational task as art practice are daily asked: Is this the life you want to live? Are these the people that you want to live your life with?

There has been some debate in recent years about 'pedagogical turns' in art practice, curating and so on. Do you think there might exist a point beyond which art practice becomes 'too' pedagogical and loses its own identity as art? Should artists and curators be expected to teach their public? Couldn't this 'teaching' become patronising?

I think it depends on what you mean by 'teach'. If teaching is vertical, then there is a very high possibility that it can devolve into paternalism. But some art proposes horizontal alternatives that can also be seen as educative. Not because one person

Figure 63. Jorge Lucero, We still don't know how much less nothing can be, *2012, photograph of the artist delivering a lecture intended for a large audience to one single person, who then delivered the lecture – in summary – to the audience. The lecture was given at the University of Toronto's 'Shifting Plane of Performance' conference*

(say, the artist) is teaching another (say, the 'layman'), but rather because people are coming together to mutually educate themselves, while making something together. Here I would add that the thing that we might come together to 'make' might not, in fact, be a thing or an artwork as is typically understood.

I think 'pedagogy' in art has practically always existed. Enculturation and colonialism are examples of a form of pedagogy and—certainly—artworks grouped within the 'pedagogical turn' can be indicted under these pretensions. At the same time, I see the varied and sloppy landscape of the pedagogical turn as a horizontalising gesture that rips into notable acts of enculturation simply by being so unrefined. In the so-called pedagogical turn there is a lot of failure; there are disagreements between the purists, the ethicists, and all the wayward ghosts in between, and it is this texture that is so invigorating. The mistake is to think that the pedagogical turn in art is an art movement or that it is a specific mode of working. The pedagogical turn is a generic term that alludes to thousands of projects that are essentially hit or/and miss. What I mean here is that everything—and I mean every

single thing—needs to be taken into account! The most notable Socially Engaged Art projects and the unrecognised work of a day-to-day teacher; the Socially Engaged Art work that hits on all cylinders effectively provoking long-term change in a community, spreading democracy, (while being sensitive to its own imperialist pitfalls) and the grotesquely insensitive Socially Engaged Art project that objectifies and capitalises on an Other. The more I look at the scope of what is happening under the auspices of the pedagogical turn, the more I recognise it as unruly and therefore vibrant. It self-governs and will soon find itself unpopular enough to just become good old-fashioned life again. I'm excited about the fact that good old-fashioned everyday life has gathered a different type of cache recently, but in the end these types of currencies are not why I do what I do. I do them for the long-term currencies, the ones that will still be circulating long after I'm dead.

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LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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Alan Cusack is an artist and teacher from Northern Ireland. He is based in London, where he is currently undertaking a PhD with University College London: Institute of Education. His practice-based research explores ideas of cultural, national and local identities and how selfhood and cultural positioning is approached in current secondary art education in the UK. His art practice uses narrative to explore memory, myth and tradition, as well as the relationship between individual and shared experience as a site for agonistic pluralism. Alan has exhibited work across the UK and Ireland. He has also published writings and drawings, including *Migratory Lines, Communist Manifesto for Young People* and *Tintin na ma rafiki Congo*. He has led a number of EU funded community art projects promoting cultural diversity and, more recently, he has been working as a freelance artist exploring youth identities in urban environments for the Architecture Foundation, London.

Shady El Noshokaty is a contemporary Egyptian artist whose projects were featured in many established contemporary art museums and international exhibitions around the world like the Venice Biennale, Hayward Gallery, Mori museum, Kunst museum in Stockholm, Bochum, Institut du Monde Arabe, and many others. He also works as Associate Professor at the Department of the Arts in the American University of Cairo. He was an executive curator for Ahmed Basiony's Art project (*30 days Running in the place*) for the Egyptian pavilion at the 2011 Venice Biennale. Shady El Noshokaty has also played an undeniable role in the field of art education in Egypt for the last decade. In 2010 he established ASCII—a foundation for contemporary art education – aimed at introducing young thinkers and researchers to new and alternative media practices.

