Family Photos: Digital photography as

Emancipatory Art Education in Montreal's Black Community

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ABSTRACT

Family Photos: **Digital photography as**

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This thesis documents a participatory action research project in which I collaborated with a Caribbean-Canadian family of four, to study their experiences of familial art education and photographic practice, and to generate recommendations for Emancipatory Art Education in Montreal's Black community. Emancipatory Art Education (EAE) is an emerging approach to Black community art education that I situate among African Diaspora traditions of 'education for liberation' and critical multiculturalism discourses in the field of art education. *Family Photos* begins a long-term participatory research practice aimed at defining and developing EAE theory and practices for the community from within the community. An autoethnographic study through which I locate and situate my identities as a Black Montrealer consequently emerges as a critical component of this work.

Through studying and practicing photography as art, family members develop technical skills and inclusive understandings of art, while increasingly expressing their own individual and collective aesthetic identities. All express affirmative feelings about the project and a desire to participate in similar projects in the future, and thus conclude that

family art practice can be a positive and engaging practice for other families and members in the Black community. Our results emphasize photographic practice as a site for exploring issues of identity, race and representation, and tensions between the private and the public. Recommendations are geared toward EAE and address familial and intergenerational community art education; photography, ethics and boundary control; and participatory action research in community art education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

For Mamie and Judes.

For Montreal's Black community

and its many diverse artists— past, present and future.

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[*] Please note that the print copy of this thesis provides Appendices F and G on a CD (*disc 1)*, while the electronic version of this thesis includes Appendices F and G following page 150.

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Introduction

In February of 1994 artist, educator and writer Clifton Ruggles began his column in the *Montreal Gazette* with 'a little quiz for Black History Month', challenging readers to name one prominent Black Canadian artist and anticipating that for many of us no names would readily come to mind. As an undergraduate student reading Ruggles' article about the underrepresentation of Blacks in the field of visual art, I felt a great sense of validation in discovering that I was not the only one who asked these questions; not the only one who wondered who and where the Black Canadian artists were.

Writing almost two decades later, I echo Ruggles and ask if the reader of this thesis has an easy time responding to his challenge. How many Black Canadian artists do *you* know of? I hope that many names jump to mind; that at some future moment, sooner than later, 'Black + Canadian + artist' is not such an inconceivable formula in the national imagination (Brooks, 2009), including that of African Canadians. At the time of this writing however, Black folk remain largely under-represented in the fields of art. Studying art education and art history I have never had a Black instructor and have consistently been one of *very* few Black students. Perhaps as a consequence of these factors combined, I have rarely been assigned the work of Black artists and scholars.

My research interest then, is in understanding this situation, in unpacking the idea that visual art isn't a 'Black thing', and in collaborating with members of the Black community on research that seeks to define and explore an inclusive, ethno-culturally centered community art education praxis. This thesis documents *Family Photos*, a participatory action research project that begins this work through studying the art making experiences of a Black Caribbean-Canadian family of four I have known for

several years (alternately referred to collectively as 'family members' and 'researcher-participants' in this study) toward generating recommendations for familial and community art practice in the Black community.

The *Family Photos* project was preceded by a pilot study carried out by the head of this family, *Clippings,* and I over six weeks in the winter of 2010 (see *Clippings' Photovoice,* Appendix F). The pilot study provided Clippings with an introduction to digital photography and to photovoice research, and its success built anticipation within the family for a project that would involve the children as well. *Family photos* began in January 2011 and Clippings and her three children acted as researcher-participants in a three month long digital photography project.

Research Question

The overarching question that frames my research concerns how Emancipatory Art Education in Montreal's Black communities can emerge as a relevant and transformative community practice contributing to social and cultural development and communal quality of life. I use the term 'emancipatory' in order to situate this work within African Diaspora traditions of emancipatory education and popular education programs initiated from within the community, for the community (hooks, 1994; Institute of the Black World, 1974; Jennings & Lynn, 2005; McKay, 2010; Murrell, 1997; Payne & Strickland, 2008; Potts, 2003).

As a member and longstanding community worker in Montreal's Black community, I have observed that many families have little, if any, involvement with or connection to art. Especially low income and single parents tend not to pursue what they

perceive as leisure activities and hobbies for themselves, and many report having no involvement with art at all since they were in elementary school. Many of the children I have spoken with describe school art classes as boring, and as classes where students can do whatever they want and the teacher doesn't care. Perhaps most concerning, children and adults alike have told me that visual art 'has nothing to do with,' or 'isn't for' Black people.

African American scholar bell hooks has written about how, despite family and community members who told her she must be 'out of her mind' to think that Black people could be artists, she learned '*to know* art*'* thanks to mentors and teachers who encouraged and supported her creative interests (hooks, 1995). She described a "problem of black identification with art," noting that "most black folks do not believe that the presence of art in our lives is essential to our collective well-being" (p.3). Toward rectifying this situation, hooks called for new ways of thinking about art and about the functions of art, beginning "with diverse programs of critical education that…stimulate collective awareness that the creation and public sharing of art is essential to any practice of freedom" (p.4). *Family Photos* responds to this call through exploring the potential space for Black community art practice with/in one family. Each researcher-participant has chosen the pseudonym by which she or he is identified: *Clippings*, the head of the household, her daughters *Akiva dii T'chaa* (21 yrs. old) and *Kanisha Prima Donna* (16 yrs), and her son *J-Money* (14yrs). Clippings was born and raised in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and moved to Montreal in the 1980s. All three of her children were born and have been raised in Montreal. I embarked on this research with positive relationships with all four family members, as a community worker, educator and friend of the family.

Chapter 1: Situating the study

This section introduces and describes characteristics of Montreal's Black

community so as to situate my work overall and the *Family Photos* research project in

particular. I then look at some of the scholarship that informs an emerging Emancipatory

Art Education praxis geared toward the Black community, including several examples of

community art education that have informed this study.

Montreal's Black Community

In 2010 the *Montreal Consortium for Human Rights Advocacy Training* published

a demographic study of Montreal's Black community, led by Dr. James Torczyner of the

McGill University School of Social Work (Torczyner, 2010). As the program

coordinator and caseworker of a Black community mentoring organization I served as a

community consultant on the project, and in the summer of 2010 was hired to compile

and design the *Montreal Black Community Dossier* summarizing and providing historical

context for key findings of the study[2]. This work expanded on my personal and

professional experiences to broaden my knowledge of the community and help me to

situate my research.

The "Black community" is not meant to suggest a fixed entity in terms of location

or essential identity, rather it is intended as an inclusive and fluid concept. I use the term

'Black' as a 'floating signifier' (Hall, 1996) that refers to common historical experiences

of racial classifying systems, and I acknowledge that while Black communities in

Montreal share historical, social and cultural commonalities in relation to African

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[2] *The Montreal Black Community Dossier* was developed as a resource for Black community groups
and organizations and has been distributed within the community. In what follows I cite the
demographic study directly (Torczyner, 2010), as its volumes will be most accessible to the reader.

Diaspora identities, it is not possible to speak of one unified Montreal Black community

experience. This said, in what follows I discuss some demographic data regarding the

Black population of Montreal in relation to the rest of the city's population.

Since the 1996 Census, Statistics Canada has counted Black Canadians as those

who self-indentify as Black and those who self-identify as Black and White/ Caucasian,

while census respondents who identify as Black and another visible minority group are

counted as "multiple visible minorities" (Torczyner & Springer, 2001). In 2006,

Statistics Canada counted 783,795 Blacks in Canada, 169,065 of who lived in Montreal.

This represented a growth rate in the African Canadian population of more than 37% over

the past decade, with 24% of Black Canadians living in Quebec. While Blacks formed

2.5% of the national population, in Montreal, Black people represented 4.7% of the

population. "Three major groupings—each one complex and diverse in its own right—

account for 97% of the Black population of Montreal:" 41% of Black Montrealers were

born in the Caribbean, 40% were born in Canada and 16% in Africa (Torczyner, 2010,

Vol. One, p. 23). The areas of the city where I grew up and in which I currently work –

the Western, more Anglophone neighbourhoods of Cote des Neiges, NDG/ Montreal

West, Lasalle, and Little Burgundy/ St. Henri—were home to 26,000 Black Montrealers

in 2006, including the researcher-participants in the *Family Photos* study.

There were more than twice as many single-parent led families in the Black

community than in the rest of Montreal (23.2% compared to 8.8%), with the highest rates

of single parenthood among Black women 45-64 years old (34.2% of this group were

single parents in 2006) (Torczyner, Vol. One). The poverty rate in the Black community

of Montreal was double that of the rest of the city's population (13.4% v 6.6%), with

47.1% of Black children under the age of 15 living below the poverty line. Employment inequity in the city was epitomized by the fact that Black persons with graduate degrees reported higher unemployment rates than high school dropouts who are not Black (13.4% v. 12%). Black women had the least income, were more likely to be poor and were less educated than any other group in Montreal (Torczyner, 2010, Vol. Three).

Qualitative research studies led by Miriam Denov (2010) and Anne Marie Livingstone (2010) and performed with Black community members, helped contextualize the quantitative data with specific focus on education and criminal justice. The findings of these studies emphasized the importance of community-based athletic and artistic activities, and the vital role that community programs can play in facilitating mentoring relationships, offering long-term and meaningful opportunities for self expression and self-discovery, and in fostering dialogue and awareness within Black communities (Livingstone, 2010; Livingstone, Celemencki, Calixte, Kofi-Duah, Julmeus-Léger, Thompson, and Dolphy, 2010; Denov & Farr, 2010. See also Hampton, 2010a).

The demographic profile outlined above clearly underscores the importance of an educational project like *Family Photos* that emphasizes the experiences and builds on the strengths of a Black family of low income and led by single parent mother in her 50s; a project aimed at enhancing socio-cultural quality of life through art and thus fostering family and community engagement.

Working as a family worker and art educator within my own community, I have built a professional identity inclusive of my own lived experiences and centered on relationships that are in many ways familial and personal. In this way, I have learned a tremendous amount about the profound strength and value of the notion of *community-as-*

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extended-family.   I approach my research with a deep sense of membership in and commitment to Montreal's Black community and with profound respect for its histories, diversity and strength.

Emancipatory Art Education

Research suggests that community-based art programs have the potential to make significant contributions to community development and that intergenerational, ethno-culturally centered creative practices can facilitate the overall success of Black and other ethnic minority youth and adults through fostering a sense of community membership and solidarity (Adejumo, 2010; Alexenberg & Benjamin, 2004; Archer-Cunningham, 2007; Chioneso, 2008; Hutzel, 2007; Kinloch, 2007; Laporte, 1998; Largo, 2007; Lowe, 2000; Lowe 2001). I have been developing an approach to art education called Emancipatory Art Education (EAE), specifically geared towards Black community based settings in Montreal and centered on an "asset-based community art curriculum" (Hutzel, 2007, p. 300) that builds on the social, cultural, environmental and human assets of the community. EAE research employs this same approach:

> Asset-based research is grounded in the recognition that a unique combination of assets exists in each community. Specifically, these assets can be found in at least four places: (a) with individuals in the community, (b) in community associations, (c) within community institutions, and (d) in indigenous forms of knowledge "native" to the community. Indeed, an asset-based strategy emphasizes the development of policies and practices

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grounded in the capacities, skills, and assets of people and their

neighborhoods. (Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, p. 78)

Asset- (or strength-) based approaches oppose "deficit-informed or majoritarian

approaches to research" that focus on community needs, deficiencies and problems

(Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2002, p. 77), asserting that the ability to identify and

understand a community's assets must be a prerequisite for emancipatory work within

and with that community.

EAE is informed by the pedagogical approaches to education as liberation of

Paulo Freire (1970/2008; 1997/2005) and bell hooks (1994), as well as George Dei's

work on Africentric and anti-racism education in relation to Black learners in Canada

(1996a; 1996b). EAE takes Dei up on his challenge to integrate Africentric teachings

with other systems of thought, through an approach centered on the experiences and

histories of the African Diaspora that simultaneously promotes an inclusive environment

and encourages students' multiple subject identifications and multi-centric ways of

knowing. EAE seeks to develop creative communities of inquiry that encourage students

to "learn from one another by sharing and exploring the products of their own minds and

hands" (Ruggles, 1998, p. 13). Africentricism is recognized here as a critical component

of transformative education with Black learners (Archer-Cunningham, 2007; Dei, 1996a,

1996b; Henry, 1993; Potts, 2003; Ruggles, 1998). An ever-expanding body of research

continues to demonstrate that positive regard toward one's ethnic group and knowledge

of and respect for African culture are "positively associated with educational success and

other healthy outcomes for children of African descent" (Potts, 2003, pp. 176-177).

In the context of art education, an inclusive Africentric approach— what can also be described as a student-centered, critical multicultural approach to working with Black learners— works to broaden conceptions of 'art' and 'artist' and seeks to examine and dismantle powerful traditions of racism and ethnocentrism ingrained in the histories of Western art and art education (Chalmers, 1992). Two aspects of emancipation are emphasized within this framework: individual emancipation, facilitated through the learner's engagement as a subject rather than object in her or his education, and collective emancipation providing Black learners with tools of critical dialogue, thought and action through which to transform their selves and communities (Murrell, 1997). EAE embraces the central notions of Anti-Racism Education— community and social responsibility, with emphasis placed on the importance of collective responsibility (Dei, 1996b).

In his PhD dissertation "African-Centered Multicultural Art Education", Samuel Adu-Poku (2002) developed and implemented an African-centered, multicultural model for community-based art education as an alternative curriculum and pedagogy for Black students in Vancouver, BC. Adu-Poku's Africentrist pedagogy called for a dialogue-based, group centered, collaborative approach to learning that emphasizes listening, negotiation and compromise. He stressed the importance of caring and involved teacher-student relationships in which teachers lead by example through modelling pride in African cultural values and traditions. At the core of this pedagogy is Freire's notion of praxis, a teaching practice involving theory + reflection + action, in which learning is understood— as it has been for me in Black community work— as "interdependent and bi-directional rather than dependent and unidirectional" (Adu-Poku, p. 266).

Adu-Poku concluded that no single approach to multicultural education will meet the needs of Black learners, and that the most successful approach will be one that is multifaceted and cooperatively involves students, parents, community and school. Art projects should promote meaningful dialogue and collaborative work, and educational discourse must address issues of race, class, ethnicity and culture. The study demonstrated that "community-based groups can function in powerful ways to enhance the efforts of multicultural art education and education in general in Canada" (p. 268).

Paul Dash, an art teacher in the UK, has written about teaching art to African Caribbean students and the challenges he faced in attempting to identify art education resources from the Caribbean. In his essay "Heritage, Identity and Belonging," he identified several of these resources, and outlined his thinking about the lived and inherited experiences of the African Diaspora in relation to art (Dash, 2006). Dash asked challenging questions about identity construction and the intergenerational consequences of the rupture of the African Diaspora from African homelands through the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Borrowing the notion of a Diaspora experience of an "absence of ruins" as described in the writing of Barbados-born poet and historian Kamau Brathwaite, Dash raised the issue of "a real artistic difficulty in the search for origins" experienced by Diaspora peoples born severed from their ancestry (Brathwaite, quoted in Dash, p. 259).

While Adu-Poku focused primarily on West African artistic traditions and on blending African and Canadian approaches to teaching and learning, Dash emphasized postcolonial conceptions of hybridity and problematized notions of authentic origins through a concern with the ways in which African Caribbean cultures are deeply intertwined with and have played a major role in developing civilizations in the West. I

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agree with Dash's assertion that art education should demonstrate for all students how knowledge is shared and produced through cultural exchange and interaction, while challenging his denial of the significance of African histories, philosophies and cultural traditions to those of us born in the West. EAE, as a pedagogical approach centered on the experiences of African Diaspora people, embraces an Africentrism that accentuates "the dynamic relationship of hybridization and fertilization across cultures, countries, dialects, histories, and margins" (Henry, 1993, p.214). As African American feminist Gloria Joseph has argued, "the Afrocentric conceptual system is not exclusively Black or exclusively African" (Gloria Joseph, 1988, quoted in Henry, p. 214).

I conclude my discussion of Emancipatory Art Education by returning to the issue of a lacking engagement with visual art in the Black community[3]. Established explanations for low levels of Black participation in the field of visual art have included the "historically hegemonic, anti-other aesthetic of the Western canon," institutional and structural racism, and lack of opportunity (Charland, 2010, pp. 116-117). William Charland's (2010) study of "African American Youth and the Artist's Identity" added to my understanding of these external and structural issues by addressing the *intra-*community aspects of this phenomenon in an investigation of "Black avoidance of art as an area of study or career aspiration" (p. 117).

Charland worked with fifty-eight adolescent informants from four different American high schools, exploring their attitudes and behaviours toward visual art and the identity of 'artist.' His informants were asked to describe stereotypes that they believed White people attributed to Blacks, and then later in

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[3] It is important to note that this is not the case in the performing arts; Montreal's Black community has longstanding and well renowned music and theatre traditions.

the study were asked to relate widespread stereotypes that people have of artists. There emerged a "startling overlap between informants' understandings of society's demeaning stereotypes of artists and African Americans" (i.e., both as poor, marginalized, moody, unable to function in 'normal society', etc), suggesting that "an African American adolescent who assumes the mantle of artist willingly takes on social stigma aligned with racial stereotypes as well" (p.124). Informants talked about family and community objections to an art career, suggesting that stereotype-informed beliefs about artists exist across generations.

Charland's findings have significant implications for Black community art education and how it may emerge as an emancipatory, transformative practice. He demonstrated that for African American youth "foreclosure on art affiliation is clearly an adaptive strategy" (p. 128) in response to having accepted the dominant model of art as presented to them in school (and the data suggests, reinforced in their communities). Given that "informants visualized anachronistic, antisocial White males when conjuring up the image of an artist it would be a struggle [for them] to integrate that model with the strong racial and family identities that they espoused" (p. 128). As Clifton Ruggles described his own experiences as a Black kid growing up in a low income neighbourhood of Montreal, his parents did not support his interest in art and "if parental discouragement doesn't get you, peer pressure will do it every time. Artistic talent doesn't exactly make you the most popular kid on the block" (Ruggles & Rovinescu, p. 195). The importance of access to Black artist-mentors and art educators working *within* our communities is thus underscored, as is the need for inclusive critical multiculturalism in art education that both broadens understandings of art to include the "unacknowledged undercurrent of

creative visual activity" taking place in Black communities but not recognized as art nor

its creators as artists (Charland, p.128), and allows space for the interrogation of the ways

in which "notions of race have conditioned our understanding of art" and art education

(Chalmers, 1992, p. 134).

Chapter 2: Methodology

In weaving together a hybrid methodology for this study I sought to resist binary ways of thinking about the researcher and researched, teacher and student, and objectivity and subjectivity. As both a university researcher and member of the community being researched I was conscious of occupying the positions of insider (to the community) *and* outsider (to the family) as I attempted to develop ethical, collaborative relationships with researcher-participants and to remain self reflexive and sensitive to the power dynamics of my research. With these concerns in mind, *Family Photos* emerges as a participatory action research study using photographic methods and autoethnography.

In her exploration of the intersections of community art and participatory research, Deborah Barndt (2004) outlines several areas of tension that she feels that participatory research and community arts must engage: (a) Context: local/ global, public/ private tensions; (b) Agency: process/ product, personal/ political, individual/ collective tensions; (c) Praxis: action/ reflection, theory/ practice, critical/ creative tensions; (d) Holistic knowing: body/ mind, rational/ intuitive, matter/ spirit tensions; and (e) Leadership: insider/ outsider, researcher/ researched, facilitator/ artist tensions (p. 224-5). My research explores these tensions, recognizing, as feminist scholar Patti Lather (2006) suggests, that all researchers "do our work within a crisis of authority and legitimization, proliferation and fragmentation of centers, and blurred genres" (p.47).

Participatory Action Research

Participatory action research (PAR) has been shaped by various postmodern and postcolonial discourses in education and is therefore an ideal methodology for *Family Photos,* a project intended to inform an emancipatory art education praxis. My desire is to perform research *with* rather than *on* members of my community (Smith, Bratini, Chambers, Jensen and Romero, 2010), and in this way to produce scholarship that privileges the voices, cultures and lived experiences of Black Montrealers. Power sharing is central to participatory research, which seeks to involve communities in defining the issues to be researched as well as in the full research process, "*by them and for them*" to use Barndt's phrase (2004, p. 222). The *Family Photos* project hence emerged as a "negotiated partnership" (Stocek and Mark, 2009) with and among researcher-participants and my self. I worked to privilege the varied cultural perspectives and ways of knowing of Clippings and her children, while 'respectfully pushing back' if and when oppressive ideologies and narratives surfaced (Smith et al., 2010).

I acknowledged and examined my presence in and influence on the work through a reflexive practice that sought to avoid allowing "idealized conceptions of mutuality and trust" to tempt me into complacency (Smith et al., p. 422). While community educators do require a deep and sophisticated multicultural competence and understanding that is typically obtained through lived experience (Murrell, n.d.), it is certainly not enough for an educator to be of the same ethno-cultural background as her students. As Filipino Canadian cultural worker Marissa Largo (2007) noted in relation to her research in Montreal's Filipino community, we must begin by assuming that shared ethno-cultural identity does not grant us any 'special authority' to conduct research in our communities.

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All too often PAR, participatory photography and photovoice are defined as methods aimed at researcher-participants and communities who are "disempowered," "at risk" and/ or "oppressed." While this is constructed as a gift (of voice, of visibility, etc) and gesture of inclusion, I emphatically reject the predetermined characterization of co-researchers and/ or participants with whom I perform participatory research. It seems to me like a contradiction to promote a democratizing approach to research while maintaining categories that pathologize researcher-participants and/ or label them as essentially lacking.

Situating researcher-participants "as clients or in need of guidance and management" forecloses the possibility of establishing a sense of shared authority in the research practice and consequently contradicts "the most foundational principles of what we [hope] to do as PAR researchers" (Smith et al., p. 415). Doing so simultaneously predetermines the identity/ role of the university researcher or educator (whether community 'outsider' *or* 'insider') as that of 'saviour' who brings and gives empowerment to others, rather than one who works with community members to create structures that enable communities to empower themselves (Macedo & Araújo Freire, in Freire, 1997/2005)[4]. As scholar Annette Henry has argued in discussing educational research, "within the language of dominance there lurks a racialized discourse of pathology, deviance, and deficiency concerning Black people" (Henry, 1993, p. 209; see also McKay 2010). I join Henry in calling on educators and researchers "to rethink, deconstruct, reconstruct the language of theorization", recognizing that without

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[4] This labeling can occur beyond the researcher's control. I was invited to do an e-mail interview about Emancipatory Art Education ahead of a conference at which I was discussing the approach. I was grateful for the opportunity to share my ideas, however much to my embarrassment when the interview was published it appeared under the title *rosalind hampton: Empowering Montreal's Black community.*

challenging some of the dominant assumptions, concepts, values, and practices of social science we can "easily acquiesce in our own oppression as African people" (Henry, p. 209). I take seriously the responsibility to interrogate the kind of educator and researcher I want to be and how this desire on my part mediates how my research is framed and how impressions of the people I work with are constructed.

