

CENTER FOR VISUAL ART

Theory Loves Practice features the work of an MSU Denver sponsored art education research group. 18 art educators will contribute artwork based on individual research questions, documentation and reflection in response to pedagogical shifts, 21st century artists and thinkers. The exhibition demonstrates elements of the process and evidence relating to work in education and the arts.

July 5 - September 21, 2013

THEORY LOVES PRACTICE

MISSION

A Metropolitan State University sponsored research group, Theory Loves Practice brings art educators together monthly to cultivate contemporary arts practices in our classrooms. Each member of the research group is an educator and innovator, engaged in the process of exploring enduring ideas with all their students and contributing to academic theory in the field of arts education.

FOREWORD

We identify ourselves as a community based research group, committed to supporting professionals working in the field of education as they research ways to integrate contemporary art theory within their day-to-day classroom practice.

We are in our second year of research. Each member of Theory Loves Practice chooses an avenue of inquiry that correlates to instruction in and around the classroom. They live with their research, mine their artistic and educational practices, and use their discoveries to develop ideas and advance their professional practices for application in the classroom. Because there is no time clock to punch and no expectation for a refined finished product under a deadline, we get to spend time with our questions and work with others collaboratively. This allows for the thoughtful evolution of an idea and not just a response to an idea.

This exhibition and catalog marks an important milestone for each researcher and an opportunity to acknowledge and share with a larger audience their inquiry process as educators and artists. Our intention is to highlight the value of the creative process for instruction and learning, demonstrating the importance of inquiry in the practice of teaching, curriculum development, and approaches to instruction. Developed as an instructional resource for teachers, the catalog can be used as a tool to continue this conversation and engage others around the topic of creative inquiry in the classroom.

This catalog features essays by practitioners, educators, researchers, artists, and theorists committed to the advancement of art education at the K-12 level. Each contributor considers the intentionality of this through different perspectives and media. Arnold Aprill begins the conversation with the future of arts education, moving from a modernist to a post-modern conception of art. Cecily Cullen and Talya Dornbush consider the role of the gallery as a constructive space for building meaning. Rachael Delaney and Anne Thulson propose the potential for manifold idea building in the K-12 art classroom. Members from the Theory Loves practice group share their work and reflect on their practices as educators, artists, and researchers. Rounding out the catalog is our appendix filled with additional resources and some user-friendly tools that may help to facilitate a bit of the unexpected in your classroom.

We are extremely grateful to Center for Visual Art and the Department of Art for supporting the Theory Loves Practice research group from its infancy to the culmination of this publication and exhibition. This undertaking highlights Metropolitan State University of Denver's commitment to use community based art projects with diverse constituencies as a means to build life-long engagements with the intricacies of learning.

We enthusiastically thank our School of Letters Arts and Sciences. With the support of funding awarded through the School of Letters Arts and Sciences mini-grant, Theory Loves Practice was able to develop, create and produce this exhibition catalog with Studio M, a design studio housed in the Communication Design program at MSU Denver. Without this support our goal of creating a meaningful and engaging exhibition catalog would have never been realized.

Finally, but not least, we acknowledged the support and the sustained engagement of the Theory Loves Practice researchers. Without them, this project could of never taken shape. It is their dedication, commitment, passion and friendship that have allowed this group to thrive and grow. We are grateful for all of the contributions you have made. We look forward to continuing the dialogue in coming years and to seeing what comes next. Those interested in joining this adventure please visit: <https://groups.google.com/forum/?fromgroups#!forum/theory-loves-practice> for more information.

Principal Facilitators:

Rachael Delaney
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| | | |
|-------|-------------------------|---|
| 1 | CONTENTS | |
| 2-3 | APRIL ARNOLD | THE FUTURE IS ALREADY HERE |
| 4-5 | THERESA CLOWES | FORAGE FOR LACE |
| 6-7 | ERIN LEA-DAOUGHERTY | BETWEEN HOLDING ON AND LETTING GO |
| 8-9 | DALE ZALMASTRA | ASSESSMENT: FORMATIVE/SUMMATIVE |
| 10-11 | SARAH CHUNG | |
| 12-13 | THULSON/DELANEY ARTICLE | MANIFOLD IDEAS |
| 14-15 | ANNE THULSON | |
| 16-17 | KAT POTTER | THE DESK |
| 18-19 | SARA HIRIS | PASSION CHOICE SKILLS WHOLE BEING SOCIETY FREEDOM |
| 20-21 | ANITA RODRIGUEZ-HARMAN | |
| 22-23 | TALYA DONRBUSH | |
| 24-25 | SARABETH BERK | THE SHAPE SHIFTING OF IDEAS |
| 26-27 | SARAH SHAY | PLAY WITH PURPOSE |
| 28-29 | KATIE TAFT | |
| 30-31 | CULLEN/DORNBUSH ARTICLE | THE GALLERY AS A TOWN SQUARE |
| 32-33 | JODY CHAPEL | COLLECTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS |
| 34-35 | SARAH GRUNDERMANN | OPPOSING APATHY |
| 36-37 | AMY KAHN | |
| 38-39 | RACHEL DELANEY | REDACTED |
| 40-41 | KATIE LEWIS | |
| 42-43 | YAEL | |
| 44-45 | APPENDIX A | ART PRESS |
| 46 | APPENDIX B | CLOSING PROCEDURES |
| 47 | APPENDIX C | GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS |
| 48-49 | STUDIO M | |



Arts teachers must lead the charge for all teachers to move from instruction that “covers” curricular content to pedagogies that “uncover” essential questions and enduring understandings that make thought and experience palpable and visible. A modernist “Principles of Design” approach - line, shape, color, texture, etc. (that was a break-through concept in its day) is emphasized less. A post-modern approach is emphasized more, involving metaphoric and poetic representations of thinking and feeling processes (which are break-through concepts for the present and the future). And that is just what is being showcased in this exhibition.

Here are a few “Principles of Post-Modern Design” that are explored in this show:

ARTWORKS CAN USE ICONIC CULTURAL ARTIFACTS AS THEIR “CANVAS”:

Kathryn Potter explores our ideas and associations about education by using an old school student desk as her platform, filling this resonant image with wooden sculptures and carving the surface with graffiti, and Amy Kahn is forging a post-modern “Chatelaine” - the decorative chain that 18th and 19th century women used to hold the tools of their domain.

ARTWORKS ARE AN EXPRESSION OF LEARNER AUTONOMY:

Katie Taft: “The arts are a language all their own that the individual has complete control over.”

ARTWORKS ENACT CYCLES OF INNOVATION:

Talya Dornbush examines the classroom conditions that scaffold or suspend the dialogs necessary for generating innovative thought and practice in the arts.

ARTWORKS NAVIGATE THE “IN-BETWEEN”:

Sarah Shay explores the dissonances and assonances between highly structured models of knowing and highly subjective models of knowing.

ARTWORKS CAN USE LANGUAGE AS AN ART MATERIAL:

Sara Webb Hiris works with her Philosophy of Art and Education students to create artworks based on their evolving command of pedagogical language.

ARTWORKS CAN QUESTION PURPOSE, AUTHENTICITY, AND AUDIENCE:

Anita RoHa represents her own questions and the yin/yang of her contradictory thoughts about collecting data from pre-schoolers.

ARTWORKS CAN BE GUIDING TOOLS FOR POINTS OF VIEW:

Dale Zalmstra is creating sculptures with viewing tubes that rotate to define a range of options for perception.

DOCUMENTATION AS ART:

Katie Lewis documents the processes of accumulation and deterioration.

ARTWORKS CAN QUESTION FALSE DICHOTOMIES:

Sarah Chung questions the right-brain/left-brain split, Yael Kanarek examines the heart/mind opposition, and Sarah Grundemann interrogates issues of gender equity.

ARTWORKS CAN DOCUMENT THE “SHAPE” OF THINKING:

Sarabeth Berk works to represent thinking itself as “a series of expansions and contractions that contain both visible and invisible flaws or incompletions.”

ARTWORKS CAN INTEGRATE DIVERSE TECHNOLOGIES TO INVESTIGATE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

Jody Chapel integrates a variety of digital and non-digital technologies to explore the nature of time and memory.

ARTWORKS TREAT SURPRISING JUXTAPOSITIONS AS A FORM OF RESEARCH:

Theresa Clowes uses unlikely materials to form traditional lace patterns as a way of investigating how we organize our work in a world in which there is access to more information than we can process.

ARTWORKS CAN SPEAK TO LARGER CONTEXTS THAN THE ARTS WORLD:

In Anne Thulson’s “The Mystery and Melancholy of Data”, she labeled a jar with Dante’s Circles of Paradise, Purgatory, and Hell, and had subjects from where she lives and works add beans to the jar based on their self-assessment of their competence in their day’s work. The beans are being cooked into a soup that will be fed back to the respondents at the exhibition opening. A fresh take on bean counting and on feeding back data to its sources (literally).

As the science fiction writer William Gibson has commented, “The future is already here — it’s just not very evenly distributed.” This exhibition, here and now, is a delivery system for bringing more of the future into the present.

**THE FUTURE IS ALREADY HERE
ARNOLD APRILL**

Founder and Lead Consultant
Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE)
www.capeconsults.org/arnies-blog



THERESA CLOWES



Forage For Lace

4

Forage for Lace is a piece rooted in research and inquiry where academia and art intertwine. I think about my art in the form of architectural textiles that incorporate juxtapositions: ephemeral fabric and discarded objects, translucency and opaqueness, the refined and unrefined. Patterns created by light and shadow come alive within these opposites. As Louis Kahn once said "The nature of space reflects what it wants to be." For a moment, a viewer slows down, observes, and

contemplates the calming rhythm found in the breadth and depth of my work.

A 20 year investigation into lace culminates in a growing series of felted drawings that are everything lace is not. While beautiful in their own way, they are raw, crude and rough - simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar. According to the Oxford Dictionary, research is the "systematic investigation into and study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and

reach new conclusions." Based on historical lace patterns, this work reaches new conclusions while creating more essential questions. As Bruce Mau once said, "Now that we can do anything - what will we do?" Will inspiration come from the breadth of an experience or the depth of its investigation? I have been in Art Education for over 20 years, including my recent challenge preparing Teacher Candidates to face the 21st century educational system. In our Art Education

“Will inspiration come from the breadth of an experience or the depth of its investigation?”



5

Programs, young students are crammed with information in hopes that they will survive that first day of school with 30+ eager rowdy first graders. At this point I question which is more important - the breadth of their knowledge or depth of their preparatory experiences? We can ask them to thoroughly read textbooks and sit through endless lectures; however, this academic knowledge should be accompanied equally by hands-on experiences. Tony Wagner believes that because knowledge is so accessible, "what you know matters far less than what you can do with what you know." What will the next generation of art teachers do with what they know?



ERIN LEA-DOUGHERTY



**Between Holding on
and Letting Go**

“This process of cataloguing objects confronts my desire for and struggles with self-preservation.”

Between Holding on and Letting Go is an investigation of power and preservation. Objects confiscated and gifts of sentimental value from 1st-4th grade students are suspended in jars of honey as a way to simultaneously preserve and purge emotional attachments to these objects. Precariously stacked, the jars parallel the fragility and impermanence of memory

while at the same time mimicking the volatile nature of opposing forces. This process of cataloguing objects confronts my desire for and struggles with self-preservation. The jars and objects represent the conflicts inherent in the struggle between holding on to emotions, memories and learning to let them go...



“I am immersed in teaching,
in the creative construction
of meaning...”

DALE ZALMSTRA

Assessment: Formative/Summative

I am immersed in teaching, in the creative construction of meaning; 5 year old meaning, 9 year old meaning, 11 year old meaning; artmaking meaning. It is the interplay of thinking and making, posing questions and trying to facilitate next steps.