Sonia Guggisberg is a Brazilian artist with Swiss origins. She lives and works in São Paulo. She obtained a PhD in Semiotics and Communication from Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo and a Master in Fine Arts from UNICAMP. Guggisberg works as an artist, videomaker and researcher, participating in solo and group shows, lectures and workshops in Brazil and internationally since the 1990s. From 2007 to 2013, she developed the project *(I)mobilidade* [(Im) mobility], about swimmers whose movements were somehow confined. The result was a series of video-installations that generates emotional pressure by opposing the will of displacement to its impossibility. This was the starting point to a reflection on social enclosure and urban chaos. Nowadays she's developing research on the city's redesign movements and its identities. She has presented many solo shows in Brazil and her work has also been seen in the USA, Germany, Mexico, Colombia, Malta, Spain and France. Her works are part of the collections of Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, Museu de Arte Contemporânea de São Paulo, SESC SP, Instituto Figueiredo Ferraz and Museu Lasar Segal, among others. In 2014, she was awarded the Brazil Photography Prize (Porto Seguro), in the Essay category.

Shelley Hannigan is a visual artist, art educator and academic. She has also trained and worked as a creative arts therapist. Deakin University has been her workplace for the past ten years, where she has taught art and art education at the Institute of Koori Education and in the School of Education. Shelley's PhD focused on the meaning of Place and Identity unique to visual artistic practice with a particular focus on her own practice as artist and the practices of four Australian artists. She has been translating these findings into her teaching practice. Other research projects she is working on include using self-study and arts-based research to study pre-service teaching practices with seven other Deakin colleagues, researching quality art education with art educators from other universities, using art in science education and the changing landscape of Media Education. She has been the recipient of research and art grants.

Sangbin IM was born in Seoul, Korea, and lives and works in New York and Seoul. IM majored in Painting at Seoul National University in Korea, then when to Yale University in the U.S.A. on a Fulbright scholarship and graduated in 2005 with an MFA in Painting and Printmaking. In 2011, IM completed his doctorate in Art and Art Education at Columbia University, Teachers College in the U.S.A. As an artist, IM portrays insatiable human desire in capitalist society and creates work based on multifarious relations and clashes deriving from a melding of nature and city, tradition and modernity, reality and imagination, photography and painting, part and whole, and digital and analogue. As of 2016, IM has had sixteen solo exhibitions in New York, Los Angeles, Zurich, Busan and Seoul, and participated in numerous group exhibitions internationally. Since 2012 he has been a Professor at Sungshin University in Seoul, Korea.

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Joachim Kettel is an artist and Professor of art and didactics at the University of Education, Karlsruhe. Since 1994, he has developed and managed international artists projects and scientific congresses like *Imaginary Hotel* (1994), *How to teach the arts?* (1997), *Mapping Blind Spaces* (2003); *horizons/horizonte—insea2007germany*, InSEA Art Education Research and Development Congress (2007). His research interests are innovative forms of learning between the arts and pedagogy, artistic education, aesthetics and media. He is preparing next international congress named *The_MissingLink. Unknown Transitional Forms Between Arts and Pedagogy*, Karlsruhe 2016.

Alena Kotzmannová is a visual artist, photographer and teacher living and working in Prague. In 2014, she received a PhD from the Faculty of Education at Charles University. In 1998, she graduated from the Studio of Conceptual and Intermedia

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Jorge Lucero is an artist who currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Art Education in the School of Art + Design at The University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. His current work investigates the intersections of contemporary art practices with distinctly pedagogical properties and how those modes of operation propose alternative approaches to making, learning, and civic engagement. Lucero is currently writing and making art about how these educationally-reminiscent forms of contemporary art practice function as permissions for a teaching practice that is also a highly sophisticated art practice. Lucero's work has been shown, published, and presented internationally and across the United States. He holds degrees from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Pennsylvania State University. Through the permissions of conceptual art, Lucero now sees the potential of being in the academy.