Photography-based Methods

Family Photos draws on several overlapping photographic methods including participatory photography, *Literacy through Photography* and photovoice. Participatory photography involves providing people with access to cameras and "the opportunity to document, analyze, and make meaning of their own experiences and realities through images and symbols of their own choosing (Daniels, 2003; Evans, 2001; Gallo, 2001; Wang & Burris, 1994)" (Clover, 2006, p. 276). Reflecting on her decision to become a photographer, Wendy Ewald said in a 2002 interview, "I knew I wanted to be involved with lots of different kinds of people, but I felt that being a social worker was dishonest. I felt I couldn't presume to tell anyone else how to live her life" (Lehrer, 2002, para. 2). This comment resonates deeply for me, as I came to community work and art education from an earlier career in the field of social services. Ewald's comment suggests the impetus that would lead her to pursue participatory photography, that is, a desire to *be involved with* people; not only to photograph them, but to be involved with them in meaningful exchange.

A pioneer of participatory photography practice, for nearly four decades Ewald has worked on photographic art projects in collaboration with children, families, women,

and teachers in Labrador, Colombia, India, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Holland, Mexico, and the United States. In 1990 she founded the "Literacy through Photography" (LTP) program at Duke University, working with public school children in Durham, North Carolina. The program "encourages children to explore their world as they photograph scenes from their own lives, and then to use their images as catalysts for verbal and written expression" ("Literacy through Photography Blog", *LTP at CDS*, para. 2). The *Family Photos* project drew on this approach in allowing our responses to family members' photographs to guide our weekly dialogue and in encouraging (while not requiring) researcher-participants to experiment with creative writing as part of their artistic practice.

In the past fifteen years, social sciences have taken up participatory photography as a form of PAR called *photovoice*. Working in the field of public health and education, Caroline C. Wang and her colleagues developed the concept of photovoice "(1) to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns; (2) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important community issues through large and small group discussions of photographs, and (3) to reach policymakers" (Wang & Burris, 1997, p. 370). While the *Family Photos* project does not incorporate outreach to policy makers, I draw on photovoice as a photography-based research methodology and understand the potential of photovoice research to foster community engagement, activism and development within the greater context of the many benefits of community art practice discussed above[5]. Photovoice is consistent with an asset-based approach in

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[5] While outreach to policy makers was not a stated goal of this project, an important objective was to generate recommendations for future EAE practice, and the *Family Photos* study will likely be used as a resource in future outreach geared toward generating support for Black community art programs.

that it can allow people to depict their strengths and values, and need not be framed by an emphasis on 'problems' to be fixed.

Killion and Wang (2000) offer an example of photovoice research by Black women with a project they led to explore the feasibility of an intergenerational house-sharing and mutual assistance program. The project involved five African American women who were encouraged to take pictures about the things, places, and people they love and that have an important impact on their lives, and about what they as African American women had in common (Killion & Wang, p. 312). While the women in Killion and Wang's study spanned three generations, several common themes emerged in their photographs ("my own space, my own place", "transitions", "kinships/ friendships", "our heritage: our hope", "children are a blessing", and "the perils of poverty" (p. 313). Through their participation in the photovoice project they developed mutual respect for one another and engaged in an affirming exchange of ideas and information in which "each woman was an authority on her own life experiences" (p. 320). The older women became mentors to the younger, offering advice about things like child rearing and living independently, and the women built alliances and established a strong sense of community.

The photovoice research methodology has also been used successfully with children and adolescents in a number of social science studies designed to involve them in raising awareness and creatively addressing social problems. Several of these projects are addressed in Wang's (2006) article "Youth participation in Photovoice as a Strategy for Community Change," where she offered an overview of ten such programs, several of which involved ethno-culturally defined communities. Wang's summary demonstrated

the consistency with which youth have responded positively to the opportunity to work creatively and effectively for the betterment of their communities, as well as how "photovoice methodology facilitates youth-adult partnerships in which each group may gain insights into each others' worlds from which they are ordinarily insulated" (Wang, 2006, p. 157).

Drawing on the body of research documenting the use of photovoice and participatory photography, *Family Photos* claims photovoice as a method of participatory action research in art education, incorporating art making and art historical considerations while sidelining outreach to policy makers for the time-being. The multiple benefits of engagement with art, learning art skills, and producing art include the development of creative thinking and creative problem solving skills, learning how to artistically represent ideas and concerns, demystifying and accessing art production skills, and gaining insight into the roles (historically and currently) of art and visual representation in society. The use of photographic methods in this study provided a familiar introduction to an art making practice with great potential as a sustainable activity in the lives of researcher-participants.

Autoethnography

Participatory action research calls for the establishment of trust between researchers and participant-researchers, and this trust must operate in both directions. As bell hooks has noted "when education is the practice of freedom, students are not the only ones who are asked to share, to confess" (hooks, 1994, p. 21). In order to be honest and trustworthy co-researchers, participatory researchers must be deeply self reflexive and

willing to 'encounter ourselves' in relation to our co-researchers and to be accountable for what we discover (Smith, et al., p. 411). I believe that my research is both enhanced and complicated by my "insider-outsider positionality" in relation to the researched community (Smith et al, p. 420), and that this requires a particularly rigorous reflexive research and pedagogical practice on my part that does everything I can to eliminate the possibility of positing myself as an 'all-knowing, silent interrogator' (hooks, 1994, p.21). Required to perform a study for a course in arts-based research methods then, I chose to pursue a project that would allow me to write myself into the *Family Photos* research; to reveal the presence of my self /images and ways of seeing and knowing.

Autoethnography is a method of self-study using autobiographical narrative (Rolling Jr., 2008) and a "form of research that deliberately blurs the boundary between storytelling and traditional social science research" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000 quoted in du Preez, p. 512). Autoethnography provided an approach that I could combine with art practice to explore my own ethno-cultural identity and how it might frame relationships with my co-researchers, and to create my own body of family photos. It became a means for me to make art and meaning out of my personal and professional identities (Rolling Jr. 2008), as well as an ideal structure to support critical race theorizing (Rolling Jr., 2004a, 2008; Lee, 2008; Weems, 2008; Wright, 2006).

I approached self-study quite concerned about the ways in which such work might become highly personalized to the point of limiting its relevance beyond myself as an individual researcher. Having engaged in this form of research I remain cautious about maintaining its relevance to broader issues, while

in agreement with Claudia Mitchell, Sandra Weber and Kathleen Pithouse in their

assertion that:

> When done with a critical gaze, self-study facilitates professional growth
>
> in ways that not only end up changing oneself, but also serve as impetis
>
> for tackling the wider social problems that contextualize our individual
>
> lives. Far from being a route to a blinkered focus on 'me', self study can
>
> actually encourage a wider view of the broader situation that shapes our
>
> individual practice (Mitchell, Weber & Pithouse 2009, p. 119).

Using the framework provided by Anderson's (2006) conception of analytic

autoethnography, then, provided me with a built in link back to the broader issues being

studied. Analytic autoethnography requires a researcher to be a member of the

community or group being studied and visible as such in published texts presenting

research findings. The researcher must engage in analytic reflexivity and be committed to

generating theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena (p. 375). Through an

autoethnographic assemblage practice involving photography (particularly self

portraiture), reflective writing, historical narrative inquiry and assemblage itself (the

collecting and reassembling of found and personal artifacts), I constructed my own *family

album*, imagining and imaging a family history that helped me to more clearly locate and

situate my identities in relation to the research. This work is discussed in *family album: a

Southern auto-genealogy* (Chapter 3).

Research Process

I met Clippings and her children in the context of my work at a Black community mentoring organization of which they were members. Having become quite close to Clippings and involved in her family's life, when the organization ceased operations and I returned to school in 2009 we remained in contact and continued to become close friends. From September to December 2009, Clippings collaborated with me in my art practice, prior to which she reported no meaningful experiences of art. This collaboration involved talking to me about her Vincentian cultural traditions and posing for photographs from which I could later draw. Our pilot project *Clippings' Photovoice*, conducted from February to April 2010, emerged out of this practice with Clippings agreeing that she would like to continue to work with me as an artist and co-researcher.

Clippings' enthusiasm for the pilot project and the ways in which she involved her children in her photographic practice stimulated interest in a family project. For the next year, family members and I continued to discuss art and explore ideas for a family photography project in which they would work as researcher-participants in the context of community art education. I kept them up to date and involved in my progress vis-à-vis the university by discussing the research proposal and ethics review processes.

Given the nature of our relationships it has been somewhat difficult to identify a clear beginning and end to the research; in many ways, as suggested above, we started and ended 'in the middle' (Herr & Anderson, 2005, pp.72 and 128). Formally, however, the *Family Photos* project began on the last weekend of January 2011 and family members and I met weekly (with few exceptions) until late April 2011. We held regular meetings in the front room of the family's home, usually on Sunday afternoons. I also

met individually with Akiva dii T'chaa (AdT) at my apartment on one occasion and once with Kanisha Prima Donna (KPD) at a restaurant. Family members and I collectively agreed upon questions we wanted to ask in the study, and based on the family's preference for dialogue, pre- and post- study interviews were open-ended and took the form of one-on-one and group conversations. KPD and *J-Money* (J-M) were given digital cameras to use for the duration of the study. AdT loaned her mother her camera for the first week and then purchased a camera for Clippings as a birthday gift. Early sessions included instruction and collective problem solving regarding the use of the cameras as well as discussions regarding the ethics involved in photographic practice and our study in particular (Wang & Redwood Jones, 2001; e.g. see Appendix C).

I provided researcher participants with notebooks in which to record reflections, ideas and any other notes related to their process, and kept my own journal throughout the study in which I recorded reflections and observations directly following each session. None of the researcher-participants chose to use written reflection, brainstorming or journaling as part of their practice. It seemed that my ideas about the role that written reflection could play in the study did not appeal to my co-researchers, who preferred to share their ideas and feedback in the context of group dialogue. Early in the study I realized that for this project, an emphasis on reading and writing was counter-indicated as we were most interested in visual art and privileging multiple ways of knowing 'beyond textocentrism' (Singhal & Rattine-Flaherty, 2008). For this reason any handouts that I provided to family members were also read aloud and discussed in our sessions. Researcher-participants chose titles for their work through a dialogical process, and as far as I know Clippings, J-Money and Akiva did not keep any written notes.

Kanisha did keep a little notebook (separate from the one I had given her) in which she recorded what she refers to as her "morals," from which she chose a passage to include with her images.

I understood the *action* of this participatory action research as art education, and as an educator I provided resources, instruction and any other support that researcher-participants required for their work. For the first several sessions I delivered presentations and led activities intended to inform their process as art students. These included 'collective looking' at several photography exhibition catalogues, photo-essays and image-text publications, with an emphasis on the work of Black and Caribbean photographers and writers. An activity that proved especially popular and engaging involved photo elicitation, or reading photographs for stories. All family members particularly enjoyed the serial photographs of Lorna Simpson and Carrie Mae Weems and enthusiastically discussed and debated their potential meanings. Reading and constructing narratives in photographic series led to stronger, more engaged readings of individual photographs taken by Clippings in the pilot project, as well as deeper contemplation of one another's pictures.

As the sessions continued, our focus increasingly turned to the photographs being taken by family members and the issues and themes that began to emerge in their work. My role shifted during this time; I was required to deliver less planned pedagogical content and instead to place greater emphasis on observation and listening in order to learn from the work being done by my co-researchers. This latter role was the more challenging of the research for me, and at times when things got off track it was difficult to know how much control I should attempt to take in reorienting us to the study. PAR

requires that researchers resist becoming project 'leaders' in the traditional sense in order to encourage researcher-participants to take increasing ownership of the project. At the same time, it would have been disingenuous not to acknowledge my role as an educator, my privilege as a 'university researcher' and the unique stakes I had in the project in relation to completing my Masters degree.

Data Collection

Drawing on and elaborating questionnaires that Clippings and I designed in the pilot project, researcher-participants and I addressed six areas of interest prior to and following the study. The overall question that framed our investigation was: Can the members of this family benefit from making art together, and if so in what ways? Drawing on the family's experiences, we sought to make recommendations for Black community art practice. Prior to and following the study we talked about researcher-participants' (a) experience with photography and photographs; (b) experience and skill using a digital camera; (c) participation in research; (d) art-making and sense of accomplishment and pride in the act of creating; (e) self-expression and communication through art making.

The researcher-participants' photographs are also an important source of data in this study, however first and foremost they are understood as artwork. Fixed meanings are not attached to the photographs or sought within them. Rather, as with all artwork, they are understood to evoke various meanings, depending on who is engaging with the work and in what context.   Family members and I discussed their photographs collaboratively throughout the project, drawing on a series of questions that served to

stimulate and guide our dialogue (Appendix E). My analysis of their art draws on these

conversations and various art, cultural theory and research discourses. I bring this

reading of their work, along with information gleaned through interviews and my journal

entries, to the evaluation of researcher-participants' art making experiences. Through

cross-case analysis I then identify dominant and common themes and issues that emerge.

Chapter 3: Discussion of Results

As a participatory action research study, *Family Photos* involved (and in many ways continues to involve) ongoing cycles of planning, action, observation and reflection in dialogue with my co-researchers and a body of relevant literature that grew alongside my understanding of our work. Consequently, the study does not produce an objective and comprehensive set of findings that can be neatly separated from my own and family members' ongoing interpretations and analyses of them. As Kathryn Herr and Gary L. Anderson (2005) note in *The Action Research Dissertation*, action research studies tend to focus more on process than on findings.

> The idea that knowledge—even in the social sciences— converges on findings has been challenged repeatedly. …We are suggesting that solid action research leads to a deepened understanding of the question posed as well as to more sophisticated questions. The findings should demonstrate this kind of deepened understanding, but how the researcher wants to *represent* them is more open. (Herr & Anderson, 2005, p. 86)

With this in mind, I take a holistic approach (Herr & Anderson) to the multiple layers of data generated through the study. I have used the notion of triangulation in my inclusion of multiple perspectives and use of a variety of methods of data collection. The following discussion of results begins with a summary of data collected through pre- and post-study interviews and researcher-participants' photographic practices. This leads into a more in depth discussion of each researcher-participants' experience of the project

and an analysis of a selection of the artwork they produced. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of my reflective practice through self study.

Interviews

Drawing on and elaborating questionnaires that Clippings and I designed in the pilot project, researcher-participants and I addressed six areas of interest prior to and following the study. Rather than individually answering questionnaires as initially planned, family members preferred to answer questions orally and so we had conversations about each area of interest in the style of open-ended interviews.

We completed the pre-study interview together in our second meeting at their home. All four family members had previous experience with some form of art making at the onset of the study and all had experience using a digital camera. All had participated in some form of research, however only Clippings had previously acted as a researcher (in our pilot study). All stated that they felt capable of clearly expressing themselves orally and anticipated that they would be able to so through their art. Clippings, KPD and J-M stated that they had created something in the past that they were proud of and articulated confidence in their abilities to engage in photographic practice. These responses were duplicated in our post-study discussions, with these three researcher-participants expressing great satisfaction with their work and pride in their accomplishments. AdT on the other hand, expressed less confidence at the onset of the project and replied "not yet" when asked if she had ever created something she is proud of in her pre-study interview. While she often assisted her mother by taking photographs that Clippings staged and wished to appear in, AdT did not create her own body of work

in the context of this project and post-study she repeated that she has yet to create something that she is proud of.

Researcher-participants and I had an animated discussion about their expectations around whether or not their family could benefit from making art together. Clippings confidently stated that she thought that the family would benefit from art making, reminding me that at the end of our pilot study she and I had anticipated as much. AdT and KPD were slightly more hesitant, with AdT stating that she *guessed* it would be fun, and KPD emphasizing that the family would benefit from the project *only* if they remained very open minded. Finally, J-M offered that "sure, *some* families could benefit, but it depends on the family; I dunno' if *this* family can!" After a slight pause he added "We'll try…"

Following the study, all family members expressed positive feedback about the experience overall. Post-study interviews were conducted in a meeting with Clippings and J-M at their home, and in separate telephone conversations with KPD and AdT. Clippings reflected on both *Family Photos* and *Clippings' Photovoice* and we discussed how much experience she gained over the course of the two projects. She expressed pride in her developing identity as a photographer and recalled the pleasure she derives from performing photography:

> [Photography] gives you experience; you know, like when I see those birds come in flock— like we say at home *flocka birds*— I see it out the window and I run to get the camera. It's very, very exciting to take pictures. From the beginning I liked it because it gives you experience. (Clippings, post-study interview)

J-Money agreed with his mother adding that working on a family photography project

"teaches you how to use the camera and how to take

good pictures."

All researcher-participants stated post-study

that they felt that families in the Black community

can benefit from photography and making other

kinds of art together. Despite significant tension and

conflict between them throughout the project and

Figure 1. Flocka Birds.
Clippings, 2011.

within the sessions, KPD and J-M both affirmed without hesitation that they felt they had

benefited from the project as individuals and as a family. Both expressed pride in their

work and recommended that familial art practice be part of community art programs. J-

Money said that he would be happy to participate in another, similar project and that "it

benefits families because it teaches you skills and ways to use art to make special things."

KPD suggested that art practice can be a way to enhance family communication, and

reiterated her call for family art practice to be approached with an open mind:

> It's a very positive activity for families; for family members to see what
>
> each other sees and to see through their eyes. Y'know, because it's
>
> photography you see what they see as if through their eyes. I would do it
>
> again. Everyone has to be open minded though, and then there's a benefit
>
> for any family who does it. …Cooperation is really important and you
>
> need to take it as a family activity and feel like it's something creative
>
> everyone can do together, y'know, as photographers. It uplifts the family

name and the family's sense of value and worth. (KPD, post-study

interview)

Both J-M and KPD emphasized that photography in the context of the project had

been a form art and talked about the difference between photography-as-art and

photographic practices they pursue with their friends. Reflecting on the *Family Photos*

project J-Money said that "There's a *way* big difference between this kind of

photography and taking pictures with my friends" and suggested that the intention of the

photographic practice and the subject matter work to define this difference. For J-M, the

Family Photos project was a private practice within his home, while the pictures he takes

with friends are tied to special events when they go out. KPD expressed similar

observations:

> Photography is... not the same when it's in a project like this. When you
>
> take pictures with your friends you're projecting; you're affected by the
>
> social scene you're in. But in this project I thought more about my own
>
> thoughts and I was more free to take pictures of what I thought was
>
> important. I was on my own, y'know? On your own you're with yourself.
>
> I'm very happy to have had that time to experiment. It makes you realize
>
> that a picture has a second sense. (KPD, post-study interview)

Photographs

Each researcher-participant began their process by reflecting on their historical relationship with photographs and examining (and in some cases photographing) old school and family photos, as well as photos taken with friends. It appeared that this trend was inspired by Clippings, who early in the study brought several old family pictures into the front room. Several of these are framed, and preparing them for display, she rested them on a surface beside where we met each week.

Collectively, the family took 243 photographs, the majority of which were taken within and around their home. Family members and I analyzed their photographs collaboratively throughout the project, drawing on a series of questions that served to stimulate and guide our dialogue (Appendix E). Clippings took the most pictures—128, twenty-three of which she chose for inclusion in the family catalogue. Kanisha Prima Donna took 88 pictures, and J-Money took twenty-seven; each chose sixteen images for the final catalogue, *Family Photos: Picturing Ourselves* (Appendix G).

Each family member received copies of all of their photographs and of the twenty-five page family catalogue on a CD. Clippings, J-M and KPD each also received at least two prints (5x7" or 8x10") of their favourite images. A lack of financial resources limited the scope of how many photographs we could print, and while we created a digital version of a family catalogue, we have not printed copies of it as of the time of this writing. The photographs exist as both family photos and as *Family Photos*; both private as domestic practice and public as artwork. At the conclusion of the study, Clippings expressed that she would like to be able to make more prints and to show the photographs in an exhibition, while KPD has maintained consistently that she does not

want to have a family exhibition. Clippings would also like to print copies of all of the

photographs to send home to family members in St. Vincent. We will continue to discuss

if and how we wish to use the photographs and to explore our options in terms of

financial resources. Like any artists then, family members have produced work that they

may or may not choose to exhibit in their home or publicly and that they may or may not

choose to expand and develop further.

Family Photos: **The art and the artists.**

I have organized the following discussion of each researcher-participant's

experiences into three overlapping sections. First, I address the family member's artistic

process and emerging *aesthetic identity* (a notion explained further below). Second, I

identify the dominant subject matter and themes raised in and by the family member's art

work and third I discuss each researcher-participants' approach to photography.

Throughout this process, I analyze what I understand to be a representative (albeit

limited) selection of each family member's artwork.

I use the term 'aesthetic identity' in discussing researcher-participants'

conceptions of themselves as creators of beauty and art— similar to Darlene Clover's use

of the term to refer to 'empowerment as an artist' (2011, p. 20). I also use the term in its

broader sense as a social construction that helps to define a group. Here I draw on

sociologist William G. Roy, who uses the concept of aesthetic identity to refer to "the

cultural alignment of artistic genres to social groups by which groups come to feel that

genres represent 'our' or 'their' art, music and literature" (Roy, 2002, *Abstract*, p. 459). I

find Roy's ideas helpful in thinking about the ways in which cultural forms are

"embedded with racial codes, associating genres and racial groups" (Roy, p. 467) and the ways in which we might decode and unpack these correlations. Consequently, my discussion of the emerging aesthetic identities of researcher-participants is informed by what I know of their individual artistic tastes and preferences as well as the ways in which visual art practice begins to materialize as relevant to and inclusive and representative of Black people's experiences.

Clippings.

Artistic process & aesthetic identity.