There is this big thing, though, growing and becoming ever weightier. Assessment/Summative is supposed to be a pause, that famous snapshot of learning: narrow, valid, and reliable. Summative on its own is such a small part. But, when all efforts are focused on the one small part; It shifts.

All the bigness that comes before
Is forced to become small.

The messy, ongoing, always happening Assessment/Formative, is reduced. The lenses are turned and the work is small and far away. Without the before, the snapshot is negated as well. It becomes meaningless.

It should be the student who takes the indifferent snapshot, who can take the risks, try again, and seek solutions, rather than the assessor who takes a pretty picture and has no “before.” The student looks back at us, the educators, through the assessment lens. What is student perception?

Seeking balance, shift.

8

9



“As an art educator, I am a bridge maker between worlds.”

10



As an art educator, I am a bridge maker between worlds. I am a conduit between the esoteric world of the human psyche and the industrialized institution of education. The harmonization of both realms is an extraordinary challenge, but critical for the facilitation of creative and connected minds of our future generations.

Driving to school one morning, I heard a radio interview with Clemantine Wamariya, a Yale Graduate and Rwandan genocide survivor. She was six when she escaped Hutu killers attacking her village. She commented that in the darkest hours, when she was starving and alone, it was

her rich childhood memories that provided her the strength and will for survival. She would remember playing in a giant mango tree with the children from her village. Playing in the mango tree, they created their own worlds, imagining they were in traveling on train or flying a plane. Since then, I have strived to provide opportunities for my students to have experiences making art that could generate such essential emotional strength and creative autonomy. Nevertheless, my intention and practice are often at odds as my students and I are operating within a space that is part of the industrialized institution of education with conflicting priorities. For 3 years I have taught Preschool-8th grade as the only art teacher

SARAH CHUNG



11

for over 400 students. In that time I have persisted with rigid limitations of time, large class sizes and structural disconnect from the academic goals and priorities of the school system.

This work is a representation of my thoughts and embodied experiences from teaching for 3 years. One side of the body represents the right-brained, holistic, and connected approach to education and human experience. The other side represents the left-brained, rational and compartmentalized approach to education and human experience. By producing this work, I attempt to resolve and dispel the idea that both sides of my character need to exist in a state of duality.



“The child of three who discovers what can be done with blocks, or of six who finds out what he can make by putting 5 cents and 5 cents together, is really a discoverer even though everybody else in the world knows it” (Dewey, 1916, p. 159).

MANIFOLD IDEAS

12

The discipline of art engages contradiction, uncertainty, complexity, and unpredictability to advance understanding and participation with ideas. Bringing this type of bedlam into the K-12 environment requires the art teacher to move nimbly and fluidly among manifold ideas. How does one survive in this space? How does one instruct in this space? How does one assess in this space? How does one develop tools in this space that foster ambiguity and generate the impossible through the practice and use of innovative thinking?

In the *Elements of Style*, E.B. White advises writers to “be obscure clearly.” As teachers, we hope to be obscure clearly in our curriculum development. We are obscure when we lead our students into the unsure territory of accidents and unforeseen tangents. We are clear in our instructional expectations, scaffolding, and assessments, which lead students into this land of uncertainty. We take great pains to get them there because we know, in this location they become deeply intimate with ideas, fostering the ability to think with an idea and not just about an idea.

Teachers are often caught in a dichotomy. On one side, it is tempting to offer students a neatly bundled solution that leads to a

quickly digestible understanding of an idea. Here, content is thin and materials and technique are dictated because any ambiguity has already been resolved by the teacher. Instruction becomes a series of tasks to complete where ideas are deposited, but not tinkered with. John Dewey lamented this kind of instruction when he wrote (1916), “Pupils who have stored their minds with all kinds of materials which they have never put to intellectual uses are sure to be hampered when they try to think”(p. 158). At this end, the teacher’s invasive clarity strangles the enchantment and learning in art. Collaboration does not exist. The teacher is the patron and the student, a passive worker.

On the other side, teachers offer students art materials and techniques with little to no conceptual layers for fear of invading or influencing their thinking too much. At this extreme, the student is an autonomous agent and the teacher, an observer who responds and aids, but hides their own ideas. Ironically the teacher’s obscurity can create an idea vacuum, an empty place where students play with air, but not ideas.

What is missing in both of these instructional spaces is the authentic collaboration of teacher and students as idea makers. We call on teachers to not just be the arranger of art supplies and creative techniques, but the arranger of multiple, divergent ideas. This requires setting out these ideas with the same intention that one sets out a box of clay or instructions on printmaking. Like media and technique, ideas need to be painstakingly prepared and lavishly presented.

Children have wonderful ideas and teachers don’t contaminate those ideas when they offer their own. Knowing this allows teachers to engage with their students as intellectual comrades, each bringing something to the table. Teachers can offer new contexts for ideas providing rich resources that children can excavate. This includes the spellbinding world of contemporary art. Teachers can challenge and prompt children to respond to those ideas in ways that might have never occurred to the child. This intentional consideration of the ideas of children encourages contribution and collaboration as an integral aspect of instruction. Multiple voices are then able to share the space of inquiry as the teacher and students together approach the unpredictable.

“Intelligence cannot develop without matter to think about. Making new connections depends on knowing enough about something in the first place to provide a basis for thinking of other things to do- of other questions to ask-that demand more complex connections in order to make sense” (Duckworth, 1987, p. 14).

We propose that through our lesson planning, we don’t offer a blank canvas and we don’t offer a formula. Instead, we offer children “matter to think about,” and a context to do it in. How do we sequence matter to think about? We don’t wait to introduce meaning making until the ideas are fully understood or the studio skills are mastered. We foster knowledge and skill acquisition simultaneously (Wiggins & Mc Tighe, 2011). Acquisition of information does not need to come before thinking and teaching, for thinking means building great ideas that “demand not just our rapture, but something more human: every bit of our fuller, truer, better selves”(Haque, 2013).

When lessons contain multifarious layers of robust content, children have many places to choose and build unique and unexpected connections. These are lessons that are also planned to include intentional gaps providing the

time and space for children to run through, build forts in, and contemplate concepts explored. Ideas can begin to inform content when participation in the building of ideas is inclusive, together“(Students and teachers) become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow...Here no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. People teach each other, mediated by the world” (Freire, 1970, p. 61). A semester of these kinds of lessons is a location where teachers offer layered, big ideas, then research these with their students, and learn together through the making.

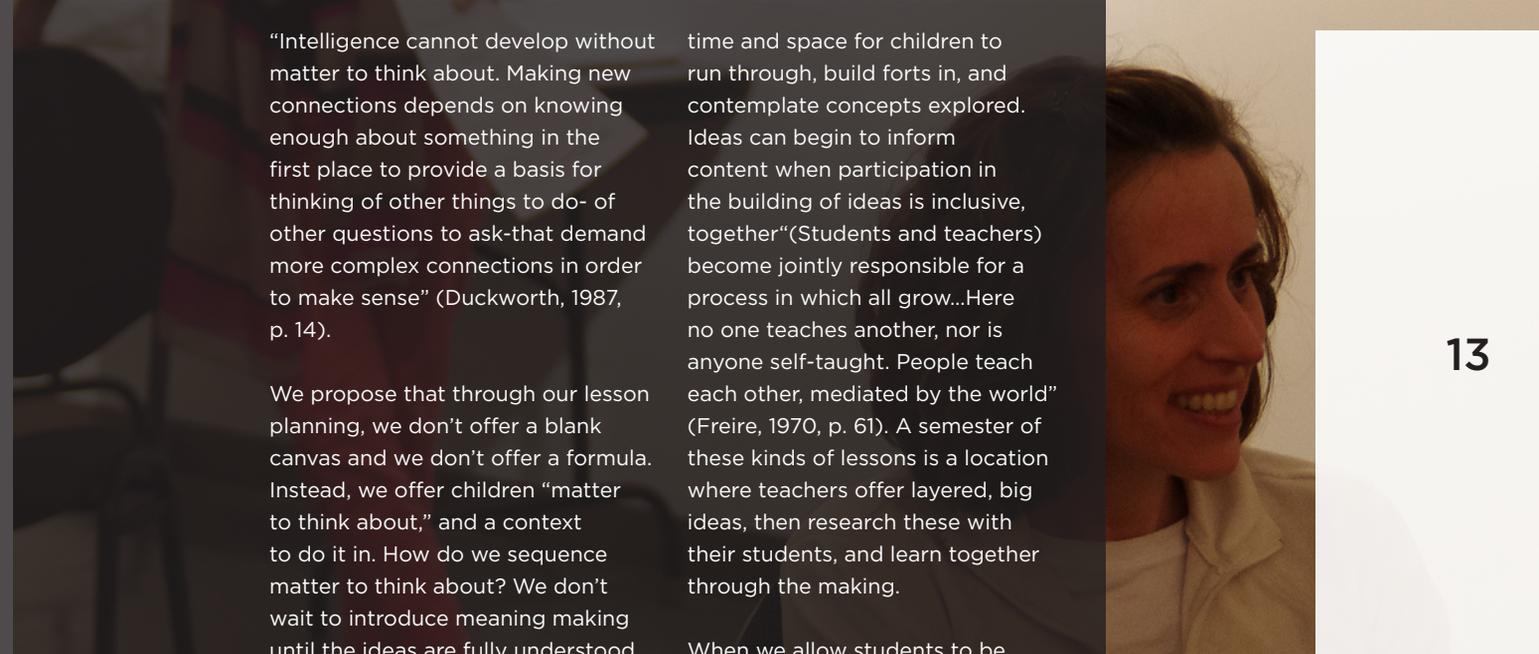
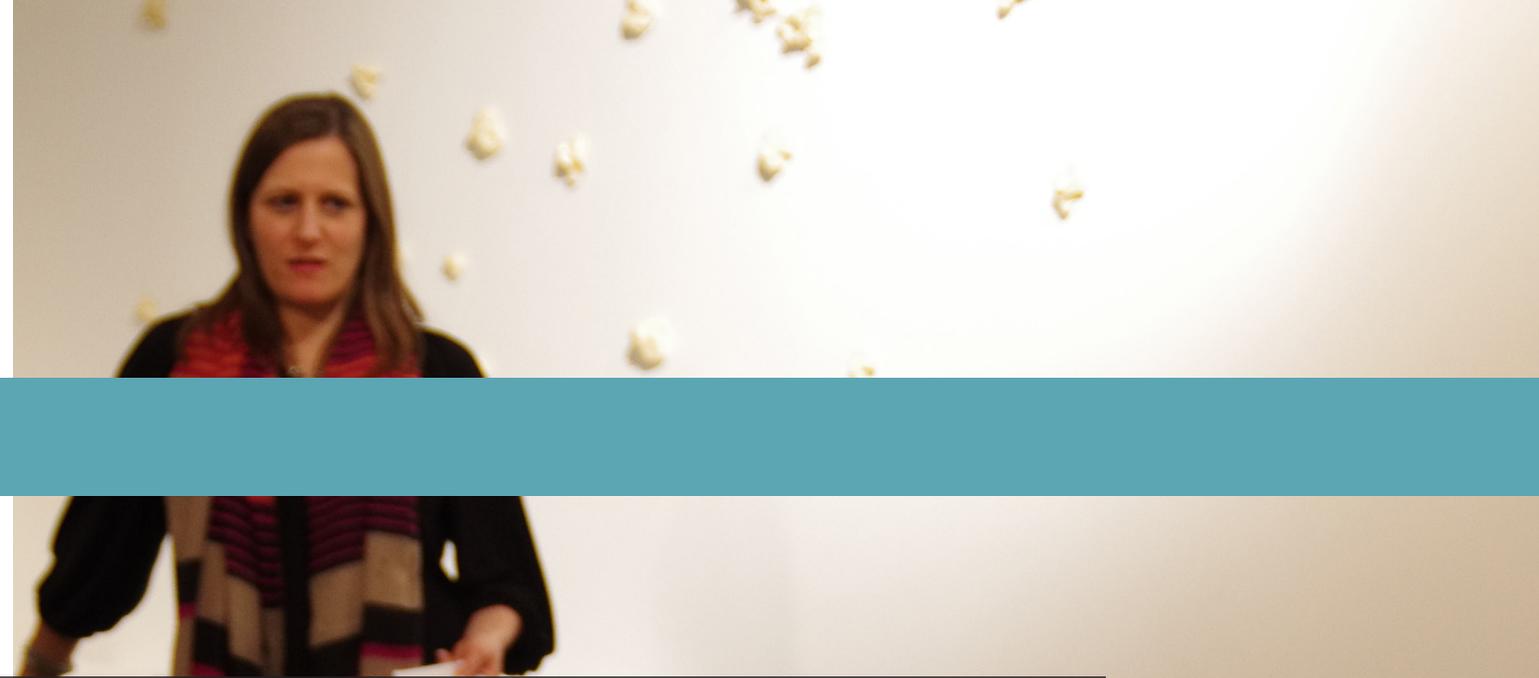
When we allow students to be entrepreneurs of their own ideas, we can solicit participation, collaborative engagement, careful listening, and thoughtful conversation as the foundation of our curriculum. This approach keeps us mindful of the spirit of discovery and reminds us that discovery can only happen when we make space for it by cherishing the newness of it even when it is not so new.