Beverly Naidus is an interdisciplinary artist who creates interactive installations, artist's books, and works on paper. She facilitated and designed the permaculture inspired eco-art project, Eden Reframed, on Vashon Island, WA. Inspired by lived experience, topics in her art focus on environmental and social issues. Her work has been exhibited internationally, from city streets to major museums, and has been written about in journals and books. She is the author of *Arts for Change: Teaching Outside the Frame* (2009, Oakland, CA: New Village Press) and numerous essays. She has been "teaching art as a subversive activity" at NYC museums, Carleton College, Cal State Long Beach, Hampshire College, Goddard College and the Institute for Social Ecology. Her undergraduate work at Carleton College provoked her feminist and conceptual approach to art. Her graduate work at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design enhanced her social engagement. She facilitates a unique, interdisciplinary, socially engaged, studio arts curriculum, for the UW Tacoma campus and leads workshops in her Seattle studio.

Nona Orbach is a Mediterranean multi-media artist, educator and therapist. She received her MA in art therapy at Lesley College, Boston, 1988. She coaches and

supervises artists, art educators and therapists in Israel and Japan. She has developed pedagogical and therapeutic methods to broaden authentic creativeness. She is fascinated by the alchemy in which a medium expresses the emotional essence of any creative procedure. The spiritual blueprint of the creator is a term she closely observes through artistic processes. The thoughtful studio setting is the facilitator for that matter. She runs a socially-engaged art teachers' group, supporting them to create an art studio as a safe-place in schools. She believes it is especially essential in a multi-cultural society. In her art, she excavates an imaginary archeological site called Tel- Nona, linking reality and fiction, history and mythology. Her latest museum work was exhibited at The Israel Museum in 2013.

Flávia Pedrosa Vasconcelos obtained a PhD in Arts Education from the University of OPorto (UPORTO), with a PhD Scholarship at CAPES – Brazil. She has a Master degree in Visual Arts from the Federal University of Paraiba and Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPB/UFPE), a specialisation in Arts Education and Portuguese Language – from the Regional University of Caririr (URCA) and a Graduation in Fine Arts from the Federal Institute for Education, Science and Technology (IFCE). She is Professor at Visual Arts Teachers Education Graduation, Federal University of San Francisco Valley (UNIVASF), acting also as leader of Multi, Inter and Trans in Arts Research Group (MITA -CnPQ) and a member of International Society for Education through Art (InSEA), Iberoamerican Arts Education Network (RIAEA,) Federação de Arte/Educadores do Brasil (FAEB) and LatinAmerican Arts Teachers Education Research Network (LAIFOPA). While rethinking and praticising theories through artistic/educative practices, she develops in parallel her artworks and organises sporadic exhibitions.

Lisa M. Stybor studied painting, sculpture and design at the Fachhochschule in Aachen from 1981 to 1986. In 1987 a Fulbright-Scholarship brought her to the US, where she stayed for one and a half years and completed a Master of Fine Arts in Art (Painting). She won the T.G. Mays Purchase Award, an award from the Ben Barnett Memorial Fund, an award for Young Artist of the Darmstädter Sezesszion, an award to support Young Artist of the City of Aachen and held teaching assignments at Aachen and Düsseldorf. In 1993, she became Professor at the University of Applied Sciences (FH), where she still teaches artistic foundations *Bildnerisches Gestalten* at Bachelor and Master level. She also taught *Space and Volume* in the Architecture department from 1993 till 2004. Since 1987, she has held many exhibitions in Germany, the US, Italy, Israel and Japan. In 2016 she became AIR Award Winner of the BAER Art Center, Iceland.

Hong Wan Tham is a former Malaysian. After studying Fine Art at the University of North Texas and Pratt Institute, he decided to pursue a career in art education in Singapore. He taught in the same school for nine years and decided to further his studies at Teacher College, Columbia University in 2007, after which he became

Singaporean. His research is grounded primarily in the reciprocal relationship between socio-cultural, historical, and political constructs and their impact on art education, especially those in East and South East Asia. To gather data for his research, he spent two summers interacting with students from the Central Academy of Fine Art in Beijing and he received his doctorate degree in Education in 2012. He is now a teacher at the same school he previously taught at in Singapore.