Our pilot project served Clippings very well in *Family Photos.* She was confident and well prepared to fully participate in the project. She took by far the most photographs, and often assumed the lead in our discussions. The following entry from my journal describes a session exemplifying how she acted as an artist-mentor to her children:

Clippings took a leadership role in a photo elicitation exercise I had planned. First we worked from a handout showing three photos by Carrie Mae Weems from her Kitchen Table series [Weems, 1990]. Clippings was very excited by the images and immediately constructed a narrative: in the first picture the little girl was politely waiting for her mother's attention as a Caribbean child would (not like Clippings' own children, she said, who would be interrupting her and insisting on her attention!). The woman, a mother according to Clippings' reading, is reading the Bible. In the second image, Clippings was positive that the mother was praying with her daughter. She said that she could clearly see this in the way the woman is leaning her hands on the table. In the final

image, Clippings says that the child is studying and writing down an important passage in the Bible with her mother. KPD and J-M supported their mother's reading of the images, with KPD quite enthusiastically agreeing with her mother. We then looked at the entire series and everyone took a very active role in the reading....

Moving on to an image taken by Clippings last year, "One of those Moments" [Figure 2]*, I asked the family if they could read this image in the same ways as we'd read Carrie Mae Weems' work. This proved to be a very fulfilling exercise and now, Clippings took a back seat and allowed her children to read her artwork without her input. She had a huge smile on her face throughout. Especially given their familiarity with its cultural context, the kids were able to read Clippings' work very effectively. J-Money seemed moved by the fact that the picture was taken in his room and references his absence. He shared that when he was* [away from home] *he kept a Bible open in his room and when asked why, he said because his mother taught him to. KPD read the text accompanying the image aloud, and there was a beautiful moment when she realized it was written in Patois and adjusted from reading it in English to reading it in Patois. She knew the song that her mother references in the text and we all sang along.* (Journal entry, 6 Feb. 2011)

Some project sessions generated the type of mutual support and family sentiment described above, while other sessions were characterized by conflict and opposition. This is to be expected when families work together and bring their complex and layered relationships to the research situation. As the head of the family, Clippings' mood and commitment to participating in a session often set the tone regardless of my agenda on any given day. Typical of PAR, the sharing of power and authority in the project was an

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ongoing negotiation that often shifted 'between consent and resistance' (Barndt, p. 224).

While encouraging all researcher-participants to take ownership of the study, at the same

time I felt it was important to maintain respect for Clippings' authority as a parent.

Clippings was able to take this on and emerged as an artist mentor in the project while

maintaining attention to her individual artistic process as well.

Dominant subject matter and themes.

Three predominant and overlapping themes have consistently emerged in

Clippings' artwork: (a) notions of home— 'her home as her space' and of St Vincent as

her homeland; (b) family relationships and responsibilities (to her children and to family

members 'back home'); and (c) religious beliefs and practices. In addressing these

themes Clippings' photographs are *double- and triple coded*, articulating her

transnational and trans-cultural inheritances and lived experiences. Scholars Greg

Dimitriadis and Cameron McCarthy describe 'double coding' as "the tendency of the

postcolonial artist to mobilize two or more fields of reference or idiom in any given

work," that can be traced back to such practices as "the code switching and multiple

articulations or revisions of Christian hymns by African slaves [that] allowed them to

circulate meaning around and beyond the gaze of plantation owners" (Dimitriadis &

McCarthy, 2001, p. 26).   Clippings' Vincentian, Caribbean and Canadian ways of life

and of knowing (as well as multiple and intersecting subject positions, as Christian,

woman, mother, sister and daughter) are signified in her photographs and in the Patois

'spoken' in her texts. This kind of double- and triple coding in art serves a postcolonial

collective history and 'visualization of community' (ibid).

Her piece *One of those Moments* (2010), discussed in my journal entry above, provides an example of how Clippings incorporates all of her themes in one work:

Figure 2. One of those Moments. Clippings, 2010

Baptist is my mother's church.
We lookin' at services in various places.
Trying to remember, like,
The good times I used to have
when I home and go out with the Baptists;
I'm tryin' to get back that ***rhythm*** of how they make you feel,
Not like here…

Back home, they,—everybody
Has a ***sound***,
And when you get down to there
You will dance, Oh!
It's so sweet.

…So he not there,
So I always keep a Bible.
It's how the song say: I put my Bible in front the door, no one can enter in.
We would sing that song; them people don't know but the Baptists know that.

I put the Bible in front the door no one can enter
I put the Bible in front the door no one c--No one!
No one, no one, no one can enter in.

Because the Bible is a weapon eh?
Like, you can carry it around every day, and…

One of those moments,
yeh
Just one of those moments.

Approach to photography.

Clippings enjoys storytelling, and the ways in which photographs can be grouped

together to suggest a narrative is very appealing to her. To emphasize the ways in which

her photographs tell stories, we arranged several of them into triptychs in the first project,

and experimented with photographic series in *Family Photos*. She is also fond of

appearing in her own images in order to tell stories about herself, and created many self

images with the assistance of her children. This process of staging self portraits and

having an assistant click the actual photo can be understood as "a parallel to the 'as-told-

to-autobiography'" (Adams, 2000, p.231) and Clippings is understood as the author of

the images she created in this way. She very much enjoys the work of Carrie Mae

Weems, Ingrid Pollard and Lorna Simpson—all Black women photographers of her

generation who provide resonant, provocative and at times humorous examples of

photographic practices addressing issues of race and gender.

Clippings' practice underscores an understanding of photography as a

"performance of representation in which both the act and the material product of the act,

the photographic image, generate multiple and inter-related meanings" (Frosh, 2001, p.

43). Her pictures accumulate as material traces of her performances of Self and construct

a layered individual and domestic self-re-presentation (Campt 2009). Through images

and narratives of her daily life activities —caring for family members, maintaining her

home, following religious and spiritual traditions;— Clippings' presence in her

photographs posits her Self as the embodiment of her moral and cultural values. Her

developing practice as a photographer speaks to an "emerging definition of art 'as

experience' and as visible signs of everyday life" (Kinloch 2007, p. 46).

Clippings' Photovoice and Clippings' production in the *Family Photos* project can

be considered as one continuing body of work. In both projects she authored

photographs in which she is featured with a Bible, in which she is shown cleaning her

home, and of the process of sending food and other supplies back home to St. Vincent.

Figure 3. When You Give Unto the Poor, You Lend Unto the Lord. Clippings, 2011

Having regretted not capturing images of the barrels being taken away to ship to St.

Vincent in the pilot project, this year Clippings authored seventeen photographs

documenting the entire process, including the barrels being wheeled down the snow-

covered street. We chose six of these to assemble in a series for the final catalogue, that

she titled *When You Give Unto the Poor, You Lend Unto the Lord* (Figure 3).

40

Clippings' artwork incorporated much more text in the pilot project, while in *Family Photos* she focused more on the photography. She attributed this primarily to having had weekly one-on-one discussions in the pilot project that we audio recorded and drew from for the text that was later paired with her images. Working with her children as well, the dynamics in the sessions were quite different and we decided not to record our meetings[6]. This meant that Clippings and I did not have an archive of dialogue addressing each of her photos in the way we had the previous year and consequently she did not use text in the same way in her art.

Throughout the *Family Photos* project, Clippings assigned titles to her images as she viewed them each week on my laptop, keeping a pen and piece of paper handy to keep track of her ideas. Rather than the individual contemplation I had imagined this process to entail, for Clippings it was a socially engaged, dialogic process; she would 'think aloud,' ask our advice, and even make phone calls to Vincentian friends to seek their input. Each time, these calls would begin with Clippings announcing herself by greeting the person on the other end of the line and explaining "I'm working on a project and need to ask you something…". This is one example of the unique ways in which Clippings worked to bring a sense of community into the project. She also insisted that during our sessions every week we listen to *Bhum Bhum Tyme,* a CKUT radio show co-hosted and produced by a very active member of the community who we both know, Pat Dillon Moore (see http://patdillonmoore.com). While at first I found the radio distracting and often asked if we could turn the volume down 'just a bit,' Clippings' insistence on

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[6] *Family photos* sessions were not audio recorded for several reasons including (a) they were each a minimum of 2-3 hours long, (b) sessions with the children lacked the focus that Clippings and I were able to achieve one on one, and (c) Clippings insisted on the radio (and at times the television) being on during sessions.

the importance of music persevered and by the later sessions I would find myself stopping mid-sentence to sing along with her to the words of a song that Pat was playing. On more than one occasion, Clippings telephoned the radio station from our meetings, to request a song, or to send out wishes or condolences to someone in the community. In the ways in which Clipping drew on members of the community and her children's assistance, hers can be understood as a form of dialogical (or conversational) art practice that "unfolds through a process of performative interaction" (Kester, 2004, p. 10).

Figure 4. Untitled.
Clippings, 2011

Figure 5. Untitled.
Clippings, 2011

In addition to series of photos depicting her in action (e.g. packing barrels, cooking, cleaning, reading the Bible) Clippings also staged several photographs in which she posed beside AdT's new television. When viewed alongside photographs she took of the family television, these raise issues of representation and the media (Figures 4-6). Particularly rich in this regard, I find, is Clippings' self portrait beside a television with what appears to be a woman exercising on the screen (Figure 6). The woman's pale skin contrasts sharply with the black body suit and tights that cover it from her waist down. Clippings stands beside this image, wearing a sleeveless shirt and

showing bare legs, her "Black" skin thus over-exposed as not *black* at all.   The photograph works in this way to raise questions about racial categories.

I hasten to add that the above reading of Clippings' images is, of course, informed by my particular positionality as someone who is engaged with cultural theory and criticism. Clipping did not intend to raise issues of race with the photographs she took with the television. She likes the photo very much (Fig. 6), and describes her decision to pose beside the television as a spontaneous one and of "taking a picture at the right time and the right place."

Figure 6. Untitled.
Clippings, 2011

One of the issues we explored in this project was the limited capacity of an artist to fix the meaning of her or his art or to control precisely how it will be interpreted. Artwork (including Clippings') that evokes multiple interpretations—as did much of the professional photographic art that we looked at— is often the most interesting. Clippings' primary concern was that her photographs presented images that affirmed her experiences, and she often stated that she liked 'how she looks' in her favorite photographs. She interprets photography largely in terms of its perceived indexicality; its ability to create and thus prove positive representations. Her photography serves as an 'autographic counter practice' (Hall & Sealy, 2001, p.4), through which she has become increasingly creative in experimenting with re-presentations of herself.

Finally, Clippings emphasized repeatedly how photographs can communicate and evoke sentiment across time and space. In the post-study interview for example, she described a photograph that her hairdresser has on the wall of her salon that shows Black children combing one another's hair that reminded Clippings "of like when you home in the Caribbean." She commented on the value of this photograph and how so many people from the Caribbean would want and be willing to purchase it. She often wondered about and looked forward to how family members in St. Vincent would respond to her images and saw one of the main uses for the family's photos as communicating with relatives abroad.

Akiva dii T'Chaa.

Artistic process & aesthetic identity.

AdT is Clippings' eldest daughter, a 21 year old who lives at home and attends school full time. AdT was the family member I knew the least well at the onset of the project. I had observed that she holds a unique, interstitial position in the family; not quite 'one of the kids' and yet still her mother's daughter and not quite an autonomous adult. This in-between positioning in the family seemed to inform AdT's role in the *Family Photos* project, in which she was a researcher-participant who often chose not to participate or to marginalize her participation.

From the beginning of the study AdT expressed less confidence in the potential benefits of the project and in her own creativity, despite having the most photography experience. She had taken a photography class at school the semester before our project. In one of the first sessions, she went to her bedroom and retrieved the contact sheets of photographs she had taken for the class to share with us. I was surprised to learn that she had not shown them to family members before. KPD asked to see them and looked through them carefully, which seemed to provide a positive moment of recognition for AdT. However unexpectedly, these were the last photos AdT showed in the project. She attended some of the early sessions and participated actively in dialogue and exercises when she did, however remained on the periphery of the project overall. Her primary role in *Family Photos* was as a technical assistant to Clippings and (although to a lesser extent) her siblings. AdT did not create her own body of work in the context of the study and seemed to me to have lost interest in participating, however she consistently maintained that she was interested and 'still in the project'. Post-study AdT has had

several conversations with me about the project and expressed interest in the work created by her family.

Dominant subject matter and themes.

In the second week of the study, AdT and I got into a discussion about the issue of 'light skin privilege,' what is also referred to as *colourism*. The issue had gained particular prominence among Caribbean youth when in January 2011 a popular dancehall reggae artist from Jamaica, Vybz Kartel, publicly acknowledged and defended bleaching his skin (see Hope, "From *Browning* to *Cake Soap*: Popular Debates on Skin Bleaching in the Jamaican Dancehall" in *Skin bleaching and global White supremacy,* 2011). AdT is a fan of Kartel, and expressed empathy for his position. Around this same time AdT and I had an exchange on *Facebook* about colourism and AdT's resentment of women with lighter skin tones who buy into the privileges it affords them.

I had been conscious of the potential significance of my biracial heritage and lighter skin tone in the pilot project and had described it in my final report of the study as a "yet unspoken aspect of Clippings' and my relationship" (Hampton, 2010b, p.15). I knew that in Saint Vincent and elsewhere in the Caribbean lighter skin tone is strongly associated with economic opportunity and perceived ability. Regardless of class and social status, people often assess one another's value and opportunities according to perceived racial characteristics (e.g. see Young, 1993; Waters, 1985). In thinking about light skinned privilege in relation to art education, I drew on art historian Krista A. Thompson's discussion of a 1936 play titled *The West Indian*, in her essay "Black Skin, Blue Eyes: Visualizing Blackness in Jamaican Art, 1922-1944" (Thompson, 2004). The

play is about a Black slave character named Black Man, and a mixed race ("coloured")

artist named Painter, who attempts to liberate Black Man by enlightening him through

'art and the intellect.' "The play concludes when the Painter invites Black Man to an

upper-class function where white guests greet them both with hostility. The Painter

realizes that he shares a common predicament of enslavement with the slave"

(Thompson, p. 14). The play ends with the Painter disassociating himself from "white

company" and he and Black Man becoming allies against colonialism. In a world

conceived as Black and White, the biracial subject is idealized as straddling both worlds,

up until the inevitable moment, that is, when she or he will be forced (from within or

from without) to "pick sides." And while they may be liberating, artistic and the

intellectual pursuits are ultimately perceived as 'White.'

A flood of recent discourse and scholarship on the issues of skin bleaching and

colourism demonstrate how colonial legacies continue to affect 'communities of colour'

all over the world (Bromley-Mcghie, 2008; Indongo, 2011; Patterson, 2008; *Skin*

bleaching and global White supremacy, 2011; Thiyagarajah, 2010). During the first

month of our study this was a particularly prominent issue in Caribbean popular culture

and I had conversations about skin tone with both AdT and J-M during which they

described 'being dark skin' as a disadvantage that makes them unattractive to peers of the

opposite sex.

Given the salience of the issue, then, I gathered various documentary videos and

artwork to share with researcher-participants in more formally addressing the issue[7].

This session ended up taking place in two parts; I met with Clippings, J-M, and KPD in

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[7] My exchanges with AdT and desire to further examine the issue of my biracial heritage also became
the starting point for my self study, discussed in the final section of this chapter.

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our regular session at the family's home, and then one-on-one with AdT a few days later. In the session with Clippings, KPD and J-M, especially watching and responding to the video *Family of Skin Bleachers* (Bromley-Mcghie, 2008) brought to the forefront tensions between feeling proud of being Black and critical of bleaching on the one hand, and the lived realities of having dark skin in a society that holds 'Whiteness' supreme on the other. We had an animated and engaging conversation and family members asked to watch the video a second time which we did. AdT had been unable to attend the session with the rest of her family, and I was concerned that our exchanges about the issue on *Facebook* had produced too much pressure on her to feel comfortable addressing it again. When I invited her to meet me for a one-on-one session at my home however, she did so, and we had a very engaging and productive meeting.

AdT and I did not speak about our relationship specifically rather we focussed on the video and artwork. We examined Carrie Mae Weems' *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried* (1995-96) and discussed our reading of the series and how the images work with the text. One of the images references exactly a point that AdT had raised in our exchanges, that regarding slave owners raping slaves and producing 'mulatto' children and how these lighter skin Blacks became "accomplices" (Weems, 1995-96). AdT seemed to appreciate this illustration of how her observations might be explored through art.

In our one-on-one meeting AdT spoke more openly and seemed more engaged than in our sessions with other researcher-participants. She also spoke about her relationship with her mother and unique positioning in the family. I wrote in my journal following the meeting:

Akiva actually did make a plan to meet with me and came to my apartment this morning for the meeting!! I was really happy about this and told her so. We went over the same exercises that I did on Sunday with the others. She was deeply engaged and our conversations were rich. I gave her breakfast and we sat at my dining room table. She had already seen the Family of Bleachers video as J-Money had sent it to her on her Facebook page… She seems less certain about her position on Vybz Kartel' skin bleaching now [and we] *talked about the dangers of this practice ….*

   Akiva made many comments about her childhood that I found really interesting. Reflecting on her mother's reading of the "Kitchen Table Series" for example, she talked to me about how her mother taught her to pray and how she still prays, but doubts her brother and sister do. She also talked about other moral & behavioural codes that her mother taught her and seemed to take the time to reflect on what she recalls from her early childhood before her brother and sister were born. (Journal entry, 11 Feb. 2011)

   My meeting with Akiva dii T'Chaa one-on-one provided for our most constructive exchanges of the project in my opinion. For this reason I asked in her post-study interview if she thought that it was challenging to meet as a family and if she would have preferred more individual sessions. AdT suggested that "it depends on what stage of the project. Further down in the project it's better to meet as a group, but in the beginning it could be better to meet one-on-one to talk." I asked if she prefers group work or working on her own and she said "I don't really get along with groups; I'd prefer to work on my own and take my time."

Approach to photography.

While AdT did not participate in the project in the same kinds of ways as her

mother and siblings, she did spontaneously take a few pictures of herself with Clippings'

camera, while acting as her mother's assistant (e.g., Figure 7). She had also done this on

occasion during the pilot project, and these photographs were taken as spontaneous

snapshots of herself without the intention of creating artwork. While AdT did not see

these pictures as 'counting' for the study, the images can be seen as asserting AdT's

presence if not her participation in the project.

In her post-study interview AdT described her role

in *Family Photos* as "more helping [her] mother" and she

emphasized assisting Clippings rather than a sense of

herself as an artist. This noted, AdT's presence in her

mother's practice did become more visible in the *Family*

Photos than it had been in *Clippings' Photovoice* and this

hints at AdT's more involved role as a researcher-

participant in the *Family Photos* project.

Figure 7 Untitled.
AdT, 2011

In the series of images from which Clippings' *When You Give Unto the Poor…* (see

Figure 3) was selected, for example, both AdT and Clippings are shown in action. As

Clippings has become more skilled with the digital camera her practice has developed

from an emphasis on staging her performance in front of the camera, to a more complex

practice involving performance on both sides of the camera. The series suggests an

interactive and collaborative practice of Clippings and AdT photographing one another

'in the act' of giving unto the poor. Thus while these images and others taken by AdT

document Clippings' daily activities, they also both reveal and conceal AdT's presence and the roles that she plays in her mother's daily life.

Akiva dii T'Chaa has her own camera and often takes pictures of herself to post on *Facebook*. As it was in relation to the image I have included here with her permission, her primary concern tends to be whether or not she "looks good" in her pictures. When considered in light of our conversations about skin tone, this suggests issues of gender, race and representation as areas of concern. AdT's involvement in the project and her assertion that Black families can benefit from collaborative art making, imply that she continues to be interested in how issues can be explored critically and creatively through art. Her mother's art practice can be seen as providing a secure space for AdT to begin to think about and explore this interest. In the context of *Family Photos*, I see Akiva's desire to assist others toward facilitating their artistic processes as a strength reflecting a sense of investment that she has continued to demonstrate through ongoing discussions and analysis of the project with me post-study.

Kanisha Prima Donna.

Artistic process & aesthetic identity.

KPD is sixteen years old and the middle child of the family. She is very creative and articulate and she and I have a close relationship. KPD came to the project with a strong interest in art and sense of herself as an artist. She was enthusiastic about the project from the onset and said she was touched that I trusted her enough to loan her a brand new digital camera.

KPD began her process by removing the new memory card from the camera and inserting the one from her old broken camera. Consequently when we were ready to view her first set of photographs in the project on my laptop, I was amazed to find hundreds of images! KPD wanted to look at all of these pictures of her and her friends from earlier in her adolescence in our session. For KPD this seemed to be a form of memory
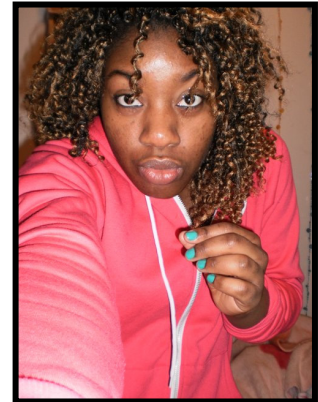
Figure 8. Untitled
KPD, 2011

work (the *memory card* 'containing' a visual record of past moments in front of the camera) as well as her way of claiming the camera. When I asked her why she did not want to use the new memory card she responded that she wanted it –the camera, the card and her photographic practice— to be *hers*. Switching the memory cards seemed to be an important starting point for KPD's inquiry, allowing her to situate the project within her personal history of photography and to establish a sense of ownership of her practice. After looking through some of the collection in our session she agreed that for the remainder of the *Family Photos* project she would take new pictures.

KPD approached her photographic practice as artistic performance and like her mother, the majority of the pictures she took are of her Self. A significant difference between Clippings' and KPD's approaches is that KPD is almost exclusively the one who takes her pictures. This self-determination is very much part of her character and it seemed important to her that she control the moment an image was recorded. At the same time KPD was very interested in what her photographs might reveal beyond her conscious intentions. She was interested in the "creatively accidental" aspects of self portraiture; that no matter how carefully she posed, she could only be partially in control of her representation (Nancy Roberts, quoted in Adams, 2000, p. 228).

While none of the participants took up journaling, as I noted earlier KPD did keep a little notebook in which she occasionally recorded her morals. While she did not view this writing practice as directly connected to the project she chose to share some of her writing in the context of our sessions and toward the end of the project decided to include some of this text in the final catalogue.