The more we help children to have their wonderful ideas and to feel good about themselves for having them, the more likely it is that they will some day happen upon wonderful ideas that no one else has happened upon before” (Duckworth, 1987, p. 14).

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13



“My hope was to get us all out of Dante’s Inferno.”

ANNE THULSON

The Mystery and Melancholy of Assessment

Twenty years ago I stared at a wall full of drawings. It was my job to grade them. Since then, the monster of assessment has harrowed and haunted me.

I wonder:

Why do we desire criteria?

Do criteria rearrange themselves while we are sleeping?

Can criteria be averaged into one story?

Does there have to be one story? Can my left hand know what my right hand is doing?

And, what would John Dewey Do?

My artwork intends to poetically enchant the assessment conversation.

From spring break until the end of finals week, students and staff at The Metropolitan State University of Denver have assessed themselves by adding beans to my jar. My hope was to get us all out of Dante’s inferno and possibly rise to the utmost circle of paradise.

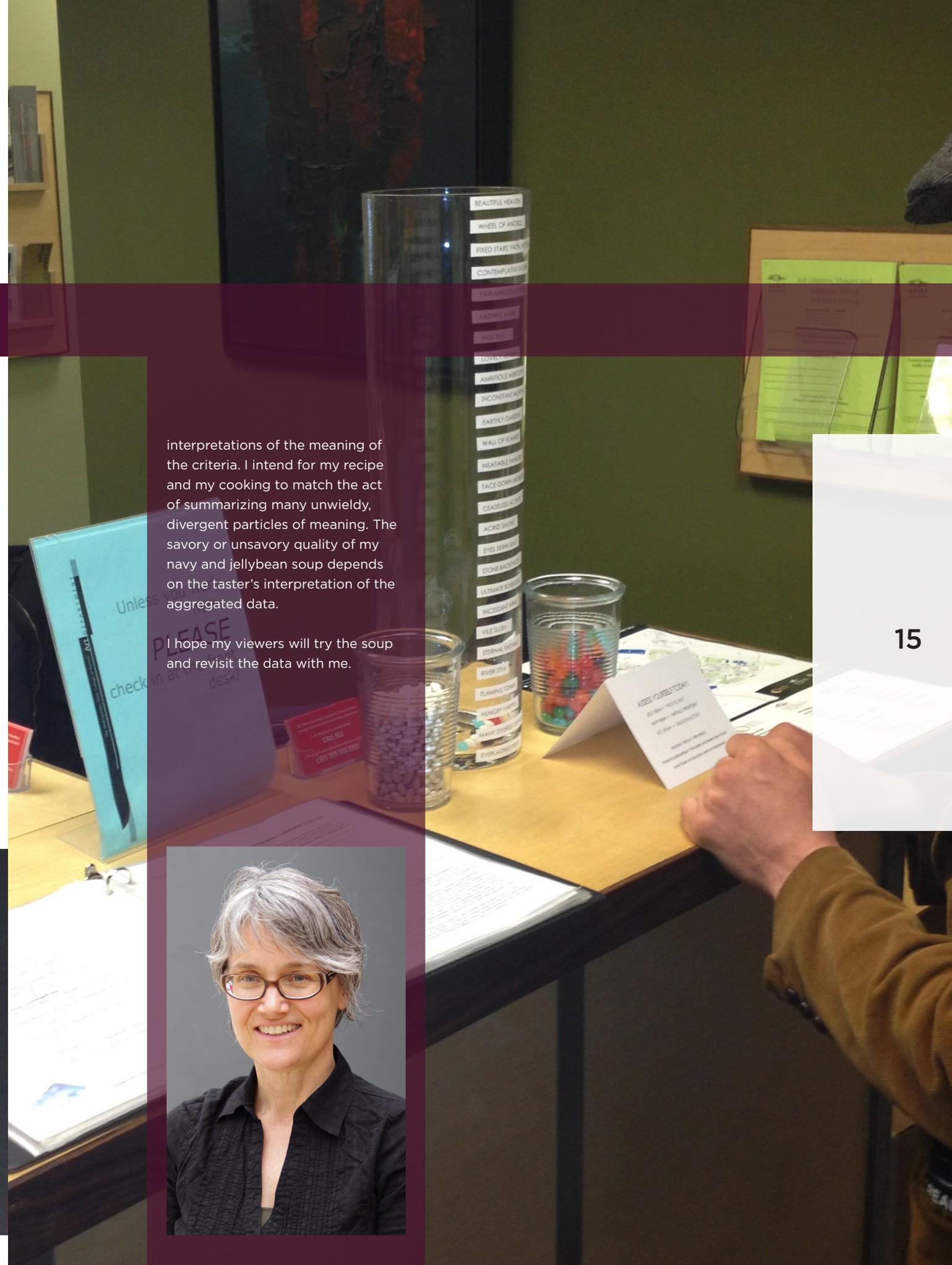
I’ve made soup from this spring’s data. The data reflects two things: participants’ interpretations of their own performance and their

interpretations of the meaning of the criteria. I intend for my recipe and my cooking to match the act of summarizing many unwieldy, divergent particles of meaning. The savory or unsavory quality of my navy and jellybean soup depends on the taster’s interpretation of the aggregated data.

I hope my viewers will try the soup and revisit the data with me.

14

15





KATHRYN POTTER

16

The Desk As my teaching evolves, I find that my experiences as an artist influence how and what I teach. Celebrations with students are more and more focused around breakthroughs in process. Teaching is akin to making, a process of inquiry. To begin making, we ask ourselves questions and endeavor until we find a resolution.

This work reflects the dualism of making and teaching, where the mind and the body separate, connect, and run furious. Both play their role in education.

The desktop begins as a stream of consciousness. Words are eventually engrained from repetition, like pedagogical considerations made real by the practice of teaching. These words take the form of school desk graffiti, replacing the thoughts of students with the lingering questions of educators.

The forms in the hold of the desk go beyond theory and represent the variables within each child. Each piece is carved carefully with respect to the uniqueness of the material. The physical process

of carving is no less fatiguing or rewarding than the hurdles of a classroom. The hold itself held particular importance for me as a child, the single space in a classroom that was my own. In this work the hold contains the momentousness that occurs in the classroom when teaching and making inform one another and true process happens.

“Teaching is akin to making, a process of inquiry.”



17



“The words and phrases are, at this point in the journey, unexposed to the elements; they are precious and packaged, shiny and new with limitless potential.”

SARAH WEBB HIRIS

Passion Choice Skills Whole Being Society Freedom

Materials: canvas, thread, plastic bags, paper
Dimensions: 24.5" x 37.5"

I have witnessed and experienced art and education as a continual process of observation, reflection, investigation and experimentation. Passion Choice Skills Whole Being Society Freedom is a visible reflection of what I have observed, read and heard as a teacher and colleague.

Working mostly with freshmen and sophomores in my Philosophy of Art + Education class, I support art educators at the beginning of their professional journeys. In this course, students craft teaching philosophies for the first time and attempt to succinctly unite theory with practice. I have noticed that students write many admirable

words, ideas and aspirations in their philosophies. The words and phrases are, at this point in the journey, unexposed to the elements; they are precious and packaged, shiny and new with limitless potential.

During our Theory Loves Practice meetings, I hear many of these same words, now exposed to the elements. Red thread leaves each perfect, unmarred package and enters the chaos, challenges, surprises and wonders of practice.

The words, now experienced, implemented and tried, have left their packages, which are no longer perfect, untouched and separate. Through sharing and

discussion among colleagues, the many individual experiences and reflections gather, strengthen and intertwine, continually creating something new and unknown.

While reading through students' philosophies, I chose these 60 words and phrases because students emphasized them during class discussions, activities and assignments.





ANITA RODRIGUEZ-HARMAN



“I think that our children should be taught to foster responsibility for self and ideas, to learn, to question, to examine problems and ideas from a variety of perspectives.”

I believe art is about creating a connection to self, to community and to the world. It is a place to play with the “what ifs” that we think about. Art making and viewing is a release of energy and a way of slowing down your thinking so that you can communicate ideas and wonderings.

I want to be the space where students come to play with their curiosity, ideas, materials and community; a place where they can make connections to themselves and be a connector for others. I think that our children should be taught to foster responsibility for self and ideas, to learn, to question, to examine problems and ideas from a

variety of perspectives. They should also be in a space that will foster exploration, failure and success and to express these revelations and ideas visually. I believe that I have to create this dynamic and playful environment where students can flourish.

My artwork is about how I am processing and implementing Data on my kindergarten students. The papier mache cage in the middle of the installation is created out of data that I scribed about one of my students from observations, conversations, student critiques and wonders. Inside the cage is the data book that was collected over the school year from the student and it

includes assessments, sketchbooks, photos of artwork and final products. The door on the cage is open for information to continue being gathered. Around the cage on the floor are my thoughts around two big ideas: Who is data for and what does authentic data look like. These are my thoughts about data, both positive and negative, and how I have arrived at my current point of understanding of data collection for kindergartners. Hanging from above is a representation of how many students I will gather data on, which shares with the viewer the overwhelming job that I have before me when thinking about and creating my data collection.