Teresa Tipton is an international researcher, educator, and visual artist. She studied at Layton School of Art in Milwaukee, WI and received scholarships from the Center for Music, Drama and Art in Lake Placid, NY and the Olivetti Foundation in Italy. She earned a BFA in printmaking at the University of Iowa and a MA in Whole Systems Design from Antioch University in Seattle, WA. Under King County and Seattle Arts Commission grants, she was an artist-in-residence and consultant in cultural education, curriculum design, and community-based projects. She earned a PhD in visual culture from Charles University in Prague and collaborated on the development and research of gallery-based programs. Her publications investigate the influence of mass media inscriptions on identity and schema-development of school-aged children and adults; and advocate for the role of the creativity in knowledge-development, cultural policy and civic engagement. She loves to paint, draw, write and take photographs.

Iva Vodrážková is an artist and teacher of fine art. She studied Art and the Czech language at the Pedagogical Faculty of University Palackeho in Olomouc (Czechoslovakia) and currently lives and works in Prague. She grew up in an artistic household in Olomouc, the granddaughter of Julius Pelikan, a famous sculptor, and a Jewish grandmother, Bozena Sternova Pelikanova, who was killed at the Auschwitz concentration camp along with sixteen relatives. This tragedy inspired Iva to study Jewish culture and history and to look for her Jewish roots. These subjects are reflected in her artistic creations. After the fall of the Communist regime, she visited the US several times, where she was influenced by the culture of Native peoples. The themes of nature cycles, vegetation and growth are dominant in her work. Since 1990, she has been teaching visual art at an Arts School for all ages, teaching drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics and mixed media. She has participated in numerous arts festivals with her students, presenting arts workshops and performance experiences. She has exhibited her works in the United States, Russia, Israel, Slovakia, Romania, Ukraine and the Czech Republic.

Daniel Yahel lives and works in Israel. In recent years, his work has been concerned with issues of pedagogy and performance, explored mostly with children through live art in front of an audience. He confronts boundaries through interdisciplinary practice and education as art. He creates performances from simple reenactments of classical performative actions and presents lectures, demonstrations and open classes on pedagogy, sports, arts and also politics and war. He sees his daily life as a history

teacher as a performance event in which the relation with students is a dialogue, like the artist/audience encounter. He writes blogs and has presented his works in museums and galleries in Israel as well as TEDX, radio stations, performance festivals and internet magazines.

Robert Zahra is an artist and teacher as well as a part-time lecturer at the University of Malta. He studied Art Education up to Masters level at the University of Malta and painting at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera, Milan. He views the fields of art and education as interconnected, on-going experimental processes. His personal artistic projects evolve around themes like the urban environment and the human body. He works mainly within the realms of painting and drawing, and the connections between the two. Throughout his creative career, Zahra also presented projects in other media including sculpture, environmental interventions and photography. Zahra presented his work in a number of solo and collective exhibitions held in Malta and in Italy. In 2007 and 2011 he participated in Bodies, and his work was also on show in Stemperando Biennale 5a Edizione (Torino-Cosenza-Roma). *Mkejjen* (2009) and *Liquid Hybrid* (2012) were two solo exhibitions. In other events, such as *Dixx* (2013), he collaborated with other artists with different artistic backgrounds.

Afaf Zurayk was born in Beirut, Lebanon and is an artist as well as an art educator. She graduated from the American University of Beirut with a BA degree in Fine Arts in 1970 and pursued graduate studies at Harvard University, obtaining an MA degree in Fine Arts in 1972. Zurayk taught studio art and art history at Beirut University College (now Lebanese American University) in Lebanon, and drawing and painting in Continuing Education at the Corcoran College of Art and Design and Georgetown University, both in Washington, DC. She currently teaches painting at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon. She has published three books in addition to her many solo exhibitions in Beirut and Washington, DC. Inspired and guided by both music and poetry, Zurayk in her artwork probes emotional experiences through turbulence to acceptance.