KPD's aesthetic identities are informed by a broad variety of creative interests and diverse aesthetic tastes. While deeply committed to her Vincentian genealogy and cultural identity, since I have known her, KPD has asserted that she is "African-Caribbean-Canadian and 1/8 Chinese." I understand KPD's insistence on '1/8 Chinese' as an insistence on the hybridity of her ethno-cultural identities; she is also fluently bilingual and in a city and Black community that is largely divided socially and geographically by language, KPD moves fluidly among French and English peers and communities. These strengths and personality traits allow KPD to feel a sense of entitlement to pursue whatever art practices interest her. While she tends to express a

preference for representations that engage and reflect African Diaspora experiences, she

embraces a broad definition of 'art' that encompasses a vast array of cultural forms. One

of her mottos is "Steal from the best and make it your own," and she applies this to what-

or whomever she sees as 'the best' in any given way. The notion of having to *steal* rather

than learn or borrow from others, however, does raise the issue of how perceptions and

realities of access can problematize a sense of entitlement.

Dominant subject matter and themes.

The titles and text that KPD chose to
supplement her photographs often carry a
religious tone and suggest her values. In the
written passage she chose to be included in the
catalogue following her photograph *Words of*
Wisdom (Figure 9), for example, she offers a religious interpretation of some of the

Figure 9. Words of Wisdom
KPD, 2011

challenges she faces as a young woman:

> There are some who will make you question how you feel. I say,
> They are testers, sent by the devil.
> If I am confident he will send an intimidator or provoker.
> If I am in love, a seducer, testing my relationship.
> Forgive them
> For they do not know better.
> Used by the devil they are not strong enough.
> He will send people to do his deeds.
> Trust myself for I am doing as I please.
> With pride and no harm to another.
> I shall let no man shatter my path.

In her writing as in her images, KPD concludes her passage by re-asserting a sense of

control and self-determination.

In many of the pictures she took of herself KPD appears to look *into* rather than simply *at* the camera (e.g. see Figures 8 & 10). In the context of her deep engagement with self portraiture, KPD's intense gaze speaks to a stated desire to 'see something new' through looking into the camera at her future self looking at her image-in-process of her self. Simultaneously her gaze works to assert the image of a young woman who is fearless and in control, not a passive object being photographed, but a dynamic subject in charge of her own image.
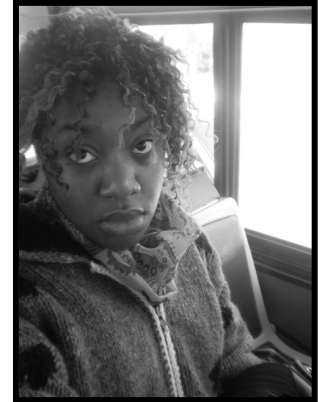
Figure 10. Untitled.
KPD, 2011

The ten photographs that make up *The Road to Salvation* (Figure 11) provide another example of Kanisha Prima Donna's exploration of her self image. The photos were taken roughly a month into the project. KPD performed and took them alone in her bedroom, and showed them for the first time during our session on February 27th. The ten images that make up the series are the ten pictures she presented to us; we did not select some and not others. I recorded my perceptions and reflections about the work and KPD's presentation of it in my journal:

Kanisha's pictures created a bit of an uproar, because she photographed herself making intense facial expressions and in most of the photos her breasts were exposed. Her family members were very uncomfortable with this work—perhaps more so with her facial expressions than her nudity. They could not understand why KPD would want to represent herself this way. I was shocked at first, as ...KPD had allowed us to open the new folder of images without warning us that she appeared nude in them. J-M moved away from my laptop so that he could not (continue to) see the pictures.

I acknowledged that while sometimes artists choose to work in the nude for various reasons, this is a family art project and we have to consider how our work might make everyone else feel. I also said that KPD is not an adult and would need her mother's permission to appear shirtless in any of her pictures. I asked KPD what had informed her decision and what she thought her nudity brought to the images, and she answered that she was trying to capture her self "raw." (Journal entry, 27 Feb. 2011)

Kanisha's images and her family's responses to them raised questions about the function of photography as it relates to issues of gender, race and representation. We talked about whether or not it is important to 'look good' in pictures and how we determine what or who 'looks good' and what or who doesn't. Clippings was concerned about how KPD had photographed close-ups of her face showing facial hair, and KPD defended the images as representing her face— and "how a woman's face can look."
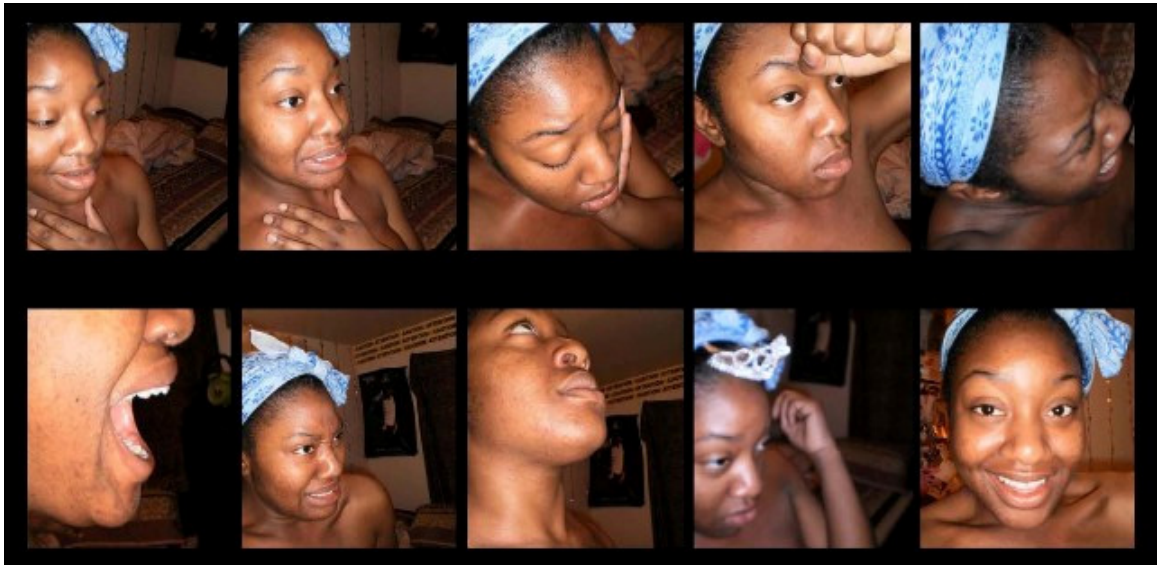
Figure 11. The Road to Salvation
Kanisha Prima Donna, 2011

While this conversation was important, the session came to a difficult ending, with family members (particularly J-M and KPD) in conflict. KPD had produced a very provocative series of images that elicited much emotion and discomfort for her family. Clippings insisted on KPD taking responsibility for the work by *not* simply stating that she would forbid her to show the pictures. Instead, she asked her daughter to come up with an answer to why she needed to appear nude.

By the time of our session the following week, KPD had decided against showing her breasts in the photographs, saying that she made this decision in part after showing the pictures to her boyfriend. She had concluded that the nudity was not necessary as long as it was suggested, and we cropped the images to this effect. KPD explained that with this work she was 'experimenting with how to see inside of herself from the outside.' She continued to clarify and defend her work to her family members, who again raised questions about why she would represent herself in ways that are not what they see as attractive. I was both impressed by the serious thought that KPD seemed to be giving her artistic dilemma and by her determination to defend her choices. Moreover, all family members had shown strength and a commitment to the collaboration in responding to and moving beyond this challenging issue.

I brought KPD a Cindy Sherman exhibit catalogue[8] to look through. I thought Sherman's work and practice might resonate with her, particularly in the ways that the artist works alone, photographing herself using a remote control. KPD was only vaguely interested in Sherman's work however, commenting that she 'gets what Sherman is doing' but that she preferred and felt more of a connection to the work in the *FLAVA*

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[8] *The Complete Untitled Film Stills: Cindy Sherman.* [exhibit catalogue]. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2003.

catalogue[9] that I had also brought for us to look at, which featured a collection of

photographic work exploring Black identity and included images of urban Black youth.

In reflecting on the session, I thought about KPD's lack of familiarity with the

film era and distinctive image of women that Sherman was referencing with the work in

question. KPD's apathetic response to the catalogue caused me to think of the

combination of generational and cultural differences that exist between the vulnerable

and passive 'woman as spectacle' (Mulvey, 1989) that Sherman experienced in the films

of her childhood, and the provocative diva as spectacle that permeates the popular culture

of KPD's adolescence. KPD's pop culture heroines actively engage the gaze of the

viewer, and perform an embodied, sexualized construction of power and self-

determination[10]. As African American feminist Patricia Hill Collins and others have

shown, Black women artists of the hip hop generation are engaged in a different kind of

personal politics than their predecessors. Encouraging "Black girls and women to

embrace their individualism and personal expression," these 'hip hop feminists' argue for

Black women's rights "to be respected, to be loved by their families and partners, to

express themselves freely (artistically and sexually), and not to be mistaken for the

stereotypes that have been applied to them" (Hill Collins, 2006, pp. 192-3).

> [T]hese are young women who refuse to allow anything (or anyone) to
> dictate to them how they should look, act or think. They are not dropping
> out from society or tuning out the concept of feminism, but instead

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[9] *FLAVA: Wedge curatorial projects (1997-2007)*. [exhibit catalogue]. Toronto: Wedge Curatorial Projects, 2008.

[10] This is by no means to suggest that there is not misogyny in some rap music and aspects of hip hop culture. See analyses of this complex issue in e.g.: Hill Collins, 2006; also Tricia Rose (1994). *Black noise: Rap music and Black culture in contemporary America.* Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press; and Michael Eric Dyson (2001) *Holler if you hear me: Searching for Tupac Shakur.* New York: Basic Civitas Books.

continuing to engage with their communities on their own terms. (Silja

Talvi, quoted in Hill Collins, pp.195-196).

KPD's use of nudity in her photographs may have been questionable in the

context of a family project, however less so as art. The photographs did not strike me as

erotic even before they were cropped, rather, the images that make up *The Road to*

Salvation have a rich organic quality consistent with KPD's attempt to capture a *raw* self.

As a series, *The Road to Salvation* reinforces the idea of a dynamic narrative that does

not progress linearly despite the final arrangement of the images in two rows of five. If

we follow KPD's gaze in the images we move through an unpredictable pattern, and the

road to salvation emerges as an erratic, emotional and intense personal journey.

Additional signifiers in the images which may or may not be 'creative accidents'

underscore and compliment KPD's themes of personal transformation and revealing.

Looking at the second image from the left in the bottom row, for example, I am

particularly interested in how KPD's gaze cuts across the poster of Michael Jackson on

the back wall of her bedroom and forms a parallel line to the three yellow 'ATTENTION *

CAUTION' banners she has placed at the edge of her ceiling. The look on her face is

intense, but difficult to read emotionally, and her gaze is fixed beyond the frame of the

image. At what or whom is she looking? The photograph doesn't tell us unless we know

the layout of her room, but since I do, I realize that she is looking at herself in the mirror.

She can see herself taking the picture and in this way she extends control over how she

poses and what she captures in the photograph.   In the meantime, the iconic image of

Michael Jackson serves to further conjure notions of performance and transformation; of gender, race and self image, indeed, of the man—or young woman—in the mirror.

Another example from *The Road to Salvation* that I find particularly interesting is the photo in which KPD is shown wearing a tiara. KPD described it as representing how even as she endures difficulty she is "still a princess." This interpretation is somewhat complicated for me though, because the photo is the only one in the series that is out of focus, because the tiara does not quite seem convincingly placed on her head, and because of the slight distortion produced by the angle of her arm. Her facial expression also suggests sadness to me, producing a particularly sharp dynamic between this image and the one to its right in the series. In the image that can read as the last because of its placement in the series, KPD looks at the camera with a big smile on her face. If the photo is read as concluding the series—and it was in fact the last one taken[11]— it would follow that it represents the 'saved' subject who has endured a transformative process. The manner in which this endurance was actually part of KPD's performance is suggested by the shine in her eyes that, despite her smile, suggests the intensity of her emotion.

Approach to photography.

KPD approached photography as an art practice and form of self-inquiry informed by previous experience with digital photography as a tool for communication and identity construction that is typical of her generation (Van Dijck, 2008). She fully embraced her

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[11] The properties of the photo indicate that it was taken at 11:47pm while the other nine images were recorded from 11:42pm to 11:45pm

roles as artist-researcher and the use of photography as an art making practice and tool for self-study.

In addition to self portraits KPD took pictures of her belongings and of her bedroom as a way of further exploring, constructing, and defining who she is. One image that works well to evoke this process is an untitled photograph that KPD took of her bedroom wall (Figure 12). In the photo we see a collection of images of women and what appears to be at least one Barbie-like doll. Of the four images that line the top of her mirror, the two in the center seem to be of actual women, the one on the right is a doll, however it is not clear if it is a picture on the left is of a doll or of a supposed 'real woman'.

Figure 12. Untitled
KPD (2011)

The image is anchored by the mirror shown in the bottom center which suggests the prominence of self exploration and identity formation in KPD's practice. This is reinforced by the various images of women framing the mirror as well as KPD's own presence reflected along its left edge. The butterflies can be understood to emphasize notions of transformation, beauty and in Christian symbolism, resurrection. KPD approached photography as a 'tool of Self:' self-study, -performance, -definition, -transformation and -re-presentation.

J-Money.

Artistic process & aesthetic identity.

J-Money is the youngest of Clippings' children at 14 years old, and the only male in the household. At the onset of the project J-M had participated in previous art classes with me and we already had a close relationship. J-M expresses a lot of interest in art despite not having a lot of confidence in his abilities, and had looked forward to the project. He participated actively in the early sessions and like his sister, appreciated the opportunity to take responsibility for a digital camera.

The first thing that J-Money expressed interest in photographing was his old class photos from his first years of elementary school. We worked together on this first set of pictures, and took many until he had taken one that he liked of each class picture. By the time I had returned home from the session, J-M had uploaded his photographs of old class photos onto *Facebook* with the title *Memories…Younger Days* suggesting that taking these pictures was a way to connect with his past experiences of photography (in this case being photographed), similar to how KPD began her process.

J-Money's practice seemed to develop thoughtfully, perhaps cautiously; he worked in less dramatic bursts of activity than his sister or mother and produced fewer pictures than Clippings and KPD. At times I found it difficult not to feel that J-M was marginalized in the project, being the only male and the youngest both in his family and our research. Given the level of conflict between him and his sister, he often sat quite apart from the rest of us in a session, literally on the margins of the front room in which we met. Never the less, J-M remained engaged throughout the project and has continued to practice photography since the study ended. During the sessions, J-M's work involved

taking stock of what is "his;" his belongings, his space, his childhood, and his accomplishments. Since the *Family Photos* project concluded, J-M has turned the camera on himself, and in late May 2011 he produced a series of five self portraits (taken alone in his bathroom mirror) that he shared on Facebook with the title *Year of the Pretty Boy* and the message "Bored Decided 2 Take Pics" (to which I responded with an excited "YES!!"). J-Money's aesthetic identity continues to develop as he is exposed to more art forms, gains more art making skills, and acquires a sense of his competence and strengths as an artist.

Dominant subject matter and themes.

The overarching theme of J-Money's work as I understand it is autobiography, or, *The Life of a Giant*, which is also the name of one of his photos discussed below (Figure 15).

By taking pictures of personal artifacts from his childhood, J-M created a visual record documenting signifiers of his growth and successes, leading up to his adolescence and current life. In one image (Figure 13), we see his Kindergarten Diploma displayed diagonally from a newspaper clipping from his first year of high school.

The newspaper clipping features an article about a basketball game in which J-M performed particularly well. The picture accompanying the article shows him blocking the shot of another boy, but

Figure 13. *Untitled*
J-Money, 2011

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because of J-M's height in comparison to the other boy, J-Money's head is outside of the picture frame.

It is noteworthy that J-M did not only take pictures of the individual awards and acknowledgements that he has received, but that he also took photos that document his display of these awards as a collection in his bedroom. One question that is raised by his work, is how these tangible acknowledgements, their arrangement and display on his bedroom wall *and* his photographs of this display, all work to construct a visual archive and cohesive image of *J-Money*. I return to the issue of how J-M and KPD 'curate' their personal environments in Chapter 4.

In addition to pictures of his early elementary school pictures, J-M took pictures of two framed family pictures of himself as a baby, one of which is shown Figure 14. The photographs sit on his dresser, and he photographed them surrounded by several items of his clothing. As in the newspaper clipping where J-Money's 'life as a giant' is evoked by the suggestion that his body is too big to fit into the picture, in his photos of his baby pictures, the angle at which the pictures are taken and the size of his socks act as traces of J-Money's current self.

Figure 14. Untitled.
J-Money, 2011

Underlying the theme of a giant's life, the pictures that J-M took of his baby pictures displayed among his clothing also bring to the fore the tension and transition between childhood and manhood that adolescence entails. J-M is shown in these images as a baby while simultaneously his clothes reveal someone the size of a man.

J-Money did not take pictures of himself until right at the end of the project when he and his friend took a series of six pictures of him in the park. He posted these on *Facebook* with the title *"FLYER THAN I? NEVER."* When I saw them, I asked J-M about his process in creating them and after a discussion we agreed that he would choose one to include in the *Family Photos* catalogue. J-M selected an image from the series in which he stands with his back to the camera (of the six photographs, three show his face) and titled the photo *The Life of a Giant*. In the image J-M is shown with his hands in his pockets. The slouch of his shoulders and the way in which the edges of his ski vest extend outward away from his body suggest that he is pushing down with his

Figure 15. The Life of a Giant.
J-Money, 2011

hands and holding open the vest in front of him. This gesture of opening up, however, is turned away from and thus denied to the viewer.

The cool, grey tones of *The Life of a Giant*, the lingering strip of snow, and the way in which J-M's body is situated in the photograph suggest a sense of isolation; a lonely life of a giant. The horizontal lines in the image—the path, the snow, the fence— suggest the demarcation of space and containment of the subject. This use of line to cut through and delineate the image is present in other photographs by J-M. In a series of

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seven pictures taken by looking out of his bedroom through the camera for example, heavy lines cut vertically, diagonally and horizontally through the images (Figures 16 & 17). These lines work to construct angular pictures containing distinguished blocks of space. In most of the images we do not see the frame of the window, but experience the blurring, cloudy effect of the moist glass pane through which we gaze. The effect is that of a semi-transparent border or filter between the viewer and the scene that we might assume to be the focus of the image. The one exception to this is a photo in which the window frame takes up most of the picture (Figure 17). The repetition of line in the image confirms, in fact insists on, this perimeter—and, one could argue, the act of looking beyond or through it— as the key subject of this work.

Figure 16 (above) & *Figure 17* (right)
Untitled. J-Money, 2011

Approach to photography.

J-Money appears to take two distinct but interwoven approaches to photographic

practice. He recognized this in his post-study interview when he said that he sees his art

work in the *Family Photos* project as being very different from the kinds of photographs

he takes with friends. J-M's photographic practice seemed often to be pushed forward by

the structure of the project itself and the series discussed above (e.g. Figures 16 and 17)

was taken directly prior to one of our sessions. While concerned about J-M's

commitment at times, I resisted any urge to 'nag' researcher-participants to produce

photographs. Overall, J-M formed what appears to be a lasting relationship to picture

taking and it was important that he do so at his own pace, within the flexible structure of

the project. How often is an artist's production propelled forward by a deadline? And

can't last-minute work emerge as some of the most interesting?

Unlike his mother or KPD, J-M used *Facebook* to share some of the images he

created in the project. The use of photography as a tool for communication is typical of

digitally savvy youth and J-M is highly engaged in online social networking.   As Van

Dijck has demonstrated, teenagers share digital photographs as *experiences* more so than

sharing them as *objects* (Kindberg et al. quoted in Van Dijck, p. 62) and tend to use

photography as "an instrument for peer bonding and interaction" (Van Dijck, p. 62). This

seemed to be an important aspect of J-M's photographic practice and as noted above, he

has continued to explore and share digital photography in this way since our study ended.

J-Money has brought the artistic experience and skill he gained through the *Family*

Photos project to his use of photography and new social media, as a means of creatively

reaching out to his friends.

Van Dijck locates the impulse behind the digital sharing of camera-phone pictures within the teen desire for constant 'live communication' with peers: "Picture this, here! Picture me, now!" (2008, p.62) Since the *Family Photos* began, J-Money has gained noticeable and increasing mastery over the camera and the sharing of digital images online. In becoming a more confident photographer, he gained further access to a tool for self-imaging, self-representation, identity formation and social communication with his peers. The most recent self portraits that J-M has been taking may say "Picture me, now!" but they also begin to announce a creative and technically skilled subject who declares *Picture how I've pictured myself!*

***family album*: a Southern auto-genealogy**

This section offers closer consideration of the subjective positions that I brought

to the research, as I explored them through self study. As explained in Chapter 2, I

performed an autoethnographic study concurrently with the *Family Photos* project, using

various research methods including photography, assemblage, autobiography, digital

archival research, and historical narrative research. Through weaving these methods

together I constructed what I call an 'auto-genealogy' that helped me to further locate and

situate myself personally and professionally in relation to family, and to photos, and to

the *Family Photos* research. I include excerpts from my write up of the autoethnography

in what follows.

My self-study began as the major assignment for a course in arts-based research

and involved a photo-based inquiry into my own biracial/ mulatto/ Black ancestry. I took

up this particular self-study in the context of my MA research and ongoing conversations

with co-researchers about light skin privilege. As my study evolved, I focused

increasingly on paternal ancestry, 'the Black side' of my family, of which I had little

knowledge. I used photography as an "autoethnographic vehicle for reflection" (Smith-

Shank & Kiefer Boyd 2007, p. 1), in conversation with personal and public artifacts and

documents (family photos, song lyrics, poems, legal documents, online archival records),

as well as various literature and stories.

My process was one of assemblage, gathering and bringing together both material

and intangible fragments to construct new-old family stories. I arranged some of my

images into an old photo album, itself a found object discovered at a flea market and

appropriated as my own *family album*. It has a red padded cover with an embossed

image of a ship at sea. Inside, the black pages have become soft and worn around the edges. On them I found the little black adhesive corners that were once used to hold someone else's photographs in place. The photos were gone but the corners mark where they once were, and I sized my images to fit into those preserved spaces as much as possible.