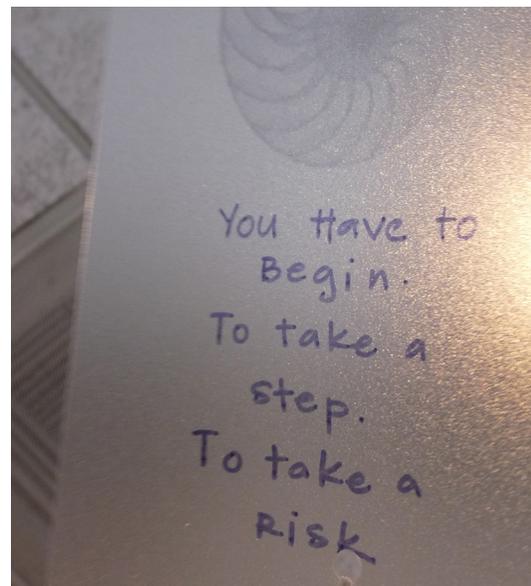
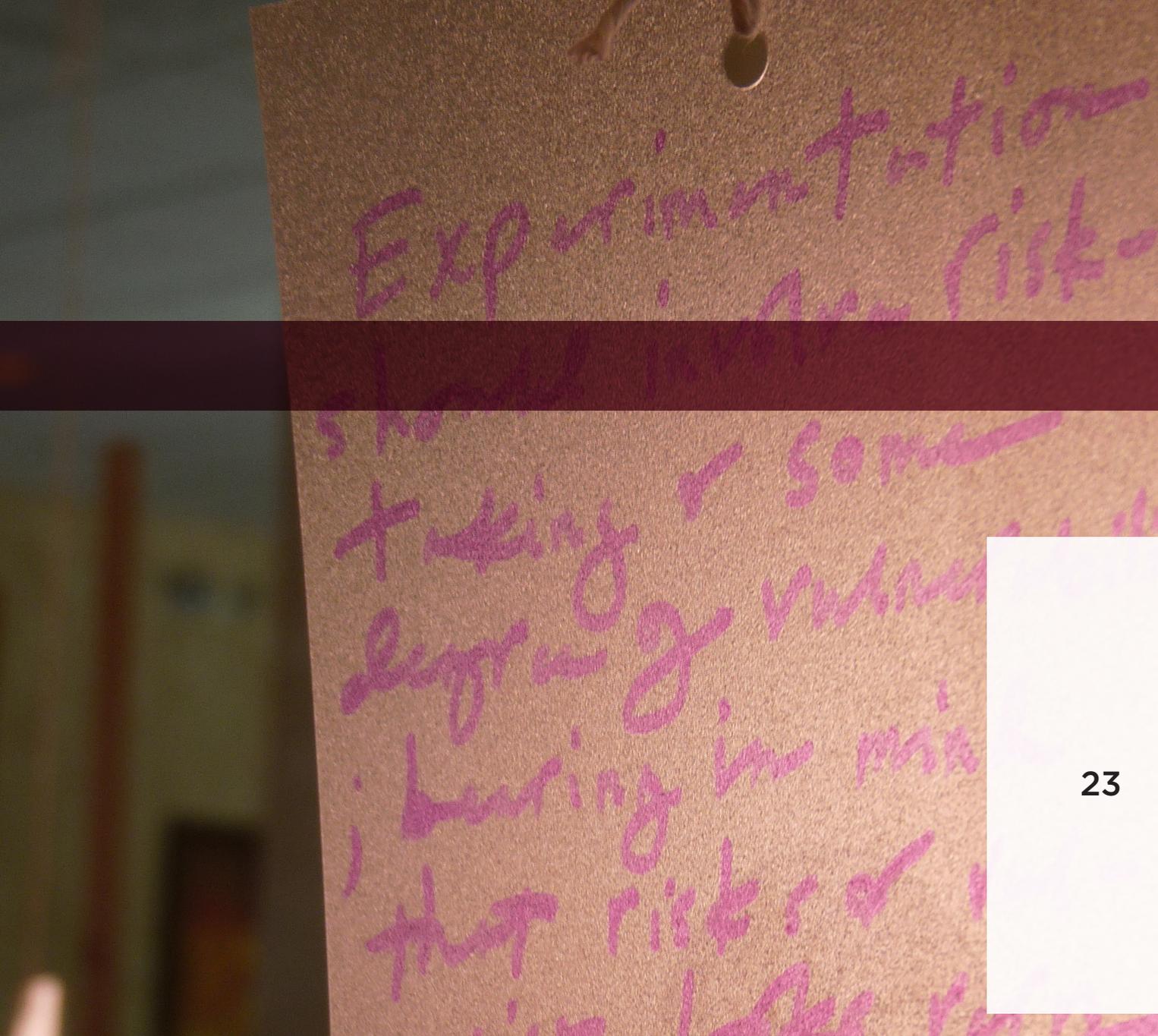


TALYA DORNBUSH

“Learning follows a helical pathway not unlike the growth of a nautilus shell.”

22

23



The path of inquiry itself fascinates me.

Not simply the artist's process but the route of researchers, scientists, inventors, designers, teachers, children, adult learners, etc. Wondering seems to preclude learning. Research and experimentation consistently play a role in the process. Many people have offered maps to demonstrate thinking strategies. I am particularly interested in the ways in which these maps can be applied or can grow out of an art education environment.

Not unlike the growth of a nautilus shell: each rotation a return to wonder, each new dimension a new understanding. Learning increasingly returns to wonder scaffolded by resources and references from previous experiences. The educator as facilitator with octopus arms supports:

The Discovery of an Intriguing Question

Abstract Conceptualization

Resource Acquisition for Research and Interpretation

Ideation towards Developing a Strategy

Active Experimentation

Observation and Documentation

Exhibition and Peer Review
Reflection and the Discovery of an Intriguing Question





SARAH BETH BERK

The Shape Shifting of Ideas

2013

White stoneware

6' x 10' x 4"



“Thinking is a process of expansions and contractions that consists of visible and invisible flaws, gaps, and beauty.”

24

In this installation, each ceramic object represents a moment in the evolution of a student’s thought process, and reflects my vision of what a snapshot of my class would look like if I could pinpoint the various stages of their ideation. After working with college freshmen in a creativity and entrepreneurship course to expand their thinking and to challenge their notions, I have come to consider ideas as something raw, not always pretty, and at times both familiar and uncomfortable. For me, thinking is a process of expansions and contractions that consists of visible and invisible flaws, gaps, and beauty.

The lower left corner represents the inception of inspiration when student ideas appear nascent, largely in formation. Moving towards the right, student ideas start to shrink and expand, collapse and atrophy, twist and bend, and conform and integrate. There are subtle shifts, delicate curvatures, and startling projections. Some ideas cluster together in the safety of similarity. Near the upper right, the ideas gather complexity, take wild turns, break apart, or show flaws. Although dynamic in appearance, these ideas may be wild and untamed. No matter, each idea has the potential to transform into something beautiful and insightful. Eventually, student ideas

will develop to a point where they launch from the student’s mind and move into the larger world.

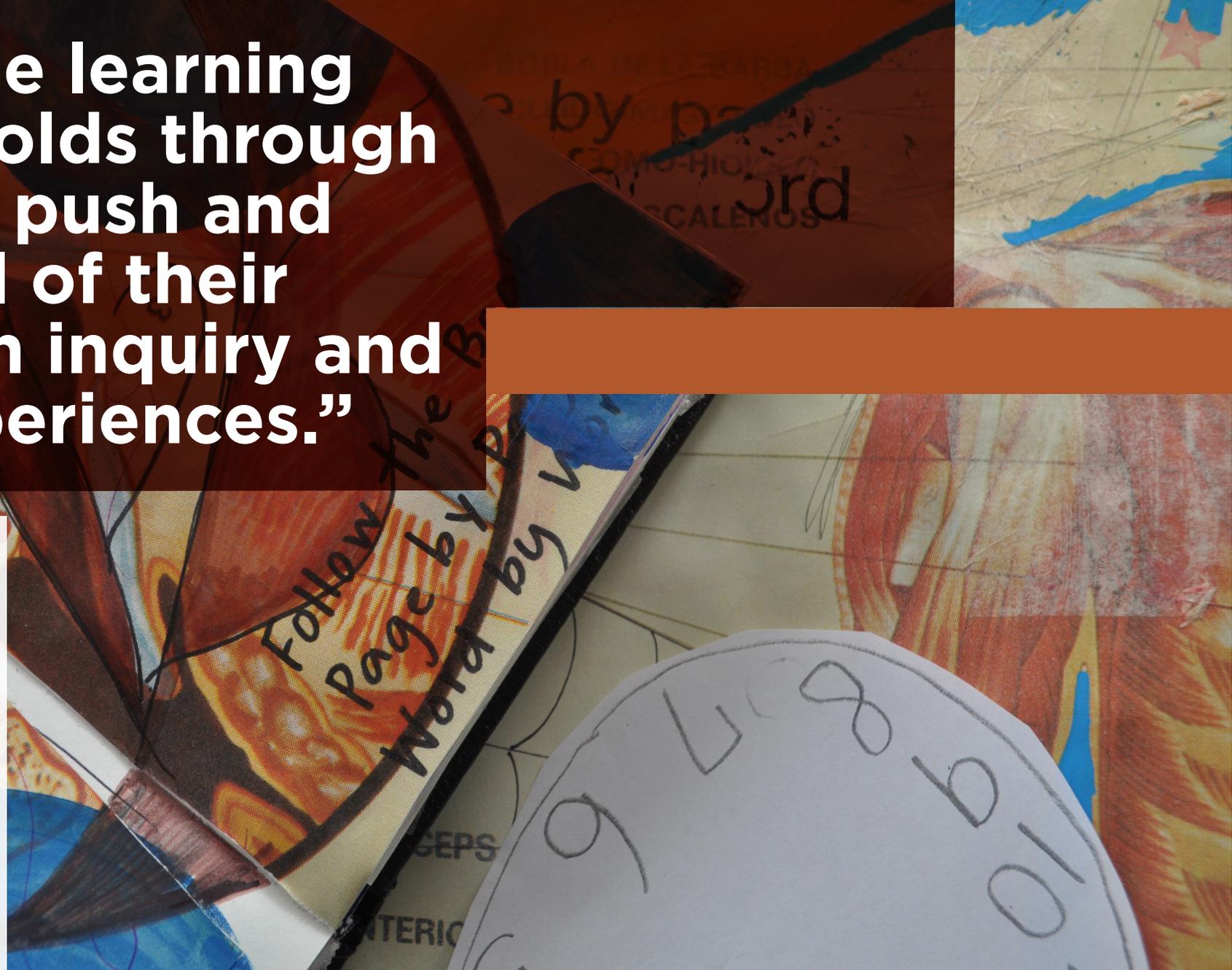
When I teach, I think it is important to remember that, yes, some ideas are precious and need to be treated with care, but for learning to happen, student ideas should be critiqued on their strengths and weaknesses. We need to teach students how to generate a plethora of ideas as well as not to become attached to just one idea. In my experience, it is essential to share and discuss ideas because it inspires students to develop truly wonderful ideas.

25



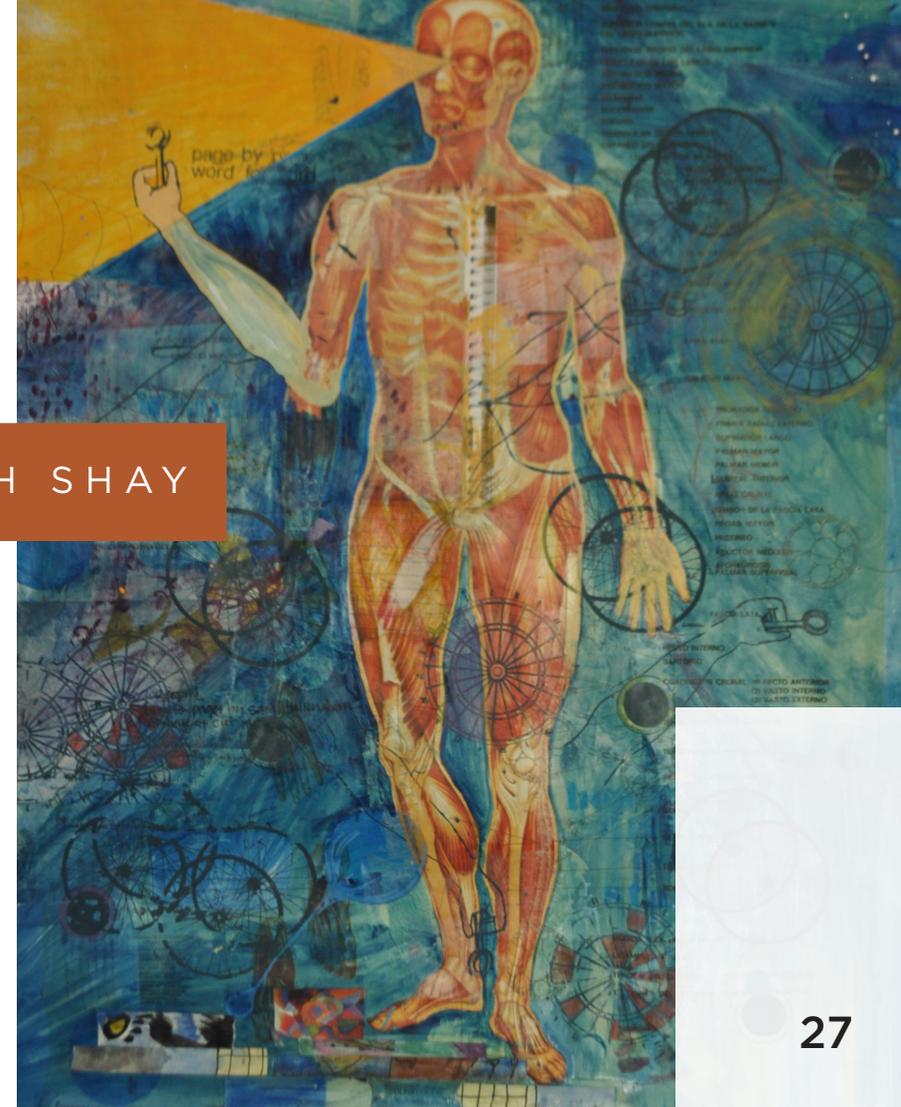
“The learning unfolds through the push and pull of their own inquiry and experiences.”