African American scholar and visual artist James Haywood Rolling Jr. describes autoethnography as "a form of inquiry that does not merely write up the research but is itself the story of discovery" (2008, p. 841) and this was true of my experience of studying my 'Black identity' and forging connections to my own family history and African American southern ancestry. The following section is written in the personal, narrative style of autoethnography and offered in fragments reflecting my process of assembling various ideas and snippets of information and graphing the spaces between them. My resistance to a linear, univocal narrative is consistent with a postcolonial understanding of history as "a nonlinear struggle between irreconcilable stories" (Dimitriadis and McCarthy, 2001, p. 70). I write in both past and present tenses and use personal and academic voices. I offer several excerpts from other authors as their voices wander in and out of my thoughts and help me to understand my journey.[12]

Discovering Autoethnography.

Complete member researcher (CMR) describes a researcher who is a "complete member in the social world under study" (Anderson, 2006, p. 379). The 'opportunistic' CMR according to this formulation, is born into the group, thrown into the group by

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[12] This section also includes five untitled images, collectively referred to as *Figures 18 - 22*, from the hundreds that I created as part of this study.

chance, or has acquired intimate knowledge of the group through lifestyle or occupational

participation; their involvement in the group precedes the research. The 'convert' CMR

on the other hand, is 'converted' through the research process, becoming completely

immersed and gaining membership in the group during the course of the study

(Anderson, 2006).

One day early in my MA research, one of my co-researchers posted a message on

her *Facebook* page announcing her frustration with light-skinned women, who she

characterized as children of slave masters:

> **AdT**: Cant be bothered with these light skin chicc [[SlaveMasterPikney]]
>
> Dark&Lovely #Darker The Berry Sweeta Dii Juiceee aka light skins are a
>
> likkle bit wack

> **r**: wow.

> **AdT**: @Rosalind being light skin is not cool. They think because they lighter
>
> than other girls they get everything. Which make things hard for us a girl who
>
> is darker than charcoal may be betta than that light skin chick.
>
> (Personal communication, Jan. 2011. Reprinted with AdT's permission.)

I responded by reminding AdT that Blacks of all skin tones had been subjected to

slavery and asking her if by calling biracial people "Slave Master Pickney" as an insult,

she was suggesting that they are responsible for the rapes of their ancestors. I added

that AdT knows me well enough to know that I do not think that a lighter skin tone

makes someone a "better" person, and stated that I attribute such thinking to a legacy of

colonialism and colonial tactics of 'divide and conquer.' Then, self-consciously, I

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attempted to compose myself and added another message to our exchange suggesting

that AdT might pursue how it feels to be 'dark-skinned' and the tensions she feels with

lighter-skinned women in her photographic work for our project.   The next time we

saw each other, AdT and I explored artwork that addresses the issue of 'mulatto'

identity and light skin privilege, but our conversation remained centered on the art and

not on our earlier exchange or how 'colourism' might affect our personal relationship

and research together.

I had been stunned by AdT's assertion that "being light skinned is not cool"

because it was as if in talking about "they lighter than

other girls" AdT did not realize she was speaking to *and*

about me. I was also shocked by my initial response to

overlook (even *deny*!) her lived experience to emphasize

that 'light skin Blacks' were slaves too (as if that is the

ultimate measure of Blackness!) I saw my emotional, defensive response and the self

consciousness it had caused me as a warning pointing to one of those 'dangerous

discourses' of critical multiculturalism (Nieto, 1999) that I often write and lecture about.

Autoethnography is a practice that moves the researcher's identities into the foreground

in order to question "the authenticity of the voice that tells of an essential self" (Rolling

Jr., 2004b, p.549). It provided me with an approach to further examine my 'Black

identity' and question prior assumptions and claims. I would study my Self, and risk

examining just what sort of 'opportunistic complete member researcher' I might be.

The utter inadequacy of racial terminology plagues us to this day. Why? Because racial definitions themselves are meaningless. The absurdity becomes most obvious –and the situation would be funny if only people didn't take it so seriously—when describing people of mixed race. A few thousand times already, I've heard people start a sentence this way: 'I've got this friend who is half black and half white, and the other day she…' Whoa. Stop right there. Let's roll out the linguistascope and look this one over. *Half black, half white.* Hmm. I've performed tests on myself, scratched my skin, measured my legs, taken blood samples, evaluated colour schemes, but I just can't locate a black half and a white half. My blood isn't either colour, actually, which makes things even more confusing. (Hill, 2001, 197-198)

'Slave Master Pickney.'

Black Canadian author Lawrence Hill has noted with tongue in cheek that the 'lovely etymology' of the word 'mulatto' fills his heart with pride. He explained that 'mulatto' comes from the Spanish *mulo* for mule; the offspring of a donkey and a horse. Other definitions cited by Hill include "A stupid or obstinate person" and "One who is 'neither one thing nor the other'" (2001, 199). Like Hill, I call myself Black rather than

'mixed' or brown, because race is not merely a description of one's skin tone. At the same time I acknowledge significant differences in a 'Black experience' as lived by those of us with lighter and darker shades of skin.

> The white folks didn't help none of we black people to read and write no time. They learn the yellow chillun, but if they catch we black chillun with a book they nearly 'bout kill us. They was sure better to them yellow chillum than the black chillum that be on the plantation. (Sylvia Cannon, 1937, in Hurmence, 2005, p.124)

> Old Marster was the daddy of some mulatto chillum. The relations with the mothers of those chillum is what give so much grief to the Missus. The neighbors would talk about it, and he would sell all them chillum away from they mothers to a trader. (Savilla Burrell, n.d., in Hurmence, p. 134)

I walk with the twenty-seven former-slave narratives recorded in *Before Freedom* (Hurmence, 2005) in my coat pocket for weeks. I read them compulsively and look for those recorded in the part of South Carolina where my father was born. …

By the time of his death in 1835, Wade Hampton (the first) had a labour force of 3,000 slaves working on his cotton and sugar cane plantations and was known as the richest plantation owner in the United States ("General Wade Hampton III"). Wade Hampton III (1818-1902) inherited his grandfather and father's enormous wealth, several plantations in South Carolina and Mississippi, and (as *Wikipedia* so eloquently puts it) "one of the largest collections of slaves in the South" ("Wade Hampton III").

After researching the life of Wade Hampton III, I took a picture of a photograph of him and included it in my *family album*. I am not entirely sure how to explain this decision except to say that it felt, albeit perversely, like the man and his family are part of the story. Looking at the *family album* one of my colleagues noticed the photograph and asked about who he was. Ironically he had mistaken him for a Black man. I looked at the picture of him again, and thought about three generations of *Wade Hampton*s owning the 'largest collection' in the country…

Christopher Poulos' term 'accidental ethnography' resonates with me, to refer to the work of an ethnographer who is willing to be led by, even *surrender to* the spontaneous, seemingly accidental signs and impulses that emerge through the research practice.   It is a performative methodology that seeks "knowing-in-action, rather than knowledge-as-acquisition" (Poulos, p. 47).

Hair and Self-imaging.

As with other Rastafarian symbols, dreadlocks have multiple levels of significance. Aesthetically, dreadlocks indicate a rejection of Babylon's definition of beauty, especially as it relates to European features and hair quality. According to Rastas, hair straightening and skin bleaching by black people reflect a yearning for Whiteness and are therefore symptomatic of alienation from a sense of their African beauty. Against this background, dreadlocks signify the reconstitution of a sense of pride in one's African physical characteristics.   …Ideologically, dreadlocks express the Rastafarian belief in and commitment to naturalness. (Edmonds, 1998, p.32)

A significant part of the vulnerability I experience in front of the camera comes from photographing myself with my locks uncovered; I usually wear my hair in a tam or wrapped in a scarf. It was important, however, to create self portraits in which my hair was visible as it signifies an important part of who I am. As it is for many Black people, how I wear my hair is informed by ethno-cultural and overtly political considerations.

Photographic Self Portraiture.

Lindsay Smith (2000) has written about how the invention and early decades of photography "enabled new ways of thinking about the relationship of the seen to the unseen, of the empirical to the transcendental" (p. 96). Could taking pictures of my self help me to see the previously unseen in relation to my identities and inheritances? What might picturing myself in new ways allow me to see of the self (auto-) of my auto-genealogy? The development of photography advanced unique ways of imagining "major metaphysical questions pertaining to identity, conscious, self consciousness, the unconscious …by newly manifesting the individual's self image, by restoring the individual's double to him or herself in new ways" (Smith, 2000, p.96).

Rather than this 'restoration' producing a fixed and whole identity, I take it to suggest a unified consciousness that embraces multiple identities, what Chicana feminists refer to as *mestiza* consciousness (Anzaldúa, 1999; Lugones, 2006). Here, as in theories of literary métissage, subjectivity is envisioned as "an assemblage of fragments", and identities are recognized as fluid. Our selves are understood to be in a continual process

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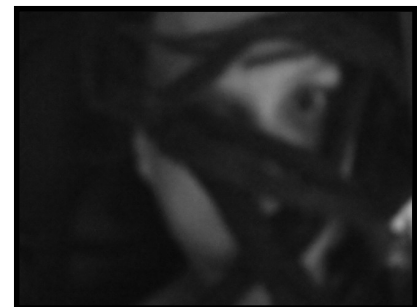
of becoming, through our encounters with our selves and others and our 'confrontations with memory' (Hasebe-Ludt, et al. 2009, p. 33).

As Angela Kelly observes, self-portraiture always bears "the risk and fear of self-exploitation." "The photographer is in the very vulnerable position of opening up and stating how she/ he is, but it is a position that is continually developing and evolving" (Kelly, 1979, p. 416). It can be difficult to maintain one's balance on this shifting

foundation. I needed before taking the photographs of myself was to be entirely alone. The process was intensely personal and intuitive; a poetic experience of 'dissolving' myself in the creation of a form of 'knowledge beyond words' (Malengret, 2003).

In Martine Malengret's study of how photography can be used as a tool for acquiring deeper self awareness, she describes a sensation like what I experienced when taking pictures; one of 'direct insight' and the free flow of "non-thoughts" as a "form of dialogue between what I am photographing and myself" (Malengret, 2003, p. 37). In my photographs of myself, that sense of a dialogue and insight was between and into my selves. Malengret draws on Eastern traditions to liken her experience of 'non-thoughts' to the production of insight-wisdom in the form of "idea-messages and impressions [that] convey *understanding*, but arrive with no words attached" (Austin, quoted in Malengret, p. 41). Malengret does not believe that these messages and impressions are decodable through the use of word-language, and indeed I too struggle to find the words to describe what I see, both through the lens of my camera and in the photographs I produce.

Self portraiture is ambiguous and like autobiography, it is achieved through processes of displaying and concealing (Adams, 2000) of which the author is and is not consciously aware. Photographing myself I was performing on both sides of the camera, but could not do both simultaneously. As photographer Ina Loewenberg (1999) describes this situation, "When the artist is her own subject she can only imagine herself on the other side of the lens. There are always ways to compensate for this but there is nothing to see when the shutter is released" (Loewenberg, p. 400).

But there is nothing to see when the shutter is released. I keep thinking about this. With each photograph I took of myself I experienced the rupture of looking through the camera without seeing my subject (my self), and then looking back from my self as subject interacting with the lens of the camera and with the trace of myself, as photographer, seeing through it. One of the ways I compensate for this rupture is to take photographs using mirrors; multiplying myself through 'reflective self-portraits' of myself with photographs of my parents, sister and I taken in 1977 for Citizenship Canada. The citizenship photos, taken as we were American citizens becoming Canadian, emphasize both my liminality –between my selves and their reflections in the mirror, between the United States and Canada—and duality: Black and White, photographer and photographic subject; researcher and re-searched.

My Blackness is unstable, just like all racialized identities are; race works more like a language than a matter of biology or physiology (Hall, 1996). As a signifier, the meaning of race is constantly subjected to shifting relations of difference and can never be fixed. In constructing my *family album* I took myself on a trans-historical,

transnational journey that simultaneously collapsed and reinforced racial categories and consequently, my sense of my own racial identity.

In closing…and opening.

For black folks, the camera provided a means to document a reality that could, if necessary, be packed, stored, moved from place to place. It was documentation that could be shared, passed around. And ultimately, these images, the world they recorded, could be hidden, to be discovered at another time. Had the camera been there when slavery ended, it could have provided images that would have helped folks searching for lost kin and loved ones. It would have been a powerful tool of cultural recovery. (hooks, 1995, p. 60)

I returned home from presenting my *family album* to my colleagues and my son was waiting for me. I showed him and his friend the *family album,* and my son's response was to pretend to steal it, stuffing it under his shirt. "You're gonna give this to me eh mom?" I was caught off guard by the question and asked why. He responded, "Because I'm your only child! Who else would you give it to?!" And it occurred to me then for the first time that I had not only made a piece of art, had not only engaged in self-study, but had changed something in a deeper and broader sense. I really had created a *family album*.

Chapter 4: Research Analysis

My analyses of family members' artwork and experiences of the project have been informed by ongoing dialogue between researcher-participants and I, both within project sessions and in less formal telephone (and at times online) discussions about the project. Common themes that emerged across all of their experiences emphasize the importance to the family of self-representation and self-determination, religious and moral values, and the notion of home. Negotiating issues related to race and gender as well as the boundary between private and public emerged as significant aspects of the art and our research project overall.

Through their involvement in the project, researcher-participants gained a better understanding of photography as a form of art and expressed developing aesthetic identities as individuals and as a family. In post-study interviews J-M, KPD and Clippings emphasized the acquisition of skills and experience. All four researcher-participants expressed positive feelings about the project and a desire to participate in similar projects in the future. We unanimously feel that family art practice can be a positive and engaging practice for other families in the Black community as it has been for theirs. Specifically, participatory photography projects can challenge family members to collaborate in learning new skills and to experience new and creative ways of expressing themselves and communicating with one another.

As a participatory researcher I have welcomed the profusion of layered data that my hybrid methods produced while I recognize (and struggle with!) the necessary limitations in the scope of this thesis. I view my engagement with and analysis of this research as continuing— as knowledge that continues to emerge and recede and re-e-

merge differently.   It has remained challenging throughout to define the parameters of the study, as I am personally engaged with the family and we have often spoken (and continue to speak) about the project outside of our formal sessions. I consider the inclusion of informal, personal interactions within the context of the research as an important part of the project; what has been referred to as "the 'keeping it real' aspect of participatory research" (Smith et al., p. 412).

Cross-Case Analysis.

In this section I return to the three areas discussed in relation to each researcher participant in Chapter 3—'artistic process and aesthetic identity,' 'dominant subject matter and themes,' and 'approach to photography'—and discuss prominent themes and issues across the experiences of family members. I draw on each individual family member's experiences while emphasizing an analysis of the family's overall experience in each area.

Artistic Process and Aesthetic Identity.

Each family member's position in the household had an effect on the role they took up in the project and seemed to influence their artistic process and individual aesthetic identity. I felt that Clippings' maintenance of her role as head of the household and her authority as the parent of the other researcher-participants would be important and would not pose a problem in creating an equitable research practice. The pilot project was designed and worked to familiarize Clippings with digital photography and photographic research methods. This was important to offset some of the power

imbalance caused by the ease and expertise with which her children engage digital technology compared to her relative lack of experience with new media. Respecting Clippings' positionality relative to her children in this way allowed her to become an artist-mentor to them in the *Family Photos* project. Her children seemed to really appreciate and draw on the experience that Clippings brought to the project and she in turn, showed positive teaching skills as well a strong sense of artistic collaboration.

Other researcher-participants also maintained their family roles and 'ranks' as in AdT's interstitial role in the project and J-M's position as the youngest and only male member of the household. In a few of our later sessions J-M arrived late and physically positioned himself on the margins of the room, maintaining a distanced presence and minimized involvement but critically, still being there. KPD functioned as the researcher-participant who often challenged the norms of our practice by raising provocative issues and asserting her self determination through taking personal risks; much as she behaves as the middle child in the family.

I hasten to add that while I have characterized AdT's participation as 'interstitial,'—that is to say, she did not situate herself firmly in the central roles of a researcher-participant and artist in the study as it was taken up by other family members, rather she positioned herself in the gaps of the project, assistant to the 'central actors,'— this is not to diminish the significance of the contributions AdT made to the project precisely *by* 'filling the gaps.' This raises the importance of participatory action researchers maintaining enough flexibility to allow researcher-participants to find their own ways of contributing to the collective artistic process, as well as accepting and valuing unanticipated forms of participation.

In the same way that I discovered through the pilot project that it was neither possible nor preferable for Clippings and I to situate our personal relationship outside of the research context, family members collaborating as artists and co-researchers coped with also being sisters, brother, parent, and children.   The complex relationships that family members brought to the project proved to be an enormous strength and challenge in the collective artistic process and development of aesthetic identities. Positionality in the family hierarchy, as well as the intense emotion that family relationships tend to generate can reinforce or discourage particular artistic approaches and subject matter in the context of familial artistic collaboration. In the same way, my close relationships with the family members affected how I carried out my own roles in the research and, as KPD rightly pointed out in one of our post-study discussions, have informed my readings of their artwork and artistic processes. Consequently, *Family Photos* can be said to have offered family members space for individual experimentation and artistic autonomy *within* the greater family and research frameworks.

The project proceeded in ebbs and flows of artistic collaboration, with subgroups forming as per schedules and group dynamics, as well as one-on-one cooperation and dialogue between myself and each researcher-participant. I felt the responsibility of being the 'project pivot' in this sense. On a few occasions I worked alone with Clippings and J-Money when J-M's sisters were not home, I met individually once each with AdT and KPD, maintained one-on-one communication with all four family members by telephone and with all but Clippings, through communication online.   Each researcher-participant required individual attention as they developed their practice and I was able to respond to varying degrees. As AdT and I discussed in her post-study interview, more

one-on-one sessions, particularly earlier on in the project, might have helped each family member to feel more confident and focused in their individual artistic practice and contribution to the family collaboration.

The family's artistic experiences and feedback suggest the development of individual and family aesthetic identities; Clippings, KPD and J-M see themselves as creators of art. Through inclusive art education and their own art and research experiences, family members have become familiar with work by Black professional artists, are thinking about the contributions that community art practices might make to their communities, and are acquiring an expanded understanding of art that includes the creative cultural practices that have always been central to African diaspora experiences.

Prior to the pilot study, Clippings reported no meaningful experiences of either making or viewing art; she now not only has a developing relationship with art, but sees herself as able to create it! She stated that she thinks that other families in our community can and do benefit from engaging with photography and other functional art forms such as pottery and basket weaving. In her post-study interview she told J-M and I about her memories of basket weavers at home in St Vincent and commented on how these artistic practices are both personally fulfilling and economically empowering.

Dominant Subject Matter and Themes.

All family members engaged with the theme of identity, including identity formation and transformation, self image and -imaging, and self representation. It was

often important to family members to 'look good' in pictures, a concept and standard that

was defined by their own personal and socio-cultural

interests and tastes. Generally speaking, for the three

youth 'looking good' is largely defined by trends in

popular hip hop and dancehall cultures (e.g., Figure 23).

For Clippings on the other hand, 'looking good' seems

specifically linked to *being* good and behaving in good

ways, and so looking good in her photographs often entails

performing and documenting the behaviour of a good

person.
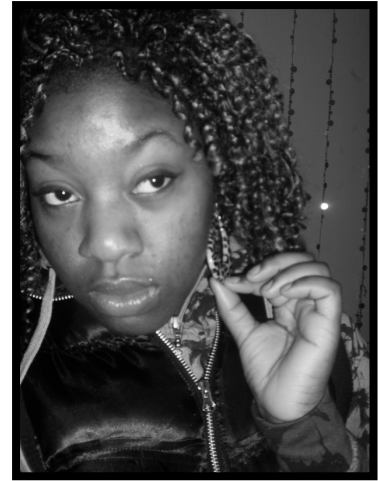
Figure 23.
From *Teenage Dream.*
KPD, 2011

Clippings and KPD addressed religious and moral values in their work as a way

of further exploring and presenting the sort of people they are. Religion emerged,

particularly in the image of the Bible and in textual narratives of self, as a framework for

understanding their lives and explaining and/ or validating the 'goodness' of their actions.

J-M explored this same theme of the kind of the person he is, but through images evoking

his personal achievements (e.g. certificates, medals, newspaper clipping, his former

basketball uniform) and belongings (clothes).

Finally, home emerged as a dominant theme of the family's artwork and in a

literal sense, as the project's 'base of operations.' Our weekly sessions were held at the

family's home, and this perhaps reinforced the idea of the home as a starting point for the

family's photographic practice. Clippings, KPD and J-M all took photos of the home

environment, and particularly of that part of the home over which each feels a sense of

responsibility and control. In J-M's and KPD's photographs their bedroom environments

Figure 25. Midnight Mopping. Clippings, 2010

appear as part of their overall self imaging (see further discussion in *Family photography and home curating*, below). Clippings also took pictures that extend her home space into the hallway of the building, an area that she cleans regularly.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the ways in which Clippings uses double and triple coding in her artwork is centered on her lived experiences and memories of her village in St Vincent as her homeland. Art practice provides another means by which Clippings transfers this cultural inheritance to her children, who acknowledge it through supporting their mother's sharing of (visual and oral) narratives, and by challenging and adopting her ways of knowing and communicating.

Figure 26.Untitled
Clippings, 2011

Race and gender as seriality.

A preference for the arrangement of our photographs in series was something that researcher-participants and I all shared. I have attributed this to the influence of photographers such as Carrie Mae Weems and Lorna Simpson and the ways in which they have used serial arrangements in their work, as well as to a love of storytelling that we also share. Iris Marion Young's essay *Gender as Seriality* (1994) offers another way of thinking about serilaity (and thus looking at serial arrangements,) that I found both highly interesting and relevant to our research.

As a feminist, Young was interested in responding to the critique that when feminists spoke of or for "women's" experiences, it implied one uniform group; that all women are the same. I have heard the same argument in relation to my use of the term 'Black community.' Young understood that despite such critiques, without understanding women (and Black people) as a group in some sense, "it is not possible to conceptualize oppression as a systematic, structured, institutional process" (p. 718). To deny the reality of a social collective termed 'women', or 'Black' reinforces the privilege of those who benefit from keeping women or Black people divided (p. 719).

Therefore, rather than thinking about women as a self-conscious and mutually acknowledging group, Young borrows Sartre's notion of seriality to posit 'women' as a series. To be a member of a series, she argues, is to belong to "a blurry, shifting unity" (p. 728) that does not define a person in their 'active individuality' (p. 731).

> To be said to be part of the same series it is not necessary to identify a set
> of common attributes that every member has, because their membership is

defined not by something they are but rather by the fact that in their diverse existences and actions they are oriented around the same objects or practico-inert structures. (Young, I.M. p. 728)

The notion of identity as seriality adds another layer to considering the ways in which photographs, and particularly photographic self portraits have been both taken and arranged in series in our (and other artists') artwork. I have not done justice here, to either Young's essay or to the ways it might be applied to serial work in visual art and particularly photography. I do see implications for further analysis of the ways in which self portraiture enacts personal detachment and deconstruction, how these ruptures are amplified when shown in series, and how identity construction can be understood in relation to the depersonalizing nature of serial membership and interchangability. Critically, how does recording the 'self in series' challenge and / or reinforce racial, gender, and other aspects of one's identity, and can doing so lead to new conceptions of group and community membership? Young claimed that "While serial membership delimits and constrains an individual's possible actions, it does not define the person's identity in the sense of forming his or her individual purposes, projects, and sense of self in relation to others" (Young, p. 727). This, as she pointed out, is not to undermine the meaning that we may find in naming ourselves 'Black' and grouping in solidarity with other members of 'the series Black people,' rather it affords a way of conceiving of that social collective without imposing a fixed set of characteristics that must apply to each and all of its members.

Approach to Photography.

Clippings, KPD and J-M all embraced photography as a form of art, research, performance and storytelling. Through working with assistants and through consulting and sharing images with friends, researcher-participants took a dialogical approach to photography that involved consultation and sharing beyond the family. Photography was perceived as a 'special' artistic pursuit in the context of our research project, while at the same time skills and experiences gained are transferable to other, more socially oriented picture taking practices.

Photography as acquisition.

acquire: "to get as one's own: **a**: to come into possession or control of

often by unspecified means **b**: to come to have as a new or added

characteristic, trait, or ability"

acquisition: "the act of acquiring"; "something acquired or gained"

(Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1996)

In their post-study interviews, I was struck by the 'language of acquisition' used by Clippings and J-Money when they talked about their experience of the project. They emphasized *getting* skills, and *getting* experience in a way that I took note of. In a recent conversation with KPD, another layer was added to my understanding of the sense of acquisition that family members experienced through photography. KPD said that "Giving a person a digital camera is like giving them a million dollars." She explained that when you have a camera "it's better than shopping" because you can *take* pictures of

whatever you want. She said when you take pictures you "get things" and described photography as a form of acquisition. This recalls Barthes' observation that "it is as if the Photograph always carries its referent with itself" (p. 5); that that there is "no photograph without *something* or *someone"* (p. 6).

If it is true that 'the referent adheres' to the photographic representation of it, can some of teens' materialistic preoccupation effectively be reinvested in artistic material practices? Can photography offset the sense of lack that many adolescents experience in response to the pressures of contemporary targeted marketing and peer pressure? In what ways does photography evoke a sense of possession for KPD, and given that she 'possesses' the vast majority of her photographs not as objects (material) but in digital form, how does this disrupt our notion of "having" something? 'Possession' is defined as "the act of having or taking control" (Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1996). It is not only about ownership, then, but about *control,* and moreso than anything else perhaps, a sense of control is what photography negotiates and ultimately gives to those who use it.

Family photography and home curating.

As the mother and head of this family, Clippings seemed to be most interested in constructing, displaying and sharing largely positive familial representations. This was a source of conflict with her children at times, as the artistic impulses of KPD and J-M contradicted their mother's conception of what would make a 'good pictures' to display in the home or send home to St. Vincent. Clippings' role in this sense can be understood as that of the family chronicler and 'home curator' (Durant, Frolich, Sellen, & Lyons,

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2009). The role of 'family chronicler' has traditionally been assumed by the mother of the household and entails the creation and management of representations of the family (ibid). In a 2009 study by Durant et al. examining the family photography practices of eight families from south England, the mother in all eight families emerged as not only the chronicler, but also the *curator* of each household. As such, these women assume primary responsibility for organization and coordination of the photographic representations of family members throughout the household environment. Durant et al. found "curatorial control and the presentation of home to be closely bound to maternal control and other domestic roles tied to reproducing a household's moral and social order" (Durant et al. p.1011). Furthermore, in addition to constructing a visual family archive and image, family chronicling and home curating provide Clippings and other mothers an outlet for creative expression of their personal tastes and interests. For Clippings these activities are also inextricably tied to her sense of responsibility for the transmission of Caribbean cultural memory (Hirsch & Smith, 2002) and tradition.

Taking out the framed pictures of her children at the onset of the *Family Photos* project was a particularly significant gesture when understood in relation to her role as family curator. The family moved in recent years and Clippings had not yet unpacked and displayed the photographs. She has also frequently mentioned that she would like to show me her old photo albums that are still packed away somewhere. In taking out portraits of the children Clippings invited the family to engage with their visual records of the past and signaled the coming of a new era of family photography in her household. The significance of this gesture (and of family photography) was underscored by the children's photographic engagement with these pictures and others from their past. Even

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AdT used her Blackberry to take a picture of a portrait of herself, J-M and KPD as young

children and posted it on *Facebook* with the title *One BiiiG Happy Family.*

AdT is, in fact, deeply engaged in the kind of photographic practice that Van

Dijck (2008) describes among youth, frequently taking pictures and immediately posting

them online as a form of live communication with peers (and whoever else she is

'friends' with on *Facebook*, including her siblings and I). I have observed that as the

family has become involved in photography, AdT has increasingly included pictures of

'photo shoots' with family members in her visual archive of images and 'moments' that

she stores and shares online. AdT's approach to photography up until this point has

involved the collection of masses of personal photos as her own 'stock' images (Van

Dijck) that she can manipulate and choose from in a life long process of imaging herself.

For all three of Clippings' children, the internet provides spaces where they can

curate and control their own images away from the gaze of their mother. While AdT,

KPD and J-M generally respect Clippings' role as the family chronicler and home

curator, they also use their bedrooms and especially online social media sites as spaces in

which they can assert a sense of autonomy. If they choose to, they can subvert their

mother's visual tastes and opinions about how they should represent themselves in the

virtual social environments they frequent. It should be carefully noted, however, that

while teenagers can undermine maternal control of the family image through their

dynamic handling of digital media (Durant et al. 2009), research also demonstrates that

the sense of permanence and stability suggested by maternal home curating of

photographic displays is deeply valued by teens. Family photos visibly maintained in the

home provide important and visible 'autobiographical continuity' for the family and

constitute "acts of display by which love is demonstrated as present and constant"

(Durant et al. p. 1014).

***Family Photos* and *family album* as Emancipatory Art Education.**

The *Family Photos* and *family album* projects generated significant insight into

the ways in which photography might provide a particularly resonant practice of

Emancipatory Art Education.   The most prominent of these insights (as I have identified

them up until this point) concern photographic practice as it relates specifically to Black

families, critical multiculturalism in art education, and cultural work and reflexivity. I

would like to emphasize here, that while I identify insights and recommendations that I

feel the *Family Photos* study has generated, I do not mean to suggest that I am positing

our results as 'generalizable' in the traditional sense. Rather, I am identifying ways in

which I feel EAE research and pedagogy can draw on this study and the family's and my

experiences.

Photography and Black Families.

Although she has not studied the history of photography, through her experience

of the project Kanisha Prima Donna concluded that photography "uplifts the family name

and the family's sense of value and worth" and this calls to the fore the ways in which

family photography has always been bound up with notions of family respectability and

social status. In the 19th century, "photographic family portraits gave the middle class the

ability to create images of likeness and self-fashioning previously reserved for the upper

classes and public figures in artistic portraits; later, family albums and baby pictures

came to serve a similar function" (Campt, 2009, p. 90). To quote Barthes, photography both photographs that which is notable and "decrees notable whatever it photographs" (1980/ 2010, p.34).

Likewise, in her essay about the role of photography in (particularly southern) African American culture, bell hooks described the "cultural passion" that Black people developed for photography as a way to challenge the dominant, racist images of Black people, to "contain memories," "sustain ties" and to overcome and "ensure against the losses of the past" (1995, pp. 60-62). hooks recalled how, standing in front walls covered in family photos, she and other children 'listened to endless narratives' that taught them about who their ancestors were. She described the 'walls of images in Southern Black homes' as "sites of resistance" that "constituted private, black-owned and –operated gallery space where images could be displayed, shown to friends and strangers" (p. 59).

One of the most noticeable and commented upon outcomes of the *Family Photos* project has been that Clippings, KPD and J-M have acquired more creative and technical skills and access to both individual and family imaging and self representation. The significance of these gains cannot be understated, to this family and in Black communities in general. As Annette Henry and others have comprehensively and repeatedly argued,

> The Black family, especially the poor and working-class Black family, and the Black mother have been distorted as sites of pathology and oppression. Rarely is the Black family conceptualized as a site of political, cultural, and spiritual resistance. Rarely examined are the complexities of Black

women's lives as activists in their families and communities. Rarely examined are their lives in the complex relations of power in Black community life or in the greater society. We need reconceptualizations of Black lives, Black education, and Black family and community life that inscribe Black women's participation in the analyses (Collins, 1990; Dill, 1979; King, 1988; Ladner, 1973; Murray, 1987; Sizemore, 1973; Zinn, 1989). (Henry, 1993, p. 209)

Family photography provides families with a 'mode of domestic self-representation' through which to image and reproduce themselves according to how they would like to be seen. As KPD suggested, photography provides a way for families to express and project their "desires and aspirations for social status and self-creation" (Campt, p. 90). While most of the *Family Photos* pictures were taken in their apartment, as the project went on, family members also began to experiment with taking pictures further out in their communities. KPD took photographs of and with her boyfriend and of his young nephews, and Clippings took a picture of a senior woman she visited in the hospital and at her hairdresser's salon. Their photographic practices (as well as my own) involved self portraiture, engagement with personal artifacts and signifiers of self, and the situating of self in the larger contexts of family, home and community. KPD and Clippings both discussed the project and sought creative feedback from significant friends in the community. Clippings and J-M both elicited the assistance of others in taking self portraits. J-M and AdT shared photographs with their online social networks. Clippings is anxious to send a selection of the *Family Photos* home to family members in

St. Vincent. In sum, as collaborative, dialogical art, family photography emerges as an expressive and performative practice that works to both create "the linkages and attachments it depicts by visually and affectively suturing individuals to one another," and to "[knit] the family into broader community formations" (Campt, 2009 91-92).

Critical multiculturalism in art education.

Critical multiculturalism applies critical pedagogy to multicultural education in order to engage with contemporary conceptions of identity as trans-cultural and 'hybrid.' As outlined by Sonia Nieto (1999) critical multicultural education is understood as pedagogy that affirms students' cultural identifications without trivializing the concept of culture. It challenges hegemonic knowledge and normative assumptions, encouraging 'dangerous discourses' and problematizing a simplistic focus on self-esteem. Applied to art education, critical multiculturalism examines the politics of representation and challenges notions of 'authenticity' that reduce and essentialize 'Other' cultures and art practice by non-Western and minority artists (Desai, 2000). It seeks to move us toward an understanding of culture as discursive terrain that is socially and politically constructed and re-constructed in relation to multiple intersecting subjectivities including but not limited to race, ethnicity, social class, gender, and sexuality.

The *Family Photos* project used a critical multicultural approach in many respects: in pursuing 'dangerous discourses' that emerged as current and relevant to our daily lives and the work we were doing; in studying professional photography and other art practices across cultures (including American, Canadian, Malian, Caribbean and British); in embracing difference and acknowledging the multiple cultural identities and

subject positions of researcher-participants and myself; in challenging hegemonic knowledge and dominant discourses—specifically around notions of beauty and constructions of gender, race and class—and in overtly working to correct any notions of African/ Black peoples as essentially less civilized, less artistic, less deserving or less intelligent than White people or any other group.

The following excerpt form my journal describes one of the unforeseen benefits of an inclusive Africentric approach to community art education:

I brought and shared Rastafari and African American imagetext books[13] to provide family members with examples of how poetry/ text and images are combined. J-Money's response was priceless! I cannot stop thinking about his genuine look of surprise as he said: I NEVER knew they have books called RASTAFARI!! He was shocked. He said that he has never seen books about Rastafari or about anything else to do with Black people except about Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. He was preoccupied with the book for the rest of the time I was there, looking at the richly colored images. …This is a perfect example of how I see art education as an accommodating and inclusive space; I see it entirely within my role as a community art educator to help J-Money to broaden his understanding of books and what books can be and do. His limited understanding of what topics are and are not written and published about, for me, reflects the Eurocentric nature of education in Quebec. However the tradition of Emancipatory Education in

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[13] Baraka, I.A. & Abernathy, B. (Fundi) (1970). *In Our Terribleness (Some elements and meaning in black style).* Indianopolis & New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company; DeCarava, R. & Hughes, L. (1955). *The Sweet Flypaper of Life.* New York: Simon and Schuster; Faristzaddi, M. (1997*). Itations of Jamaica and I Rastafari, The Third Itation.* Miami, Florida: Judah Anbesa.

Black Diaspora communities has been precisely to correct for our children the omissions

of their formal education….

Fooling with his mother after the meeting had wrapped up, J-Money suddenly broke into

patois, the first time I recall ever hearing him do so.   He was very playful, performing

comfortably and strutting around the living room…. (Journal entry, 22 Jan. 2011)

My autoethnographic study and creative construction of an auto-genealogy also took on issues of critical multiculturalism, particularly in challenging my own conceptions of 'Black identity.' In assembling my *family album*, for example, I secured

Figure 26. From *family album*
rosalind hampton, 2011

one of my hair wraps into the binding, protecting and shrouding it in the fabric as its pages would envelope my auto-genealogy. The 'African' fabric in which the album is wrapped, together with the ship on the cover evoke the Middle Passage for me, and suggest ways in which the album and photographs it contains

function across time and space. However, as the work of contemporary artist Yinka Shonibare teaches us, this type of batik fabric is problematic as a signifier of normalized African origins and authenticity.

> [These textiles are] designed by Mancunian Asians for export to Africa
> (where they are worn by urban Africans as a celebration of technological
> advancement and as a declaration of independence from European dress
> conventions). The fabrics are then re-exported back to Britain where they
> retail as traditional 'African' crafts. Moreover, the Dutch wax technique

used in the production of these batik textiles is not African at all but originates form Indonesia, from whence it travelled to Holland then on to Manchester and only then finally reached Africa. (Guha quoted in Tolia-Kelly & Morris, p. 156).

Shonibare uses the textiles as his 'artistic signature,' explaining that "The fabrics are not really authentically African the way people think. They prove to have a crossbred cultural background quite of their own. And it's the fallacy of that signification that I like" (quoted in Spring, 2008, p.294). In the context of my assemblage then, I recast my nostalgia for a connection to an African root-identity as part of the artwork. The batik fabric and ship, rather than signifying an idealized connection to an African ancestral homeland, comes to signify my longing for one, and how "longing for a lost home or group identity can serve as a form of critique rather than idealization" (Hirsch & Smith, p. 9).

Emancipatory Art Education (EAE) recognizes the significance of 'African ancestral origins' that many Black Diaspora people claim as our heritage, without conflating and collapsing the history and diversity of a continent of more than 1,000 ethnic groups, and without accepting simplistic— derogatory *or* idealized— notions of Africa and African-ness. EAE can also provide a site for understanding the trans-cultural cross-fertilization, sharing *and* cultural appropriation and stealing (recalling KPD's motto,) that has been and is part of art. In this context notions of authenticity and origins can be discussed and debated, and more complex and layered understandings of culture and identity constructed.

Cultural Work and Reflexivity.

There is no denying that the auto-genealogical project was a transformative
experience for me, personally and professionally. I have been self conscious and often
quite uncomfortable about sharing my self study in the broader research context however.
As has been noted, "the major challenge with visibly incorporating subjective experience
into ethnographic work… is that it can lead to self-absorption in what Geertz (1988) has
disparagingly referred to as 'author saturated texts'" (Davies quoted in Anderson, 2006,
p. 385).

There is contention in the field of qualitative research about whether or not
avoiding self absorption and deeply personal narratives altogether should be a concern for
researchers. Some feel that emotionally charged, highly personal narratives are
appropriate and feel that "just as a traditional ethnographer's immersion within the
naturally occurring realities of others allows much deeper, richer, and more complete
understanding than is possible via other methods such as survey research,"
autoethnography offers a way to achieve otherwise inaccessible insight and
understanding through fully immersive self study (Vryan, 2006, p. 407). Others insist
that autoethnographers should "avoid self-absorbed digression" (Anderson, 385) and
believe that self-narrative should ultimately be used, "to develop and refine generalized
theoretical understandings of social processes" (ibid).

I have used autoethnography here is as a tool for reflexive practice and as a
component of a larger research endeavor, consistent with Anderson's emphasis on
remaining committed to a broader theoretical analysis.   Autoethnographic study into my
racial identity and genealogy has been of significant relevance to my research and other

work with-and-in the Black community. My conceptions of self –as a member of my family and of Montreal's Black community, and as a researcher— as well as my understanding of race have been examined and enhanced.

After studying my own identity and positionality in the context of research practice, I come to join Anniina Suominen in insisting on "systemic self-reflexive practice as a precondition for teaching principles of equity" (2006, p. 152). I would argue that the critical analysis of one's own identities and positionality through self study be required of any researcher or educator seeking to work within a community largely defined (from within and/ or from without) by race, class, gender, or sexual identity.

As an art educator, using photography in my self study also garnered new insight into how it can be important for art educators to 'practice what we teach.' Despite having experience with both analog and digital photography prior to the project, through the focused concentration of photographic *self-study*, I came to a much better understanding of what asking researcher-participants to make photographs about themselves and their lives can potentially entail. Specifically, I had underestimated the intense emotional processes that can be involved in using photography as an integrated artistic and research practice, particularly in the context of family. Photographs have the uncanny capacity to evoke, to elicit, and to 'enlarge remembering,' in part because "the parts of the brain that process visual information are evolutionarily older than the part that process verbal information" (Harper, 2002, p. 13). The difficulty of assigning word-language to one's experience of photographs means that a student/ participant/ researcher may not have the means to communicate what they are experiencing in response to viewing their own or

somebody else's photographs, and this can cause frustration, pain and anger. I revisit issues of ethical concern with this in mind towards the end of this chapter.

Autoethnographic projects can be more and less emotional (and frankly, traumatic), depending on the particular emphasis of the study. Self-study, particularly in group contexts, should not be taken lightly and can have a lasting impact long after any given research/ art project has been completed. In this way, we can think of self study in PAR as a method for gaining insight into the potential effects and impacts of our research on participants and co-researchers both during the project and once it has been completed.

Chapter 5: Assessment & Implications of Study

Validity of Research.

This section offers my assessment of the *Family Photos* project using two different frameworks: Deborah Barndt's five areas of tension that our project as PAR and community art should have engaged; and Kathryn Herr and Gary Anderson's criteria for establishing the validity of action research.

Barndt's Areas of Tension for PAR and Community Art to Engage.

Below I address how the *Family Photos* study engaged each of the five areas of tension identified by Barndt: context, agency, praxis, holistic knowing, and leadership (2004, pp. 224-5).

Context: local/ global, public/ private tensions.

Family Photos underscores how diaspora communities represent the 'global in the local' (Barndt, p. 224) and are diverse and culturally pluralistic. Clippings' work in particular emphasizes the Caribbean roots and connections that hers and other Caribbean-Canadian families experience in their daily lives in Montreal. Familial art practice emerges through this study as a site for the creation of new postcolonial, hybrid cultural practices and for the transmission of (trans-) cultural memory between generations. *Family Photos* engaged with global as well as local issues and art with particular emphasis on the Caribbean. The project also called to the fore some of the differences between family members, and between the family and myself, while in other ways it underscored our commonalities and shared community membership.

Tensions between the private and public were present throughout the project, both subtly and overtly evoked in the photographs taken by individual family members, in ongoing discussions about what is and is not appropriate family information to share with others (and *which* others), and in the very nature of the research project as a public study involving individual and familial sharing and centered on preexisting close personal relationships.

Charland's discussion of boundary control and how it is practiced in African American communities is also instructive. He describes this concept as "the tendency in the Black community to retain ownership and carefully govern the flow of personal information," at least in part attributable to a "history of abuse by the dominant culture, often through the misinterpretation and opportunistic misrepresentation of a minority culture's behaviours and beliefs" (2010, p. 121). As *Family Photos* (and *family album*) demonstrated, art practice often involves the negotiation and mediation of boundaries between the realms of the private and the public. This requires a certain level of comfort in "exercising flexible boundary control" and accepting and managing the risks involved. In the context of familial art practice in a Black community where many parents are first generation immigrants, it is of utmost importance to recognize and respect cultural differences in conceptualizations of the public and private.

Figure 27. Untitled. J-Money, 2011

For me, this photo by J-Money evokes the notion of boundaries as well as tensions between private/public, inside/ outside, and absence/ presence.

Agency: process/ product, personal/ political, individual/ collective tensions.

Family Photos took an integrated approach to engaging tensions between process

and product. The project was ultimately a study of process, as we were most interested in

how the family would experience art making together. The dialogical approach that we

took to our research and that was often taken to the art making reinforces the importance

of process in creating a rewarding experience. At the same time, product— how the

photographs came out and how we worked with them— was equally important and in

fact central to our process. The photographs that family members created remain as the

material products of their hard work and, as has been demonstrated above, as important

signifiers of individual and family identity and experience. Finally, in reading and

analyzing family members' photographs *as art* I have underscored their validity as such,

and emphasized their functionality as products of artistic practice.

Individual/ collective and personal/ political tensions were also negotiated

throughout the project. The personal is indeed quite bound up with the political when it

comes to identity. The situating of the individual within the collective—family and

community—can in fact be understood as a key aspect of both *Family Photos* and my

family album as well as central to an Africentric approach to community art and research.

As Nkechinyelum A. Chioneso's 2008 study of Ghanaian and Jamaican immigrants living

in Toronto demonstrated, immigrants from countries with collectivist cultural orientations

maintain this orientation despite their length of residency in Canada, an individualistic

nation[14]. This was seen to be "the result of three major factors: the importance of social

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[14] Chioneso cites a significant body of research demonstrating that the United States, Canada, Britain, and Australia are among the most individualistic countries, while African, Asian, and Latin American countries tend to be collectivistic, with "the pervasive Africanisms in Caribbean societies [suggesting] that Caribbean countries also tend to be collectivistic" (p. 70)

networks, symbols of identity, and transnational ties" (Chioneso, 2008, p. 70). Clippings'
(and other first-generation Caribbean-Canadian parents') collectivist orientation often
encounters resistance from her children, who are influenced by highly individualistic
Canadian and American orientations. At the same time, it is clear that the children
strongly value a sense of Black and Caribbean community membership within the
Montreal context and recognize how maintaining communal (Caribbean) values and
networks enriches Clippings' and their lives.