26



SARAH SHAY

27



Play with Purpose
Mixed Media

Artists and educators carefully craft contexts that allow the new or unseen to be discovered. I am continually interested in how this context is created, and how the spaces that exist in-between create the tension for us to look more closely, listen more intently, and to respond more fully through the way in which multiple texts overlap, connect and disconnect.

My data collection as an artist and an educator follows this path of navigating the in-between. I'm constantly moving

between the carefully structured daily lessons, units, computer-generated, summative assessments of our academic culture and the artistic observations captured in handwritten thoughts, quick sketches, and anecdotes of my students, as the learning unfolds through the push and pull of their own inquiry and experiences.

Charts and books are quintessential symbols of education, and more significantly the way we structure dominant ideologies of how knowledge

is acquired. We play these structures constantly in the classroom, attempting to select the best context to frame students' learning. The play of these structures contrasts with the subjective experience: the student voices that tell wholly different experiences of how we develop what we know to be true, the choices we make to share that knowing with others, and the non-linear way in which we continually develop the richness of our own understandings.



KATIE TAFT

28

“We all want to jump up and down and roll on the floor and yell sometimes, all of us.”



29

It's hard to be the new kid...

The mass of information that comes at you in your first year of teaching is overwhelming. There are all the new people you meet, the new words you need to learn and the new procedures you are required to follow. There is paperwork, and there are meetings. As a new teacher you are expected to learn a lot of things, some of which are relevant to your classroom, and required to complete tasks whether you believe that they are beneficial or not. And it all comes at you fast.

As I begin my teaching career in the public school system though, my biggest struggle has been teaching kindergartners. Kindergartners are new like me and when we are all together in my room, it is a room full of new kids. None of us has ever done this before. We have all been free agents up until this point. We have chosen our own actions without thinking of what 600 other people might care about it. It's hard to fit in, and sometimes you don't even want to.

As I have attempted to assimilate all of the information that comes at me everyday, I have come to identify with my youngest students. We both have new things flying at us from every direction. We are all blindsided by what is expected of us. We are dropped into this new world and expected to know what is going on. We all want to jump up and down and roll on the floor and yell sometimes, all of us.



The Gallery as Town Square: Immersive Explorations Reconciling the Distance between Young and Contemporary Artists

30

Defining art can be futile and limiting work, however history reveals a definition of the artist as one who breaks the mold, betrays expectations, changes popular thinking and forces the arm of artists, philosophers, scientists, politicians, etc. following in his or her wake. What then is the role of art education but to support artistic exploration?

Contemporary thought, and by extension contemporary art, wrestles with the reduction of silos in human life. The lines between spaces where, in the past, categories ruled have dissolved into permeable membranes blending spaces whose new names are: Multidisciplinary; Multinational; Multiracial; Multicultural; Multimedia; etc. In some cases that which was private has become public and that which was public has become private. The individuals shaping our world today are daring to stretch across seemingly ageless divides to build bridges. Artists are no exception.

In art education we have become extraordinarily proficient at supporting a young artist's mechanical prowess with the physical tools of the trade. Young artists learn the vocabulary of the visual arts through cataloging the basic principals of art and elements of design. We have allowed these

tools to assume the position of building blocks of our medium. We have ensured perfect syntax and bright vocabulary. Perfect syntax and bright vocabulary, however, are useless if the artist has nothing to say. Young artists must participate in the contemporary global conversation of our age. The lingering question is how does the art educator participate in this dialog?

Simply answered, every choice an educator makes influences the students' participation. Each piece of reference material, the layout of the classroom, balance of independent to collaborative work; every tool, guest speaker and material the students are exposed to influences art making and thinking. As a result, space and time in arts learning must be dedicated to scaffolding complex thinking. Teachers must design authentically challenging problems that encourage students' natural curiosities and deepen their commitment to exploring. Through wondering, investigating, researching, planning and tinkering students begin to consider the flexible nature of their environments and the potential of their own impact in the course of their lives. Students can learn to document their experiences through disciplined sketchbook work. They

discover, record, evaluate and learn to leverage their new knowledge. Reference materials allow them to place their creations in a temporal and spatial context. They develop an historical and cultural understanding of their role in the arts and influence on contemporary thought.

The contemporary art gallery or museum setting can significantly augment classroom learning, especially when visits are intentionally designed to promote critical thinking. Through direct experiences with contemporary art and artists students strengthen their power of observation and gain a tangible understanding of research. Students should be given the space and time to investigate the artwork independently as well as collaboratively. The composition of an exhibition creates focal points, beacons to draw the viewer through the space. The design highlights relationships between different works of art, visually and conceptually, and provides balance, but with a staccato that creates elements of surprise. The rhythm of the layout should have interruptions to awaken the viewer from participating passively. The journey makes space for a personal exchange with working artists, an elemental ingredient in art education.

Ultimately the artwork takes its rightful place in the global dialog and encourages student participation in contemporary artmaking. The gallery facilitates curiosity and engagement in the role of "town square." An immersive space for observation, questioning, exploring resources, creating, reflecting and exhibiting. Young artists develop conversations with contemporary artists through hands-on workshops. Converting potential energy into aesthetic experiences in a gallery studio and developing relationships with teachers to extend the classroom learning in and through and from the gallery into school studios.

Plato's Allegory of the Cave describes an environment in which residents of the cave suffer an imposed paralysis from birth. The cave dwellers are chained in place and can only see shadows of activities and people passing the mouth of the cave. Their perspective is passive and 2-dimensional. Given the opportunity to suddenly experience the bright reality of life outside the cave, Plato's Socrates argues that the cave dweller would disavow the real world as fictional and return to the comfortable "reality" they have lived in the cave. If one of these residents were to become enlightened to their

predicament, they would be unable to reconcile the distance between their experiences and the reality presented outside the cave.

Similarly, young artists whose experiences are limited to traditional classrooms effectively maintain the presupposed best practices and artistry of the shadow of artists who have come before them. In a world that thrives on innovation and the promise of newness we are doing a great disservice to both our students and the arts if we fail to support the conversation between contemporary artists and children. It is therefore the role of art educators in galleries, museums, community centers and classrooms to develop bridges and to not only build arts literacy but scaffold a deeper understanding of the fuel that feeds the artistic spirit and trust that the processes of art exploration holds value.

Talya Dornbush
Education Director
Center for Visual Art
MSU Denver

Cecily Cullen
Creative Director
Center for Visual Art
MSU Denver

31

JODY CHAPEL

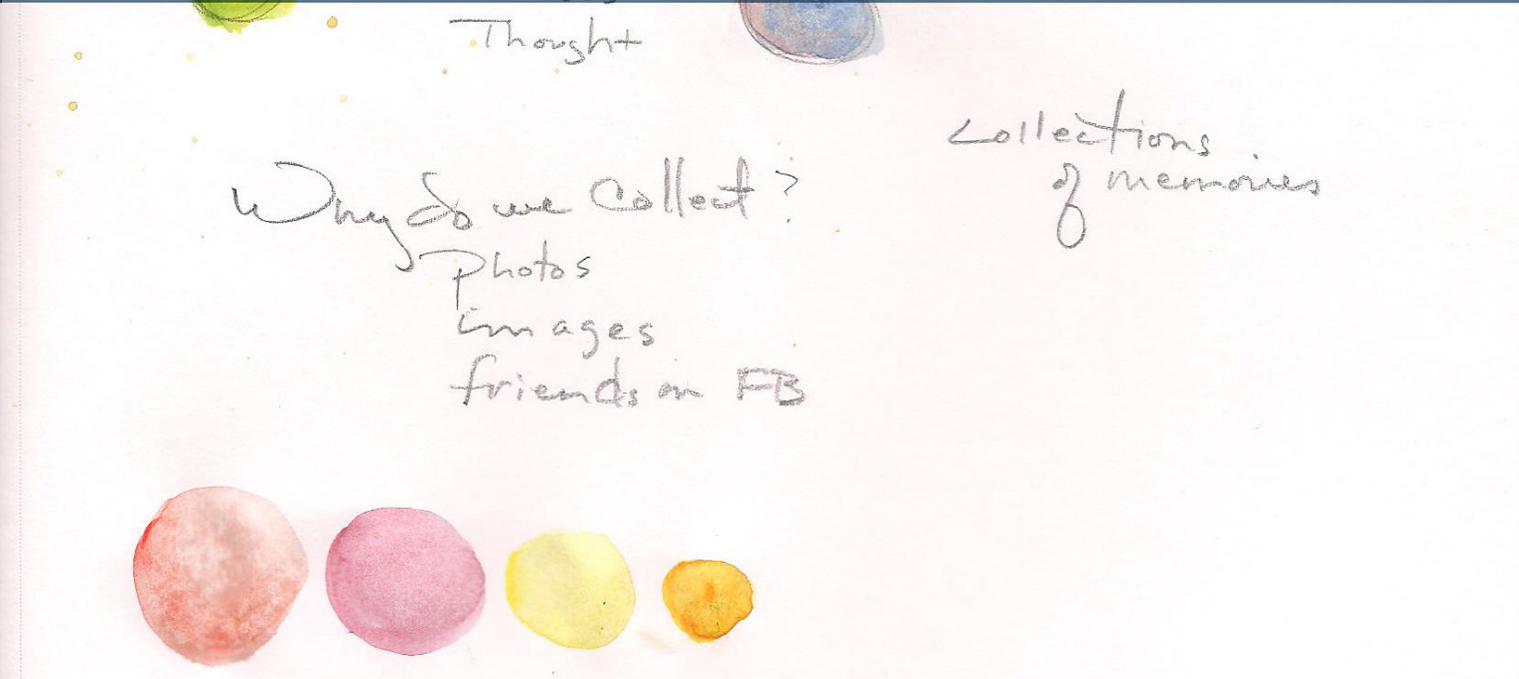
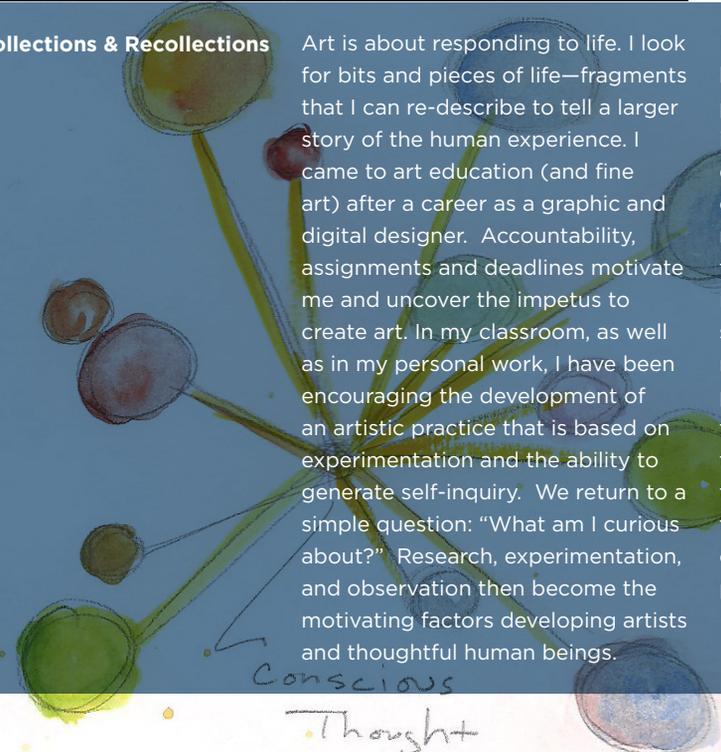


“I study the collections of my life in order to create a conversation between the past and the present.”