One of the ways in which a collectivist orientation is shared and maintained is
through transnational communication with family members 'back home,' highlighting the
significance of Clippings photographing and involving her children in the annual ritual of
sending food and various household items to their family in St Vincent, as well as her
desire to send *Family Photos* back home. In the specific context of Emancipatory Art
Education in Montreal's largely immigrant Black community then,[15] photography
emerges as a vehicle for transnational communication and as such, a tool for fostering
local Black community cohesion and self-determination through reinforcing and passing
on common collectivist cultural orientations.

Praxis: action/ reflection, theory/ practice, critical/ creative tensions.

This research project evolved in cycles of action, reflection and theory as is the
nature of participatory action research. Ongoing dialogue and critical reflection on the
part of researcher-participants and I formed an integral part of individual and group
artistic and research practices. Dialogue was understood as a complex 'act of creation' in
and of itself that both required and generated critical thinking (Freire, 1970/2008). Our

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[15] In 2006, 56% of Montreal's Black community were immigrants (Torczyner, 2010)

pedagogical content emerged out of our dialogical process, so that our artistic inquiry was informed and driven by individual and collective interests and concerns of researcher-participants. Freire rightly claimed that "Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education" (1970/2008, p. 92-3).

Holistic knowing: body/ mind, rational/ intuitive, matter/ spirit tensions.

Holistic knowing is part of Clippings' African-Caribbean heritage and she often speaks about spiritual and metaphysical experience and knowing. Throughout the project she raised issues and made statements based on dreams and 'feelings' she had, and made reference to traditional practices that she learned in St. Vincent for managing encounters with the spirit world. This can be understood as reflective of African philosophical tradition which "argues that individuals are dependent creations of their communities and the individual's existence is a communal experience with the living, the dead, and the unborn members of the group (Mbiti, 1989; Nobles, 1972; Stuckey, 1987)" (Chioneso, p. 69).

A holistic approach to art education in Black communities also recognizes, as we did in this study, that many African and African Diaspora traditions do not view art as an activity to be separated from the rest of life, rather art practices are integrated into all aspects of society (Archer-Cunningham, 2007). We experienced this knowledge resurface in Clippings' post-study interview when she, who had once dismissed 'art' as something that she did not know about, articulated longstanding familiarity with and interest in functional art forms. Likewise, "traditional African education…was

inseparable from other segments of life" and "was there not only to be acquired but also to be lived" (Boateng, 1996, p. 110).

Photography provided access to multiple ways of knowing and intuiting, and at times produced knowledge in the form of 'insight-wisdom' that could not be translated into words.   The uncanny ways in which photography and photographs work was at times a source of tension, discomfort and it stimulated difficult emotional processes. These challenges were made manageable by the profound, mutual trust that family members and I share and the love that supported our commitment to each other, to the project and to our community. Finally, I have engaged in holistic knowing in my approach to analyzing the layers of data our research produced and through making generous use of metaphor in bridging theory and experience.

Leadership: insider/ outsider, researcher/ researched, facilitator/ artist tensions.

The ways in which tensions around my positionality as an insider-outsider and researcher-researched were negotiated through reflective practice and self-study has been discussed at length above. In the context of the artwork, my role as a facilitator-artist in the project was less of a source of tension. The working relationship that Clippings and I had established in the pilot project was extended to this project hence I was responsible for organizing the selection of photographs chosen by each participant into a catalogue in the form of a power point slide show. Any cropping and other minor adjustments to photographs were done collaboratively with researcher-participants on my laptop during sessions.

Herr and Anderson's Validity Criteria.

Herr and Anderson have linked five validity criteria—dialogic, democratic, process, catalytic and outcome— to the following generally agreed upon goals of action research: "(a) the generation of new knowledge, (b) the achievement of action-oriented outcomes, (c) the education of both researcher and participants, (d) results that are relevant to the local setting, and (e) a sound and appropriate research methodology" (2005, p. 54). The criteria they offer are understood as "tentative and in flux," to be applied as appropriate to any particular study. In the section that follows I consider each of Herr and Anderson's criteria in relation to strengths and challenges of the *Family Photos* project.

Dialogic validity.

Dialogic validity refers to the use of peer review processes in monitoring and assessing the research. As my MA thesis research, this study was overseen by my thesis advisor and at various times research issues were discussed with other colleagues and professors in the art education department of the university. Most important to me, I have had critical and reflective dialogue about my work with academic peers within the Black community, who have offered invaluable feedback and helped me to maintain a community orientation.

Democratic validity

"Democratic validity refers to the extent to which research is done in collaboration with all parties who have a stake in the problem under investigation." (Herr

&Anderson, p. 56) As PAR, the *Family Photos* project was designed, carried out and to an extent, written up in collaboration and constant consultation with the family members involved in the study. On a community level, through a conference presentation in February (Hampton, 2011) members of the Black community were both advised of the nature of this work and asked for their input. Feedback from family and community members suggests widespread support for intergenerational, Black community based art education initiatives and for the continued involvement of community members in defining and developing Emancipatory Art Education theory and practice.

Process validity

Process validity addresses the extent to which the research methods facilitate ongoing learning of the individuals involved and adhere to the action research structure of reflective cycles that include "looping back to reexamine underlying assumptions" (Argyris et al. in Herr & Anderson, p. 55). As demonstrated above, the *Family Photos* project was structured around cycles of theory, practice, reflection and action and involved ongoing critical dialogue with researcher-participants. While the formal study ended with the final session on April 25th, family members and I have continued to discuss and assess the project throughout the writing of this thesis.

Process validity is also established in relation to the quality of relationships established with researcher-participants, and clearly one strength of this study was the trusting, loving relationships that formed the foundation of our work. These relationships and the emotion they generated were also a challenge at times, and being so close to the researcher-participants required a particularly rigorous reflective practice on my part. In

addition to recognizing my own emotional biases, I sought to remain conscious of ways in which researcher-participants' experiences and how they reported them might be influenced by a desire to 'help me' with my thesis (see Subedi & Rhee's [2008] section on *Helping the researcher,* pp. 1079-1081).

Catalytic validity

Catalytic validity in action research addresses how the research process deepens researcher's and researcher-participants' understandings of the social reality under study, and orients them toward a particular action or change. Family members have gained significant appreciation for art and for the potential benefits of community art education and have been motivated by their experience to pursue other art projects.

The study also deepened my own understanding of photographic and research practices, confirming the impetus behind my work and motivating me to pursue further PAR –community art studies with fellow community members.

Outcome validity

Outcome validity measures the extent of the action and in this study the action involved the family's participation in art education, specifically, a family photography project. Outcome validity is dependent on process validity, in that a "superficial or flawed" process will be reflected in the outcome. I see the use of hybrid, layered methods as a strength of this study, as they both facilitated a rich learning process and produced a significant body of data and artwork to engage with and analyze. In terms of sustainability, since Akiva dii T'Chaa purchased her mother a digital camera Clippings

can continue her practice. Post-study conversations underscore however, the importance to Clippings of the structure provided by a formal study and the challenge of integrating a self-motivated art practice into one's life as a single parent. On the other hand, since the *Family Photos* project concluded, J-Money has continued to explore photography and particularly photographic self portraiture, and Kanisha Prima Donna saved enough money from her part time job and purchased herself a new digital camera.

Another concern of outcome validity involves how "Action researchers must be competent at both research procedures and moving participants toward successful outcomes" (Herr &Anderson, p. 55). 'Moving participants' was at times challenging for me and as a researcher and educator I often had to take a step back, reflect and negotiate between my impulse to push the project forward and the realities in researcher-participants' lives that at times forced the project to 'the back burner.' As Smith et al. have observed, "university-based researchers must interrogate and resist their impulses to hasten, manage and otherwise control the always evolving, frequently surprising process of PAR" (p. 422).

Finally, "outcome validity also acknowledges the fact that rigorous action research, rather than simply solving a problem, forces the researcher to reframe the problem in a more complex way, often leading to a new set of questions or problems" (Herr & Anderson, p.55). This is consistent with Freire's 'problem-posing' pedagogy that facilitates critical thinking and a view of "the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation" (1970/ 2008, p. 83). Finding the end (and beginning) of a study tends to be an issue for insider researchers (Herr &Anderson), and because of this, family members' and my work is understood as unfinished and ongoing,

both in terms of sharing the artwork they produced and continuing our research into Black community art practice. In order to emphasize a problem-posing approach, I include questions for further research along with recommendations below.

Recommendations & Questions for Further Research

One of the objectives of the *Family Photos* research was to generate recommendations for future familial and community art practice in the Black community. This concluding section lists and briefly outlines nine selected recommendations and three questions for further research within the context of three main categories that I have identified: Familial and intergenerational community art education; Photography, ethics and boundary control; and Participatory action research in community art education. While all recommendations and questions are framed by the emerging context of Emancipatory Art Education (EAE) praxis, most are relevant to all community art education and research.

Familial and intergenerational community art education.

Recommendations:

(1): PAR researchers and community art educators collaborating with families in art and research should take into account pre-existing family dynamics, particularly in regard to ranks and roles of each family member, as part of the positionality that they bring to the project. In EAE collaboration is never to be formulated as a response to family pathology, nor framed as a 'therapeutic family intervention' aimed at deconstructing or changing family dynamics.

(2):   Researcher-educators working with families and in other Black community based collaborations can take an Africentric approach to the individual that situates her/ him in the larger contexts of family and community. This approach is consistent with the collectivist orientations of the majority of Black people in Montreal, and maximizes the potential of community art education to respond to larger social, cultural, political and potentially economic interests of Montreal's Black community.

(3):   EAE should emphasize intergenerational collaboration and further explore the value of young Black artists apprenticing with adult family and other community members who make art.

Photography, ethics and boundary control.

(4):   Throughout a collaborative project, researcher-educators using photographic methods should regularly 'check in' with *each* individual researcher-participant-student (one-on-one) to discuss their individual process and revisit issues of consent. These discussions should take into consideration both individual and group aesthetic tastes, concerns, and holistic well being.

In asking people to 'photograph their lives' as is increasingly popular in research practice across a number of disciplines, researchers must recall how "the messages contained in a person's art often, perhaps always, precede the person's conscious awareness of those messages" (Freeman Patterson quoted in Malengret, p. 6). Issues of participant consent must be reexamined in this light, with recognition that researchers and participants can not know what will be involved and revealed through photographic inquiry until it has been revealed; until they have already seen. As Poulos has written, "a

story told is a powerful thing that can unleash all sorts of grief; an untold story gives off at least the illusion of control" (Poulos, p. 39).

There is a very thin line "between that part of ourselves that we call consciousness and that part that is within us that is unconscious but that, from time to time, seems to want—or need—to bubble up into our conscious lives" (Poulos, 2009, p.30). Photographs have a way of providing a spark; taking and looking at pictures can light a fire that sends memories bubbling to the surface. As educators and researchers we are to an extent responsible for these unknown outcomes and should expect that given the "opportunity to create content for public consumption," that community art and participatory photography provide, people *will* "choose to use this opportunity to talk about what the serious business of the human experience—life, loss, belonging, hope for the future, friendship and love—mean to them" (Burgess, 2006, p. 211-212).

(5):   Because of the above, action researchers using photographic methods should consider obtaining additional, *post-study* consent for the use of participants' photographs. Likewise, while member checks are not meant to represent the seeking of participants' *approval* of the way in which the research is written up, ongoing involvement of researcher-participants in post-study analysis should be an ethical concern.

In my own use of photographic methods in autoethnography I experienced how this type of inquiry can take on 'a life of its own,' carrying the individual researcher-artist on an unpredictable and consuming journey and demanding that we give ourselves 'body and soul to the act of reading or seeing' (Miller, 2008, p. 61). It can be very difficult to assess one's personal boundaries when in 'the thick of it.' Consequently, researcher-

participants must be provided with the necessary time and space from the research experience to re-locate themselves in relation to boundary control, in order to make informed decisions in relation to consent. The goal of EAE is *never* to 'get' a student (or co-researcher) to share or expose something that they do not wish to. In addition to seeking multiple levels of consent, researchers must be critically reflective and accountable for considering the intimacy of the research context in relation to decisions regarding the inclusion and re-printing of photographs in theses, dissertations and academic publications (for an excellent example of this form of critical reflexivity see Figueroa, 2008).

(6): Given the interest that particularly youth express in using digital images as a means of communicating with their peers online, photography projects should incorporate at least basic media literacy training with emphasis on helping internet users to make informed decisions about how they share images and other content online.

Participatory action research in community art education.

(7): Graduate students pursuing community art education research should plan studies that last at least as long as (and longer than) we intend to spend writing them up.

The idea behind this formulation is not to rush the writing, rather it is to propose that *at least* equal emphasis (time and energy) be placed on the (collective) *participatory action* part of the research as on the academic writing (ultimately a largely individual endeavor). In other words, I am concerned about research studies (including my own) that, based on the demands of university schedules, attempt to 'get through data collection' with a focus on the end goal of the production of a thesis or dissertation. In

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the *Family Photos* project for example, there was a sense that when it was time for our sessions to end we had in many ways 'just gotten started.' To an extent then, and somewhat ironically, I felt required to undermine broader objectives in relation to community art education and this family's art practice in order to meet the individual goal of producing a thesis. While this can be understood as a sacrifice for the 'greater good' of producing scholarship that can positively impact the community, it has been a source of concern and reflection for me in relation to my own positionality and priorities.

Following her PhD research and dissertation, feminist participatory action researcher Patricia Macguire cautioned that PAR can be extremely difficult to pursue alone and without funding, and she placed particular emphasis on time constraints and "inevitably" having to make choices based on them (Herr & Anderson, pp. 110-11).

(8): Graduate students pursuing participatory action research, particularly in low income communities, should either secure funding prior to the project, be prepared to fund the project themselves, or design research that involves leading researcher-participants through the process of raising funds (which may or may not be appropriate depending on the study). Participatory action research proposals should be required to include a comprehensive budget and plan for accessing funds.

For the *Family Photos* project I personally purchased two new digital cameras and used my own photo paper and home printer to print copies for family members. As a community art educator I see the cameras as a highly worthwhile investment however it is clearly not ideal or sustainable to fund research out of one's pocket.

*(9)***:** 'Equity' in participatory action research collaborations should not be understood in terms of 'equal-ness' or same-ness among those involved, rather in terms

of working fairly and respectfully across differences. Equitable research collaboration

must involve the recognition and explicit acknowledgement of the power dynamics that

frame the research endeavor and relationships between those involved in it.

Question for further research

(1):   How, if at all, are individuals' artistic processes and aesthetic identities

influenced by their family rank and roles in the context of *inter*-family collaboration in

community art?

(2):   How can Emancipatory Art Education draw on a 'traditional African

approaches to art and education' in relation to fostering intergenerational communication

and collaboration (e.g. see Archer-Cunningham, 2007; Kinloch, 2007)?

(3):   Can photography and other visual art practices make theory more

accessible to community art education students and researcher-participants? If so, in what

ways and does theory emerge as meaningful to community members who do not usually

engage with it?

bell hooks described theory itself as a 'liberatory practice,' (1994, pp. 59-75)

arguing that theory can and should be directed toward healing, emancipatory and

revolutionary ends. hooks argues that anti-intellectualism in Black communities is

dangerous and "helps perpetuate the idea that we can engage in revolutionary black

liberation and feminist struggle without theory" (p. 66). I agree with hooks about the

emancipatory potential of theory, based on my own experiences of discovering links between my own lived experiences and theories that can be applied to them. I have also witnessed the anti-intellectualism she refers to among Black people[16], and understand that theoretical discourse can be so laden with pretentious hyper-intellectualized language that it is barely accessible to anyone.

So how can art practices intervene in this situation? In the *Family Photos* project an example emerged through my search for other ways of understanding our consistent use of seriality in presenting of our images. Finding Iris Marion Young's essay theorizing gender as seriality provided me with one of those satisfying moments of revelation and meaning making that propelled my thinking forward (or plunged it deeper). I do not think that such moments should be reserved for academics and I think that participatory action researchers are ideally situated between the universities and external communities with whom they work, to bridge the gap between theory and daily life. Through their art practice and our ongoing discussions in which I have shared my written analyses of our project, the researcher-participants of the *Family Photos* project have indeed demonstrated an appreciation for theory and how it can frame our experiences. To conclude with an example, when I had finished reading the section of this thesis addressing her work to her, Kanisha Prima Donna sighed with satisfaction and said "Wow! I like it! You got it right and I really like how you wrote it; it makes me sound so *interesting!*"

"That's because you *are*" I replied.

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[16] Including, for example, Black youth who equate being a good student with 'acting white,' and community members of all ages who distrust and resent the elitism of universities and the 'educated fools' (as the Rastas say) that these institutions tend to produce.

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Appendix A: Consent forms

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN *FAMILY PHOTOVOICE* (*Clippings*)

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by ROSALIND HAMPTON of the Department of Art Education of Concordia University for her Masters thesis.

<div align="right">

Art Education (EV-2-635)
Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.
Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8

</div>

A. PURPOSE
I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows:

To explore how participating in a community art and research project can affect the lives of a Black Caribbean-Canadian family of four: Clippings (a single mother in her 50s) and her three children, Akiva dii T'chaa (female, 20 yrs. old), Kano Booka (female, 16 yrs) and J-Money (male, 13yrs).

I understand that it is the art making experiences of my children and I that are being studied.

B. PROCEDURES
The project will take approximately six weeks.

1. I will work with rosalind to design the tools that will be used to assess the study.

2. I will be given digital cameras to use for four weeks, and will take pictures inspired by weekly themes and our own ideas and concerns. During this time we will also:

   - keep journals in which we will write down our thoughts and ideas about our process

   - meet with rosalind regularly to discuss our photographs and reflections

3. I will work with rosalind and my children to analyze our work and each of us will produce a final selection of 10-12 photographs. Each of us will be provided with a disc containing copies of the photographs that we take. I will own the copyrights to the photographs I take.

4. We will decide together if and how we would like to present our work (photos and texts), for example in a group exhibition or a catalogue.

5. rosalind will write up the final research report and submit it as part of her Masters thesis.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS
- There are no risks to participating in this study.
- Benefits of participation include the overall experience of engaging in an art project and that my children and I will receive digital copies of all of our photographs and printed copies of photographs that we choose for the final presentation of our work.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

▪ I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.

▪ I understand that for the purposes of this study the researcher (rosalind), will not use my real name. I will be identified in this study as **<u>CLIPPINGS</u>**.

▪ I will be free to withdraw my consent for the inclusion of my artwork in the study up until we make a final decision about the final presentation of the work.

▪ I give my consent for ROSALIND HAMPTON to present and publish the findings of this research, **including images of my artwork that I have not withdrawn,** at conferences, in articles and in her Masters thesis.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY:

NAME (please print)   _____

SIGNATURE   _____

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's Principal Investigator: Dr. Linda Szabad-Smyth, the Department of Art Education of Concordia University, at lsmyth@alcor.concordia.ca or 514-848-2424 x 4644

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, Dr. Brigitte Des Rosiers, at (514) 848-2424 x7481 or by email at bdesrosi@alcor.concordia.ca

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN *FAMILY PHOTOVOICE*
(***Clippings for Kano Booka***)[17]

This is to state that I give my consent for my child to participate in a program of research being conducted by ROSALIND HAMPTON of the Department of Art Education of Concordia University for her Masters thesis.

<div align="right">

Art Education (EV-2-635)
Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.
Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8

</div>

A. PURPOSE
I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows:

To explore how participating in a community art and research project can affect the lives of a Black Caribbean-Canadian family of four: Clippings (a single mother in her 50s) and her three children, Akiva dii T'chaa (female, 20 yrs. old), Kano Booka (female, 16 yrs) and J-Money (male, 13yrs).

I understand that it is the art-making experiences of my children and I that are being studied.

B. PROCEDURES
The project will take approximately six weeks.

1. My child will work with rosalind to design the tools that will be used to assess the study.

2. My child will be given digital cameras to use for four weeks, and will take pictures inspired by weekly themes and our own ideas and concerns. During this time we will also:

   ▪ keep journals in which we will write down our thoughts and ideas about our process

   ▪ meet with rosalind regularly to discuss our photographs and reflections

3. My child will work with rosalind and with other participants to analyze our work and each of us will produce a final selection of 10-12 photographs. Each of us will be provided with a disc containing copies of the photographs that we take. I will own the copyrights to the photographs I take.

4. We will decide together if and how we would like to present our work (photos and texts), for example in a group exhibition or a catalogue.

5. rosalind will write up the final research report and submit it as part of her Masters thesis.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS
▪ There are no risks to participating in this study.
▪ Benefits of participation include the overall experience of engaging in an art project and that my child will receive digital copies of all of her photographs and printed copies of her photographs that we choose for the final presentation of our work.

---

[17] Kanisha Prima Donna began the study with the pseudonym *Kano Booka*, and changed pseudonyms shortly after the project began, with her mother's consent.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

▪ I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my child's participation at anytime without negative consequences.

▪ I understand that for the purposes of this study the researcher (rosalind), will not disclose my child's real name. She will be referred to by the pseudonym that she has chosen, *Kano Booka.*

▪ I will be free to withdraw consent for the inclusion of my child's artwork in the study up until we make a final decision regarding the final presentation of the work.

▪ I give my consent for ROSALIND HAMPTON to present and publish the findings of this research, **including images of my child's artwork that have not been withdrawn,** at conferences, in articles and in her Masters thesis.

I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE FOR MY DAUGHTER, IDENTIFIED BY THE PSEUDONYM _KANO BOOKA_ TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY:

NAME (please print)   _____

SIGNATURE   _____

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's Principal Investigator: Dr. Linda Szabad-Smyth, the Department of Art Education of Concordia University, at lsmyth@alcor.concordia.ca or 514-848-2424 x 4644
.

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, Dr. Brigitte Des Rosiers, at (514) 848-2424 x7481 or by email at bdesrosi@alcor.concordia.ca

<div align="center">

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN *FAMILY PHOTOVOICE*
(*Clippings for J-Money*)

</div>

This is to state that I give my consent for my child to participate in a program of research being conducted by ROSALIND HAMPTON of the Department of Art Education of Concordia University for her Masters thesis.

<div align="right">

Art Education (EV-2-635)
Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.
Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8

</div>

A. PURPOSE
I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows:

To explore how participating in a community art and research project can affect the lives of a Black Caribbean-Canadian family of four: Clippings (a single mother in her 50s) and her three children, Akiva dii T'chaa (female, 20 yrs. old), Kano Booka (female, 16 yrs) and J-Money (male, 13yrs).