Collections & Recollections

Art is about responding to life. I look for bits and pieces of life—fragments that I can re-describe to tell a larger story of the human experience. I came to art education (and fine art) after a career as a graphic and digital designer. Accountability, assignments and deadlines motivate me and uncover the impetus to create art. In my classroom, as well as in my personal work, I have been encouraging the development of an artistic practice that is based on experimentation and the ability to generate self-inquiry. We return to a simple question: “What am I curious about?” Research, experimentation, and observation then become the motivating factors developing artists and thoughtful human beings.

In creating this video installation, I have asked, “How do my teaching practice and personal art-making inform each other and what does data look like to me?” As an educator I am passionate that data represents evidence of learning and that the best information is found in the ideas and creations of my students. By applying that theory to my own work I am reflecting on how people collect memories and how those memories change and distort through time. Much like I examine the data of my students, I study the collections of my life in order to create a conversation between the past and the present.





SARAH GRUNDERMANN

34

Opposing Apathy

This male head captures my internal dialogue as a female teacher in our patriarchal society. Within this context, my teaching navigates among the attitudes, frustrations, hopes, dreams and wishes of adolescents. The work sits within the paradox of my own apathy and my desire to act. I desire to fill my students' minds with curiosity, inquiry, trial, error, wonder, and persistence.

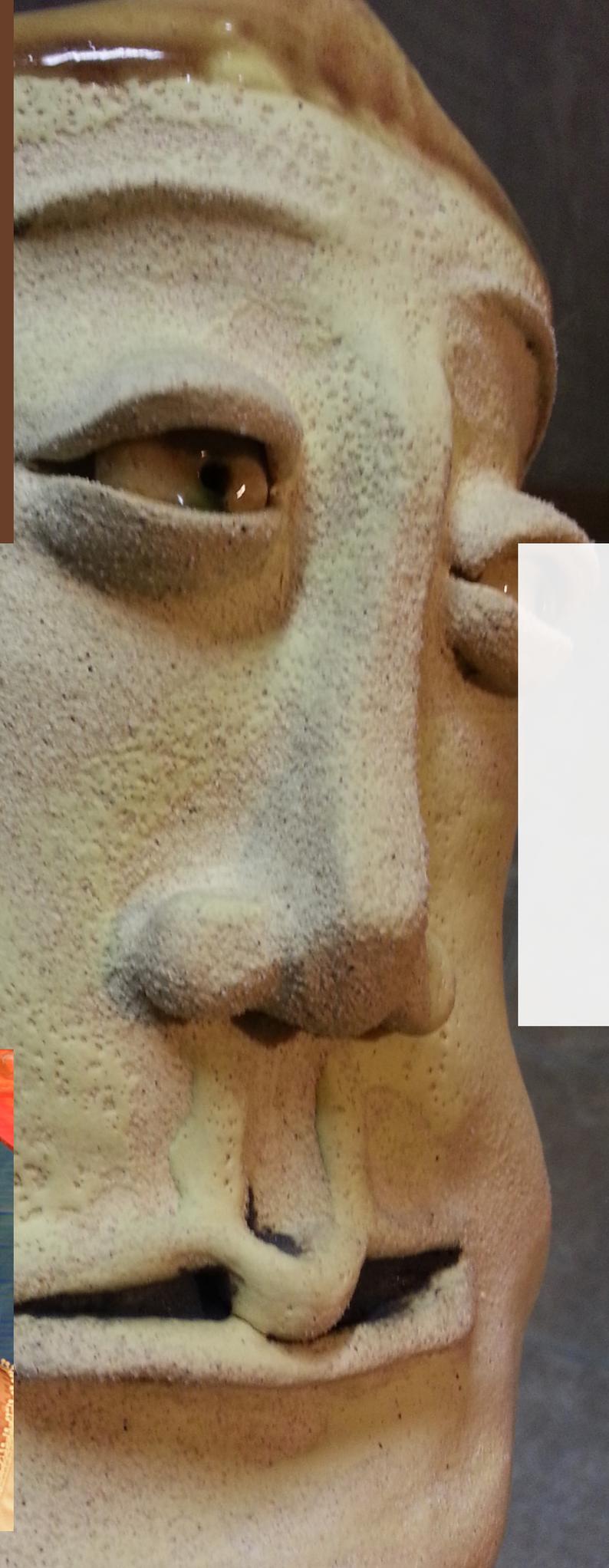
These questions float around in my mind, back and forth, very fluid, dependent on the elements of my life, personal and professional.

Is there a balance? Is it futile? Am I impacting? At what cost?

“I desire to fill my students’ minds with curiosity, inquiry, trial, error, wonder, and persistence.”



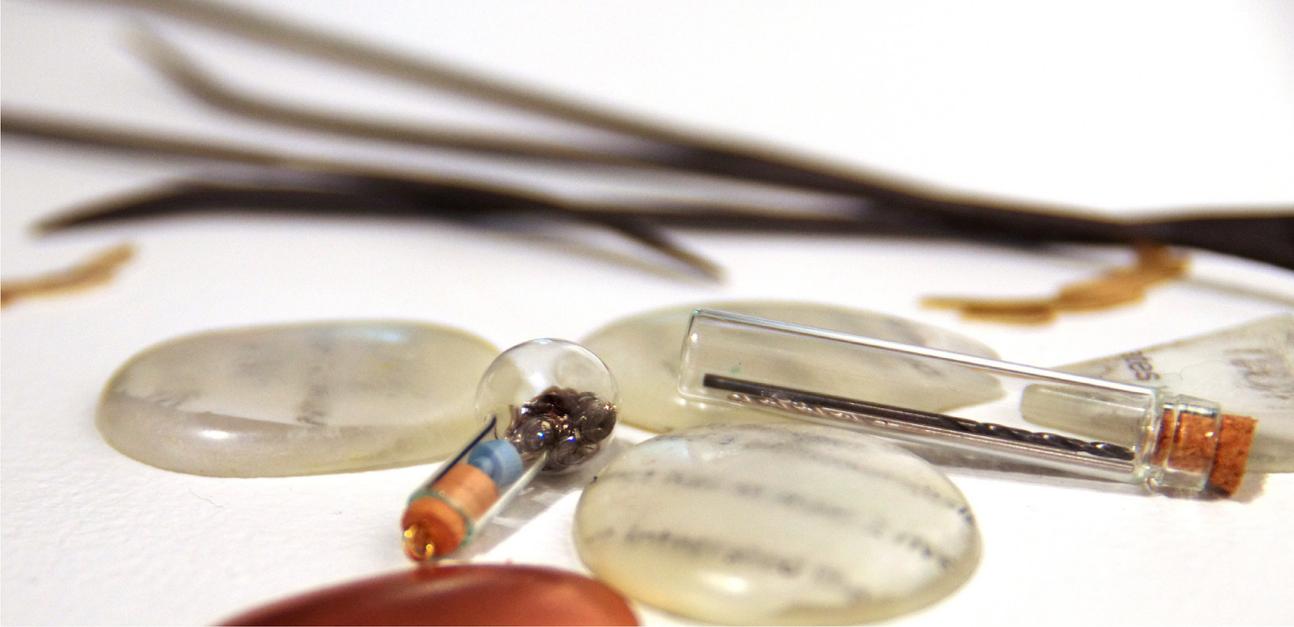
35



“As I create an object, I like to explore the challenges that develop as the work evolves; this also mirrors the approach I take to teaching.”



AMY KAHN



My work for this exhibit is made to resemble a Chatelaine. A Chatelaine is a decorative utilitarian clasp made-up of a series of long chains which each held the necessary items needed in the proper running of a household. The mistresses of the house, better known as the housekeeper, often wore the chatelaine, a symbol of her responsibility for the proper maintenance and upkeep of the domicile. In my role as a teacher I often find myself in this very same role, as the manager of facilities, and my contemporary Chatelaine contains the tools I need, or have needed when immersed in the process of teaching. The Chatelaine I have created contains tools that I have either used, or that have been used by my students. It also has tools on it that

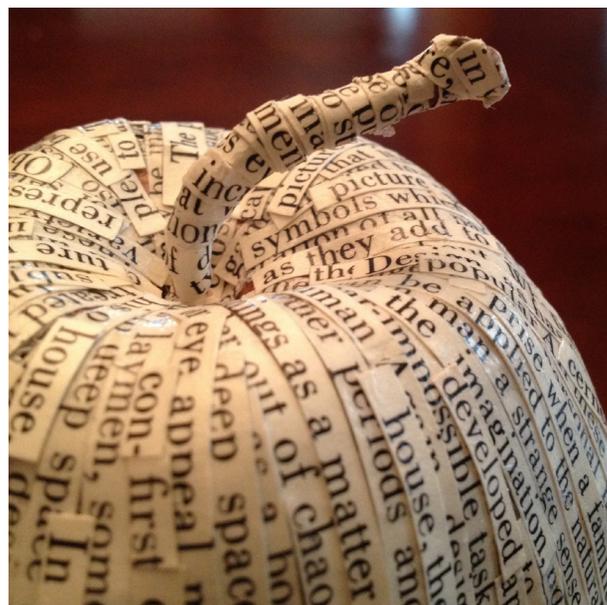
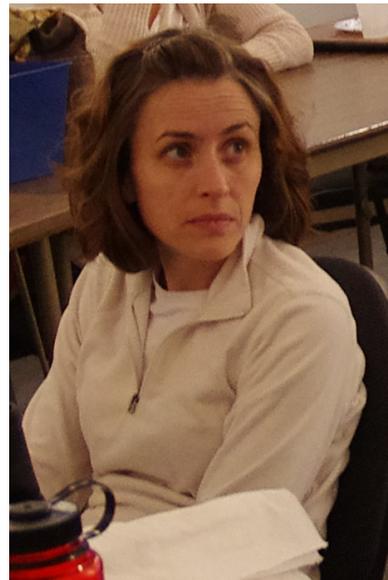
I have designed and invented, which could be used to sort out problems or challenges that I may experience. As I create an object, I like to explore the challenges that develop as the work evolves; this also mirrors the approach I take to teaching. Challenges often occur in the classroom and it is the process of exploring the challenge that allows you learn and adapt, allowing you to create the tools that you need to find innovative solutions to everyday complications.



“Ideas can be works of art; they are in a chain of development that may eventually find some form.”
-Sol LeWitt”

38

RACHAEL DELANEY



Redacted Over four years ago a student introduced me to the book, *The New Art Education*. Together we created our own book club periodically chatting about the text when time permitted.. We often found ourselves in agreement over our disagreement with many of the approaches to teaching art at the K-12 level that the author proposed.

As artist and educators we considered the possibility of making works that responded to some of the ideas in the book, in an attempt to design our own form of a new art education. Time passed, and my copy of *The New Art Education* sat dormant on my bookshelf until this past December,

when I was able to begin the process of altering the text to create an amended representation of some of the ideas in the book. By redacting the language through the process of cutting out the all of the writing in the book, I attempted to interrupt the texts dominant theme of reducing art education to the tenuous role of cultivating appreciation and connoisseurship of the visual arts. Each apple contains the text from a single chapter edited and reorganized to create an alternative version of the original work that introduces the possibility that there may be bigger ideas to explore in the visual arts, which go beyond just mere appreciation. As a result, the apples can be read, but

not in a formalized or prescriptive order. Assertive complete thoughts have been replaced with fragments of ideas, where suggestions can generate the transformation of incomplete ideas to new ideas, a place to infuse an alternative perspective. Application and use of the content is no longer bound to the rhythm of turning pages, instead the content is disrupted by possibilities where ideas are moments to consider and build upon.

39



KATIE LEWIS



“ I want the data to take on a life of its own”

My current work traces experiences of the body through methodical systems of documentation, investigating data visualization through the accumulation of information over a period of time. I begin by collecting data on a daily basis and then generate numerous systems to allow the information to exist in a material form. The work alludes to the body in certain pieces, but the reference remains abstracted. By abstracting and codifying the work, I want the data to take on a life of its own evoking a sense of the passing of time, accumulation and deterioration of materials, presence and absence, chaos and order, control and loss of control and the possibility of the

system collapsing upon itself or reaching a breaking point. Once I devise a system for a particular piece, I follow it all the way through the work allowing the visual results to exist outside of subjective expressive decisions.

By strictly following and never veering from a given system, the work is tightly controlled and asserts itself as accurate and authoritative (however false and unscientific), questioning the gap between a subjective experience and medicine’s conventions for understanding the body. The work is often organized into grid-like charts and diagrams mimicking science and medicine’s representations of

the body as a specimen, visually displayed for the purpose of gaining knowledge. In this way I create distance from the information and objectify the experience, giving a false sense that the body is accessible and easily understood.



“Language and numerals render reality, and that this reality is an entirely subjective unified field.”

Y A E L K A N A R E K

b.1967, Israel
Lives and works in New York City

Yael Kanarek’s creative practice centers on the fundamental hypothesis that language and numerals render reality, and that this reality is an entirely subjective unified field. Through the shuffling of physical properties that construct our use of language (matter, shape, sound), Kanarek’s work examines how verbal signifiers operate emotionally.

Employing modes of authorship such as storytelling and multilingualism, Kanarek manipulates the biographical predisposition of cultural associations. As an Israeli-American, Kanarek’s perception is tempered by an awareness of post-national borderlines. Her work enters spaces of meaning determined by a global network and the negotiation of identity that occurs when confronted with multiple systems. Crossing these sensibilities with her observation of the Internet as a network made of language - natural and computer - her most recent projects document the consciousness shift from a Modernist self to that which is networked.

Selected for the 2002 Whitney Biennial, exhibitions of Kanarek’s work also include The Drawing Center, New York; Beral Madra Contemporary Art, Istanbul; National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens; CU Museum, Boulder; Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University; The Jewish Museum, New York; Exit Art; The Kitchen; American Museum of the Moving Image, New York; LIMN Gallery, San Francisco; Holster Projects, London; Wood Street Galleries, Pittsburgh; bitforms gallery, New York; Nelly Aman, Tel Aviv; Boston CyberArts Festival; HVCCA, Peekskill; Arena 1, Santa Monica; California College of the Arts, San Francisco; Orsini Palace, Bomarzo; and Sala Uno Gallery, Rome. Kanarek’s work has also been shown in New York at Kenny Schachter Contemporary, Silverstein Gallery, Ronald Feldman Gallery, Derek Eller Gallery, A.I.R. Gallery, 303 Gallery, and Schroeder Romero Gallery.

In addition to a Rockefeller New Media Fellowship and an Eyebeam Honorary Fellowship, Kanarek is the recipient of grants from the Jerome Foundation Media Arts and New York Foundation for the Arts; commissions from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Turbulence.org, and The Alternative Museum; Kanarek’s distinctions also include residencies at Civitella Ranieri, Harvestworks and the Mamuta Art and Media Center. In 1999, she founded Upgrade! International. She holds an MFA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.



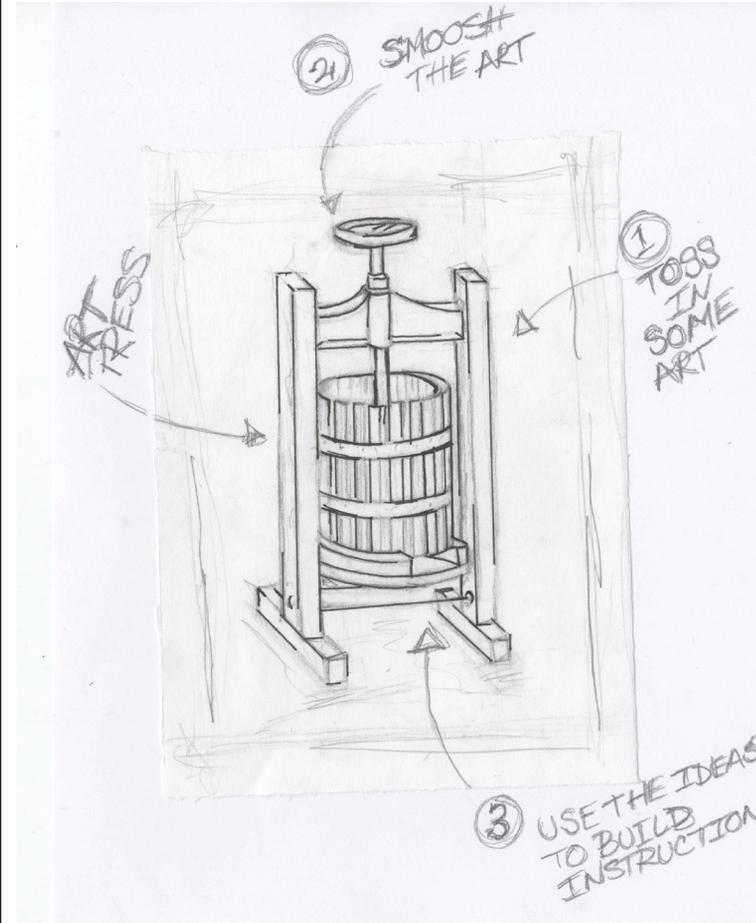
Question: Ask yourself: What do I imagine this work to be about? Skip the technique, the craftsmanship, the design stuff for now, and go straight to ideas.

Question: Ask yourself: Are these ideas that I can build instruction around? Make sure there is enough there, enough layers of content so that students are doing more than just acquiring information and skills.

Question: Ask yourself: What other layers of ideas from other disciplines do I need to introduce? These are additional content areas like history, science, math, and literacy. This is not about adding on, this is about incorporating, blending, mixing. This mimics what art does

Question: Ask yourself: What do I need to make available to my students so they have the flexibility to explore? A single, one-size fit all approach to media/material availability probably won't work for the students, as they work to share their thinking.

Question: Ask yourself: Now that I have this great idea how much time do I need? You may find that one week of instruction can't get you and your students to where you want to be, think about the schedule you need to build so that way time is not an obstacle



Lets consider placing Vincent van Gogh's 1889 painting Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear in the art press. If we smoosh this painting what are we left with, what lingers? Try to not begin with the paint, the colors, the composition, the texture or the scale. Begin instead with what these qualities together help to convey, which could be a sense of bewilderment, fallibility, tradition, identity, vulnerability and maybe even the taboo. Each of these references an idea, a concept that is not beholden to only this work of art. For example, fallibility is a familiar concept that we have all at one point or another have had to negotiate and grapple with. Within this painting maybe the point of departure for gaining access to the work could begin with the connection to the familiar instead of the bizarre. No, I don't relate to the action of clipping the tip of an ear off, but I do connect with making impetuous decisions that expose to others how fallible I am. Beginning with the idea of fallibility creates access to this work of art because it is an idea that is not exceptional to the discipline of art. Instead it is part of a larger conversation that crosses over into many domains where concepts can expand instead of contract. We can then return to the paint, color, composition, texture and scale in a work of art recognizing that they minor players in a bigger story, their role is to support meaning.

What if your lesson focused on fallibility? What would that look like at the elementary grade level and what would that look like at the secondary level?

Elementary Grade Levels

Can you ask your learners...

What does it mean to make a mistake?

Have you ever made a mistake?

What did you learn after you made a mistake?

Can you have happy mistakes?

What can you infuse into the classroom... Are there any fables or stories that might apply?

What other disciplines commonly incorporate the learning that occurs from mistakes: does science, does math, has anything been discovered because of a mistake?

What other works of art explore the idea of making mistakes?

How many ways can research be used...

Can a sketchbook be used to document ideas?

Can exercises, quick but informed, create layers of meaning before the final studio process begins?

How many exercises are needed?

How much time is needed...

If we are exploring the idea through questions...

If we are integrating other subject areas...

If we are conducting and documenting research...

Then what kind of system or framework do I need to create to track progress that will also serve as a tool to remind my students what they are working on even when they have not been in the studio classroom for weeks.

What can be made instead of a portrait?

Secondary Grade Levels

Can you ask your learners...

What does it mean to choose to expose a private experience?

Have you ever had an experience shared that you did not choose to share? What did you learn after this happened? Have your intentions ever been misinterpreted?

What can you infuse into the classroom... Is there literature, current events or music that might apply?

What other disciplines commonly address how information is interpreted and disseminated?

How does technology impact the sharing of personal information and is does type of exposure have a positive or negative influence?

What other works of art explore the idea of exposure?

How many ways can research be used...

Can a sketchbook be used to document ideas?

Can exercises, quick but informed, create layers of meaning before the final studio process begins?

How many exercises are needed to create meaningful tangents of learning?

How much time is needed...

If we are exploring the idea through questions...

If we are integrating other subject areas...

If we are conducting and documenting research...

Then what kind of system or framework do I need to create to track progress that will also serve as a tool to remind my students what they are working on each day they enter into the classroom and how can I use my curriculum as a classroom management tool.

What can be made instead of a self-portrait?

Don't let the gradebook be the final resting place for art created by young artists. Every great work carries a narrative. The artist deserves a chance to finish the story. We have to scaffold reflection to bring out the best work from our students and to move the work of artists forward. And this is authentic assessment! You can demonstrate your objectives through this process! These work for students of all ages.

| Observe and Learn to Comprehend K | | Envision and Critique to Reflect K | | Invent and Discover to Create K | | Relate and Connect to Transfer K | |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| Artists and viewers recognize characteristics and expressive features within works of art. | Personal feelings are described in and through works of art. | Identify that art represents and tells the stories of people, places, or things. | | Artists interpret connections to the stories told in and by works of art. | | Create two and three dimensional work of art based on personal relevance. | Artists and viewer contribute and connect to their communities. |
| I can find forms in art. | I can find feelings in art. | I can find stories in art. | | I can say what I think about stories in art. | | I can make art about me. | I can make art with, about, and for others. |

| Observe and Learn to Comprehend 1st | | Envision and Critique to Reflect 1st | | Invent and Discover to Create 1st | | Relate and Connect to Transfer 1st | |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| Works of art express feelings. | | Art represents and renders the stories of people, places, and things. | | Visual arts provide opportunities to respond to personal works of art and the art of others. | | Create art to communicate ideas, feelings, or emotions. | Visual arts relate experience to self, family, and friends. |
| I can guess ways artists feel in their work. | | I can find stories in art. | | I can use ideas from other people's art in my art. | | I can make art that shows what I think and feel. | I can make art with, about, and for others. I can make art about myself. |

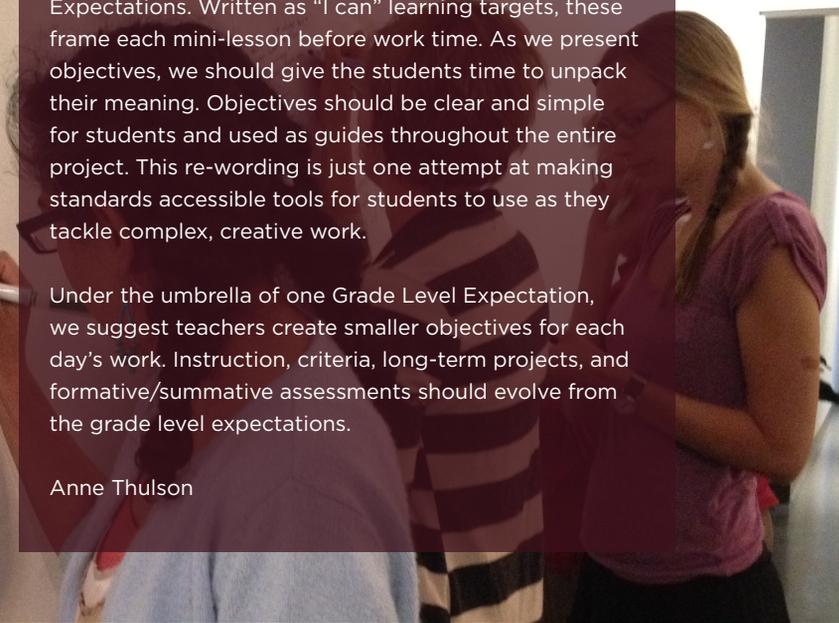
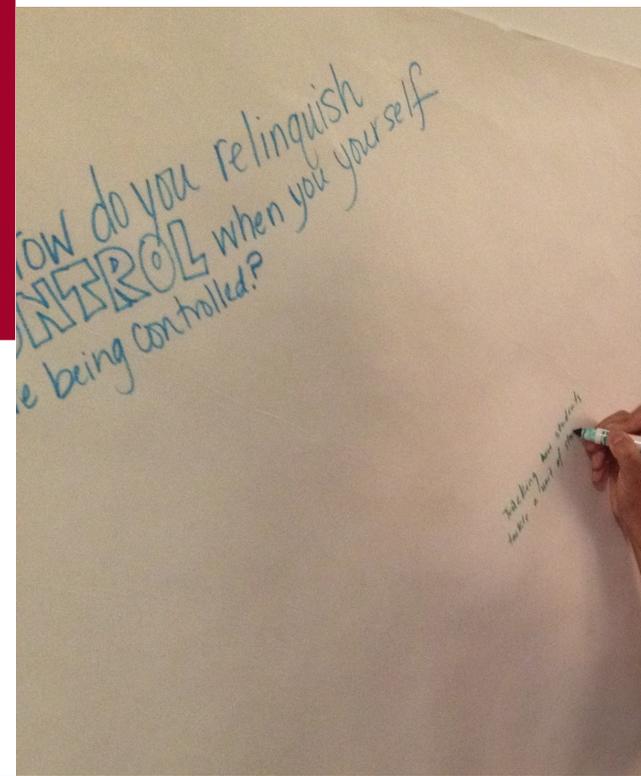
| Observe and Learn to Comprehend 2nd | | Envision and Critique to Reflect 2nd | | Invent and Discover to Create 2nd | | Relate and Connect to Transfer 2nd | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| Artists make choices that communicate ideas in works of art. | | Characteristics and expressive features of art and design are used to identify and discuss works of art. | | Visual arts use various literacies to convey intended meaning. | | Use familiar symbols to identify and demonstrate characteristics and expressive features of art and design. | Visual arts respond to human experience by relating art to the community. |
| I can find ways that artists show ideas in their art. | | I can find and talk about forms in art. | | I try out many ways to show my ideas in art. | | I can find symbols in my world and use them in my art. | I can find out and talk about how art is about people and their worlds. |

For the full GLE system, go to:
<https://sites.google.com/site/msud0cva0education/>

These are kid-friendly translations of the Grade Level Expectations. Written as "I can" learning targets, these frame each mini-lesson before work time. As we present objectives, we should give the students time to unpack their meaning. Objectives should be clear and simple for students and used as guides throughout the entire project. This re-wording is just one attempt at making standards accessible tools for students to use as they tackle complex, creative work.

Under the umbrella of one Grade Level Expectation, we suggest teachers create smaller objectives for each day's work. Instruction, criteria, long-term projects, and formative/summative assessments should evolve from the grade level expectations.

Anne Thulson



- Present your artwork at an auction.
- Defend your artwork in a court of law.
- Sing a song for your artwork.
- Write a eulogy of your artwork.
- Send you artwork a bon voyage letter.
- Draw an x-ray of your artwork and identify the vital organs.
- Create a wanted poster for your artwork (after it runs away or commits a crime).
- Create a wanted poster for an audience for your work (with all the identifying details!)
- Illustrate a storyboard about the birth of your artwork.

- Write down a question that is not answered by your art. A lingering question that you might address later on.
- Design a flier to advertise the opening of your artshow.
- Interview your artwork for a talkshow.
- Design a pedestal or frame for your artwork.
- Create a baseball card to highlight your best moments during the project.
- Describe a project that you might want to try after this one is complete.
- Lay your artwork on a couch and talk about his/her greatest regrets.
- Lay your artwork on a couch and talk about her/his greatest accomplishments.

A couple of questions to press the freshest juice!

Given the opportunity to do this project again, what might you do differently? What might you do the same?
 What are three memories you are taking from this experience?
 Can you say more about...?

A few great tools for building and environment for authentic assessment.

- Simple video cameras and still cameras or smartphones
- A pull-down curtain or structure to create a stage
- Lamps or Christmas lights to create dramatic lighting on a "stage"
- A microphone (faux is fine)
- Magnifying glasses, lighttables, paper towel rolls, can all be used to take a new perspective on the work

CLOSING PROCEDURES
 WITH GENERATIVE
 PROJECTIONS

GRADE LEVEL
 EXPECTATIONS



STUDIO M

A SERVICE-LEARNING EXPERIENCE THROUGH METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

About Studio M

Studio M provides unique opportunities for students to obtain valuable first-hand experience working with actual clients and managing project deadlines. Consisting of both departments from the institution and not-for-profit organizations, Studio M's clients request design services that include brand identities, brand messaging, message campaigns, print collateral, promotional banners, exhibition catalogues, website looks, and an array of other visually branded items.

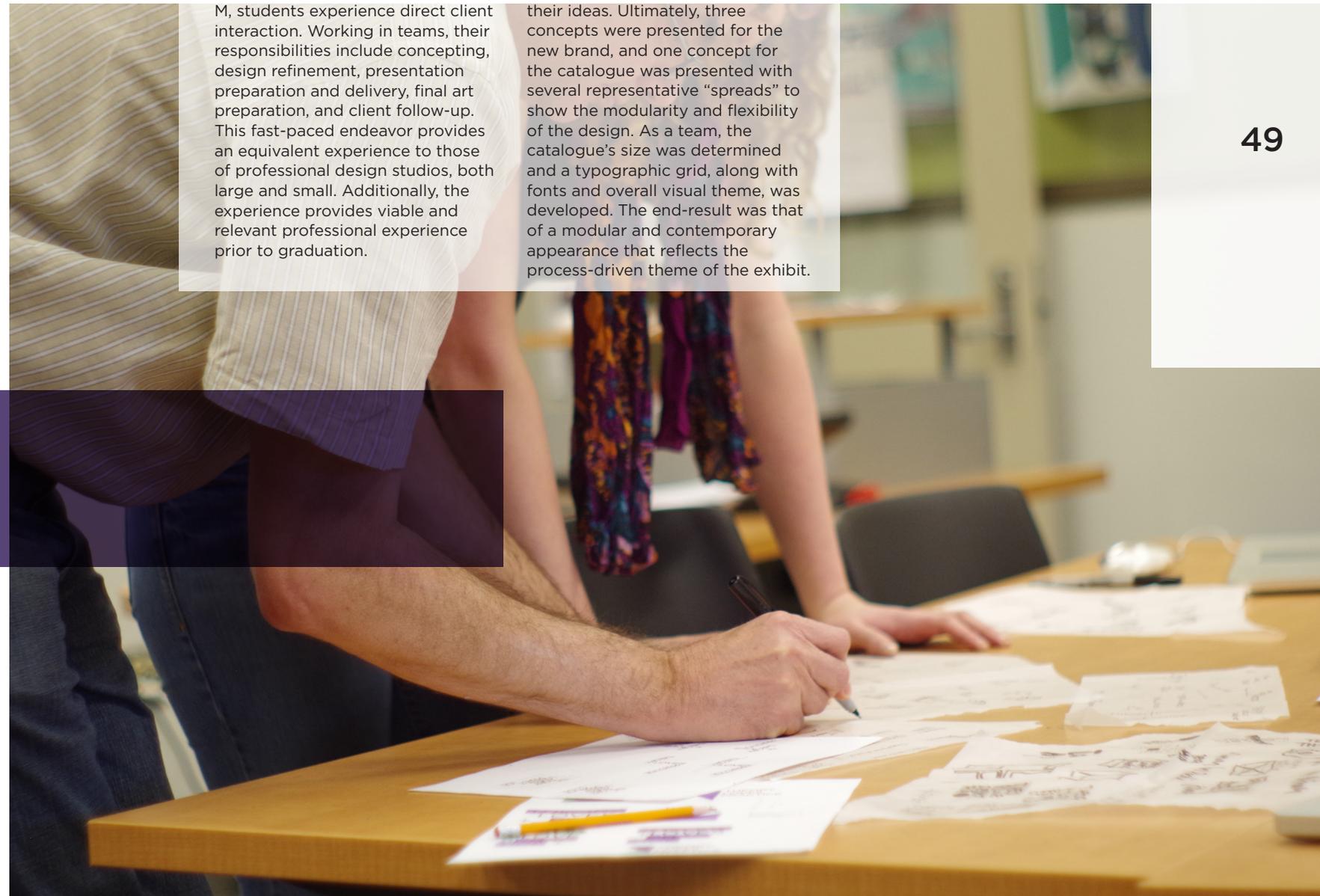
Studio M is an on-campus three-credit course that fulfills the internship requirement necessary to complete the Communication Design program. Prior to acceptance into Studio M, students must interview with the Communication Design Area Coordinator, Lisa Abendroth and the instructor for the course, serving as Art Director and mentor. Once accepted into Studio M, students obtain the title of Junior Designer. Through Studio M, students experience direct client interaction. Working in teams, their responsibilities include concepting, design refinement, presentation preparation and delivery, final art preparation, and client follow-up. This fast-paced endeavor provides an equivalent experience to those of professional design studios, both large and small. Additionally, the experience provides viable and relevant professional experience prior to graduation.

About This Semester's Team

Under the guidance and art direction of Scott Surine, this semester's Junior Designers included three exceptionally talented and motivated individuals: Anthony Constantino, Joshua Hartmann-Olsen, and Sabrina Schmidt. Collaboratively, the team developed and completed several tasks from five different clients. Including concepting, refining, and presentation preparation, the team worked proficiently to successfully achieve design objectives and meet client deadlines. Throughout the semester, each team member's individual skill-sets revealed themselves in a synergetic manner that allowed each project to seamlessly resolve.

About This Project

When tasked by The Center for Visual Arts with creating a brand identity and an exhibition catalogue for "Theory Loves Practice," the team jumped into action, brainstorming ideas separately at first, then collectively refining their ideas. Ultimately, three concepts were presented for the new brand, and one concept for the catalogue was presented with several representative "spreads" to show the modularity and flexibility of the design. As a team, the catalogue's size was determined and a typographic grid, along with fonts and overall visual theme, was developed. The end-result was that of a modular and contemporary appearance that reflects the process-driven theme of the exhibit.



CVA MISSION STATEMENT:

The Metropolitan State University of Denver's Center for Visual Art is the off-campus contemporary art center that leverages bold exhibitions, innovative education programs and entrepreneurial workforce development programs to provide accessible, diverse, high-quality art experiences that advance the global urban dialogue.

THEORY **LOVES**
PRACTICE

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