I understand that it is the art-making experiences of my children and I that are being studied.

B. PROCEDURES
The project will take approximately six weeks.

6. My child will work with rosalind to design the tools that will be used to assess the study.

7. My child will be given digital cameras to use for four weeks, and will take pictures inspired by weekly themes and our own ideas and concerns. During this time we will also:

    ▪ keep journals in which we will write down our thoughts and ideas about our process

    ▪ meet with rosalind regularly to discuss our photographs and reflections

8. My child will work with rosalind and with other participants to analyze our work and each of us will produce a final selection of 10-12 photographs. Each of us will be provided with a disc containing copies of the photographs that we take. I will own the copyrights to the photographs I take.

9. We will decide together if and how we would like to present our work (photos and texts), for example in a group exhibition or a catalogue.

10. rosalind will write up the final research report and submit it as part of her Masters thesis.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS
▪ There are no risks to participating in this study.
▪ Benefits of participation include the overall experience of engaging in an art project and that my child will receive digital copies of all of his photographs and printed copies of his photographs that we choose for the final presentation of our work.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my child's participation at anytime without negative consequences.

- I understand that for the purposes of this study the researcher (rosalind), will not disclose my child's real name. He will be referred to by the pseudonym that he has chosen, *J-Money*.

- I will be free to withdraw consent for the inclusion of my child's artwork in the study up until we make a final decision regarding the final presentation of the work.

- I give my consent for ROSALIND HAMPTON to present and publish the findings of this research, **including images of my child's artwork that have not been withdrawn,** at conferences, in articles and in her Masters thesis.

I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE FOR MY SON, IDENTIFIED BY THE PSEUDONYM *J-MONEY* TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY:

NAME (please print)   _____

SIGNATURE   _____

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's Principal Investigator: Dr. Linda Szabad-Smyth, the Department of Art Education of Concordia University, at lsmyth@alcor.concordia.ca or 514-848-2424 x 4644
.

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, Dr. Brigitte Des Rosiers, at (514) 848-2424 x7481 or by email at bdesrosi@alcor.concordia.ca

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN *FAMILY PHOTOVOICE* (*Akiva Dii T'chaa*)

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by ROSALIND HAMPTON of the Department of Art Education of Concordia University for her Masters thesis.

Art Education (EV-2-635)
Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.
Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8

A. PURPOSE
I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows:

To explore how participating in a community art and research project can affect the lives of a Black Caribbean-Canadian family of four: Clippings (a single mother in her 50s) and her three children, Akiva dii T'chaa (female, 20 yrs. old), Kano Booka (female, 16 yrs) and J-Money (male, 13yrs).

I understand that it is the art-making experiences of my family that are being studied.

B. PROCEDURES
The project will take approximately six weeks.

1. I will meet with rosalind to participate in designing the tools that will be used in the study.

2. I will be given a digital camera to use for four weeks, and will take pictures according to weekly themes and my own ideas and concerns. During this time I will also:
    - keep a journal in which I will write down my thoughts and ideas
    - meet with rosalind and my family members once per week to discuss my photographs and reflections

3. I will work with rosalind to analyze my work and produce a final selection of 10-12 photographs. I will be provided with a disc containing copies of the photographs that I take and I will own the copyrights of the photographs I take.

4. We will decide together if and how we would like to present our work (photos and texts), for example in a group exhibition or a catalogue.

5. rosalind will write up the final research report and submit it as part of her Masters thesis.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS
- There are no risks to participating in this study.

- Benefits of participation include the overall experience of engaging in an art project and that I will receive digital copies of all of my photographs and printed copies of my photographs that we choose for the final presentation of our work.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

▪ I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences

▪ I understand that for the purposes of this study the researcher (rosalind), will not disclose my real name. I will be identified in this study by the pseudonym I have chosen, **AKIVA DII T'CHAA**

▪ I will be free to withdraw consent for the inclusion of my artwork in the study up until we make a final decision regarding the final presentation of the work.

▪ I give my consent for ROSALIND HAMPTON to present and publish the findings of this research, **including images of my artwork that I have not withdrawn,** at conferences, in articles and in her Masters thesis.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY:

NAME (please print)　　　　　_____

SIGNATURE　　　　　　　　_____

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's Principal Investigator: Dr. Linda Szabad-Smyth, the Department of Art Education of Concordia University, at lsmyth@alcor.concordia.ca or 514-848-2424 x 4644

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, Dr. Brigitte Des Rosiers, at (514) 848-2424 x7481 or by email at bdesrosi@alcor.concordia.ca

YOUTH ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN *FAMILY PHOTOVOICE* (*Kano Booka*)

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by ROSALIND HAMPTON of the Department of Art Education of Concordia University for her Masters thesis.

Art Education (EV-2-635)
Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.
Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8

A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows:

To explore how participating in a community art and research project can affect the lives of a Black Caribbean-Canadian family of four: Clippings (a single mother in her 50s) and her three children, Akiva dii T'chaa (female, 20 yrs. old), Kano Booka (female, 16 yrs) and J-Money (male, 13yrs).

I understand that it is the art-making experiences of my family that are being studied.

B. PROCEDURES

The project will take approximately six weeks.

1. I will meet with rosalind to participate in designing the tools that will be used in the study.

2. I will be given a digital camera to use for four weeks, and will take pictures that I feel represent my life and ideas. During this time I will also:
    - keep a journal in which I will write down my thoughts and ideas
    - meet with rosalind and my family members once per week to discuss my photographs and reflections

3. I will work with rosalind to analyze my work and produce a final selection of 10-12 photographs. I will be provided with a disc containing copies of the photographs that I take and I will own the copyrights of the photographs I take.

4. rosalind will write up the final research report and submit it as part of her Masters thesis.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

- There are no risks to participating in this study.

- Benefits of participation include the overall experience of engaging in an art project and that I will receive digital copies of all of my photographs and printed copies of my photographs that we choose for the final presentation of our work.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

▪ I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.

▪ I understand that for the purposes of this study the researcher (rosalind), will not disclose my real name. I will be identified in this study by the pseudonym I have chosen: **KANO BOOKA**

▪ I will be free to withdraw consent for the inclusion of my artwork in the study up until we make a final decision regarding the final presentation of the work.

▪ I give my consent for ROSALIND HAMPTON to present and publish the findings of this research, **including images of my artwork that I have not withdrawn**, at conferences, in articles and in her Masters thesis.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print)   _____

SIGNATURE   _____

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's Principal Investigator: Dr. Linda Szabad-Smyth, the Department of Art Education of Concordia University, at lsmyth@alcor.concordia.ca or 514-848-2424 x 4644

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, Dr. Brigitte Des Rosiers, at (514) 848-2424 x7481 or by email at bdesrosi@alcor.concordia.ca

YOUTH ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN *FAMILY PHOTOVOICE* (*J-Money*)

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by ROSALIND HAMPTON of the Department of Art Education of Concordia University for her Masters thesis.

<div align="right">

Art Education (EV-2-635)
Concordia University
1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. W.
Montreal, Quebec H3G 1M8

</div>

A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is as follows:

To explore how participating in a community art and research project can affect the lives of a Black Caribbean-Canadian family of four: Clippings (a single mother in her 50s) and her three children, Akiva dii T'chaa (female, 20 yrs. old), Kano Booka (female, 16 yrs) and J-Money (male, 13yrs).

I understand that it is the art-making experiences of my family that are being studied.

B. PROCEDURES

The project will take approximately six weeks.

1. I will meet with rosalind to participate in designing the tools that will be used in the study.

2. I will be given a digital camera to use for four weeks, and will take pictures that I feel represent my life and ideas. During this time I will also:
    - keep a journal in which I will write down my thoughts and ideas
    - meet with rosalind and my family members once per week to discuss my photographs and reflections

3. I will work with rosalind to analyze my work and produce a final selection of 10-12 photographs. I will be provided with a disc containing copies of the photographs that I take and I will own the copyrights of the photographs I take.

4. rosalind will write up the final research report and submit it as part of her Masters thesis.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

- There are no risks to participating in this study.

- Benefits of participation include the overall experience of engaging in an art project and that I will receive digital copies of all of my photographs and printed copies of my photographs that we choose for the final presentation of our work.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

▪ I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.

▪ I understand that for the purposes of this study the researcher (rosalind), will not disclose my real name. I will be identified in this study by the pseudonym I have chosen: **J-MONEY**

▪ I will be free to withdraw consent for the inclusion of my artwork in the study up until we make a final decision regarding the final presentation of the work.

▪ I give my consent for ROSALIND HAMPTON to present and publish the findings of this research, **including images of my artwork that I have not withdrawn**, at conferences, in articles and in her Masters thesis.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print)   _____

SIGNATURE   _____

If at any time you have questions about the proposed research, please contact the study's Principal Investigator: Dr. Linda Szabad-Smyth, the Department of Art Education of Concordia University, at lsmyth@alcor.concordia.ca or 514-848-2424 x 4644

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics and Compliance Advisor, Concordia University, Dr. Brigitte Des Rosiers, at (514) 848-2424 x7481 or by email at bdesrosi@alcor.concordia.ca

Appendix B: Work Schedule.

Preliminary work	(a) family members give verbal consent to proceed (b) rosalind writes thesis proposal
	(c) Summary Protocol Form: completed by rosalind & accepted by Concordia's Office of Research
Weeks 1-2	(a) Informed Consent forms signed (b) pre-study questionnaire: designed and completed by family members (c) post-study questionnaire designed. (d) family members will be given notebooks to keep journals documenting their processes.
	(e) Family members are given cameras (*Akiva* will use her own). Discussion re. use of camera in a responsible and ethical manner, obtaining consent when photographing people; rosalind will lead a 'photo expedition' in the community to practice pictures.
Weeks 3-7	Raw data collection for the next 4-5 weeks: family members take photographs and we will meet weekly for a few hours to look at photos, discuss their subject matter and content, and discuss the experiences we are having as artists. rosalind will give brief weekly presentations regarding photography and other relevant art practices. rosalind will offer to assist anyone who requires support taking pictures, and using her laptop and basic photo software, we will be able to manipulate images and select those that we would like to print.
Week 8-9	We will make final selections of photographs to work with and reflect on our process and their experiences as artists. As a group we will make a final decision on a final format for the presentation of the family's work, for example in a zine (with the option of a launch event) or an exhibition.
Week 10	Final presentation (i.e. exhibition/ publication) of work (this may have to follow the post-study questionnaire and recommendations depending on the specific nature of the final presentation). Family members complete post-study questionnaire and make recommendations for future research.
Post-study	rosalind will continue the review and analysis of data and write up the report of our work. This is the only stage of the research that rosalind will work on alone, but she will draw heavily on the work that we have all done together.

Appendix C: Ethical Concerns (handout and framework for discussion)

<u>Ethical concerns for the photographer</u>

1. **You have to have someone's permission** to take their picture, even if they are in a public place. You should not intrude on anyone's privacy. Ask to take pictures and let them know how the photograph will be used (i.e. that it may appear in the final presentation of your artwork and/ or our research). If photographing children please obtain for consent from the child AND the parent/ guardian.

2. It is very important that the subjects of your photographs understand and agree to how they will be depicted. **Tell people about your work**; why you are taking pictures and how the image of them will be used. Because you are using a digital camera you can **show your subjects the photographs of them** to confirm that they agree to how they are represented.

3. If someone is recognizable in a photograph that you take of them, you MUST have them sign a release form if you would like the photo to be used in our project. If the person is under 18 years old you will need their parent or guardian to sign if the photograph is going to shown in public or published.

Appendix D: Tips for Taking Pictures (handout)

TIPS FOR TAKING PICTURES

EXPERIMENT
- Shoot from different perspectives

- Shoot from different distances

- Shoot from different sides and angles

- Take lots of pictures!

FRAMING
- Check the background and foreground of your pictures. What are you including in the frame? Are there too many distractions in the background?'

- Try getting close to your subject and making the subject fill up the frame of the picture.

HOLDING THE CAMERA
- Check the lines in your photo: are they straight? Do you want them to be?

- To avoid "shakey" images hold the camera with both hands and if possible, rest your elbows or the camera on a solid object (like a table)

FINDING & HIGHLIGHTING YOUR FOCAL POINT
- The focal point of your picture is the central point of interest. It is where the viewer's eye will be drawn when they look at your photograph.
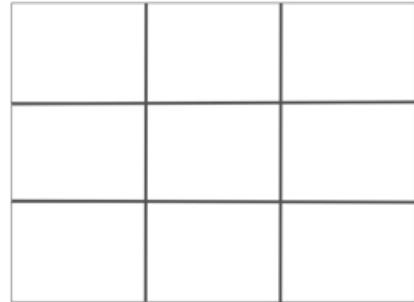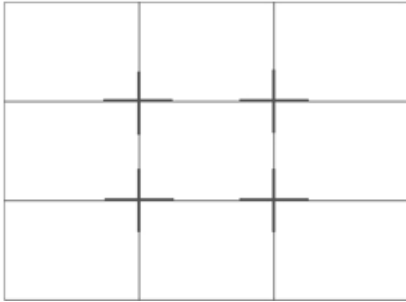
<u>THE RULE OF THIRDS</u>

- Think of your photograph as having nine parts

- Place points of interest in the intersections or along the lines and your photo becomes more balanced which will help viewers to interact with it more naturally.

- The four points where these lines intersect are strongest focal points. The lines themselves are the second strongest focal points.

- Ask yourself: What are the points of interest in this shot?

  Where am I intentionally placing them?
  How does Clippings' *One of those Moments* use the rule of thirds?

- …And now that you know the rule you can break it when you choose to!

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Appendix E: Framework for Discussing Pictures

1.   **What/ who do we see in this picture?**

       'Objective' looking at only what we *see* in the picture (i.e. not what we infer

              about what we see).

2.   **What is the picture about?**

3.   **What does it represent to you? (personally as the artist)**

       Is the main idea/intention and experience of the picture conceptual (e.g. a picture

              about poverty) or aesthetic (a picture about a certain human *feeling* such as

              loneliness or ecstasy) or both?

4.   **Are you satisfied with the composition of the photograph and how it**
       communicates with the viewer?

       Does it say what you wanted to say? Does it say things that you didn't expect it

              to?   How do you feel about the composition in terms of colours,

              brightness, focus, angles, etc?   Overall, do you like how the photograph

              looks?

5.   **What is the title of this photograph?   Is there any text that should**
       accompany this image?

Appendix F: *Clippings Photovoice* (catalogue) and

Appendix G: *Family Photos* (catalogue)

<u>Please note</u>:

In the printed copy of this thesis, Appendices F and G are included on a CD (*disc 1*)

while the electronic version includes Appendices F and G following page 150.

Clippings' photovoice

rosalind & Clippings

April 2010

Food for thought:
to keep the elderly going back home

Rations I'm sending to my mother.
I'm the only one who, who interested whether she eats.

I shouldn't say rations. Rations, —I tell you what is rations:
Rations is when, you see the earthquake?
     And the people send all the things and it come.
You see how they rations; it come from all above?
We had a crisis where the Soufrèire had erupted and people come from, like all
     Come to the place where, to rescue, and they send, people from everywhere.
Like you know like how Canada help, this one help, send the things and everybody
     They getting the rations; even me used to go get.
Yeh, this is just… food for thought?
Yeh! Food for thought. To keep the elderly going.

Once a year I do it.
I can't afford more than once a year;
     It depends how much you have.
You see she say all she want is some food.
And that hurts you so much,
     When you hear your mother say she want some food.
Well my brother call me Sunday night,
     So I tell him the stuff is on the way.
Well lady, you could **feel** the relief.

…The Food for Thought arrived safe and sound, and my brother say 'just in time'
     Because it got there for Easter and then
She have enough stuff to last her awhile ,
If she don't give none away.

Midnight mopping

The Fall Guy

The Fall Guy

We were waiting.
They have to give you a blue paper about injuries,
Ask you so much questions,
The only thing they didn't ask you
Is where your mother make you.
Because they want to call the police you see,
They want to find out about the injury,
Yeh,
Because I remember when he did fall out the window
Everything was, thing, the next thing
They say **STAY**.
Again, they go and they ask him
The questions like,
You know,
How they try fi' posit you for see
If you telling the truth?

One of those moments

Baptist is my mother's church.
Lookin at Baptist services in various places.

Trying to remember, like,
The good times I used to have
when I home and go out with the Baptists;
I'm tryin' to get back that **rhythm** of how they make you feel,
Not like here…

Back home, they,—everybody
Has a **sound**,
And when you get down to there
You will dance, Oh!
It's so sweet.

…So he not there,
So I always keep a Bible.
It's how the song say: I put my Bible in front the door, no one can enter in.
We would sing that song; them people don't know but the Baptists know that.

I put the Bible in front the door no one can enter
I put the Bible in front the door no one c--No one!
No one, no one, no one can enter in.

Because the Bible is a weapon eh?
Like, you can carry it around every day, and

One of those moments,
yeh,
Just one of those moments.

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Family Photos: Picturing Ourselves

**Clippings, Akiva dii T'Chaa,
Kanisha Prima Donna & J-Money**
with
rosalind hampton

Clippings
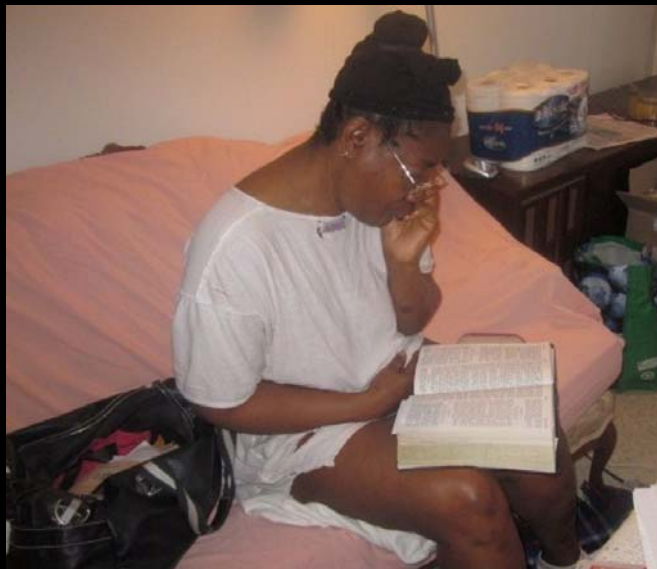
Self Portrait

Clippings' Curry Chicken

www.maughfaughbaugh.com

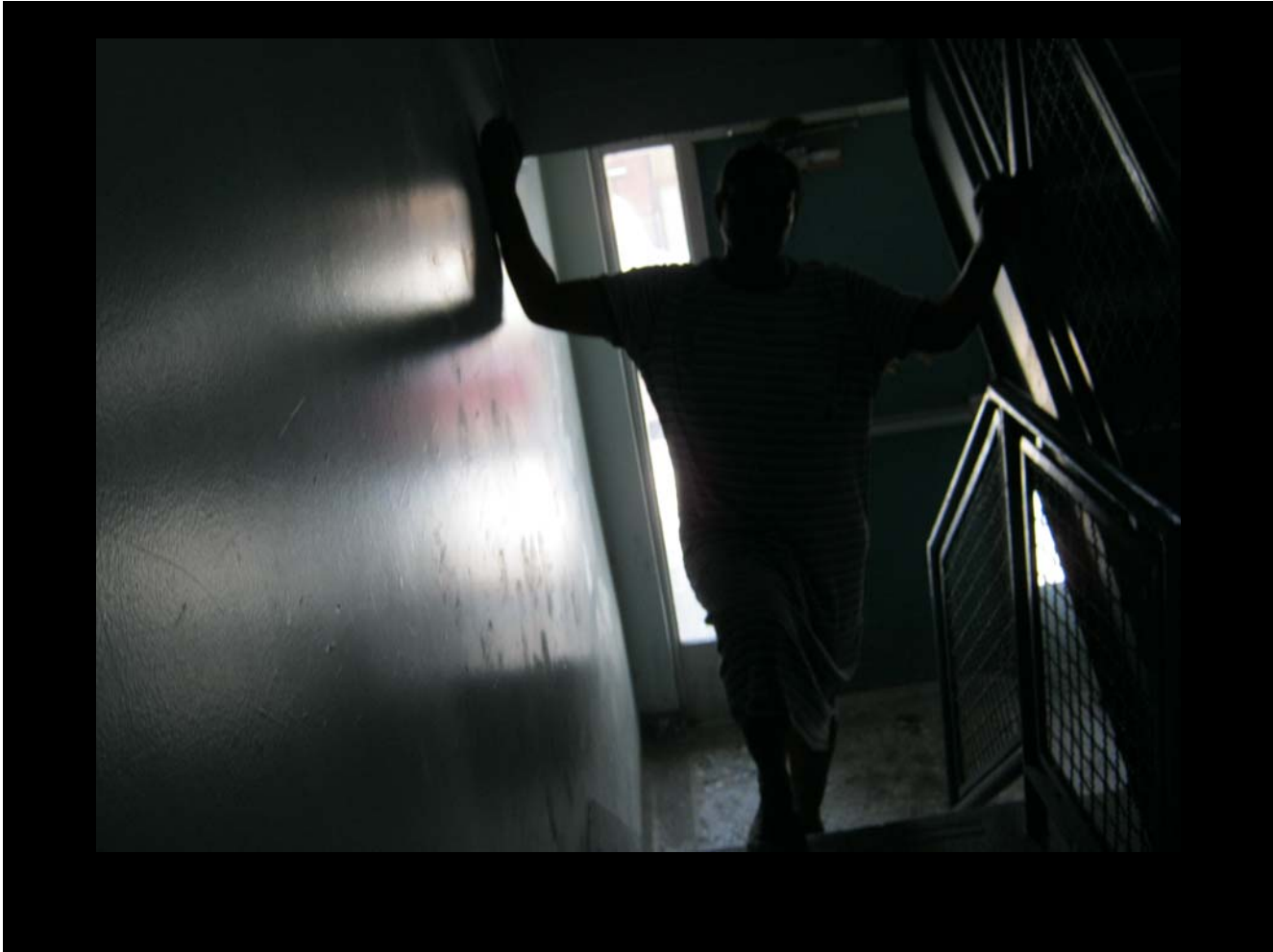When You're Exhausted, You Fall Front-First

When You Give Unto the Poor, You Lend Unto the Lord

Cleanliness Is More to Godliness,
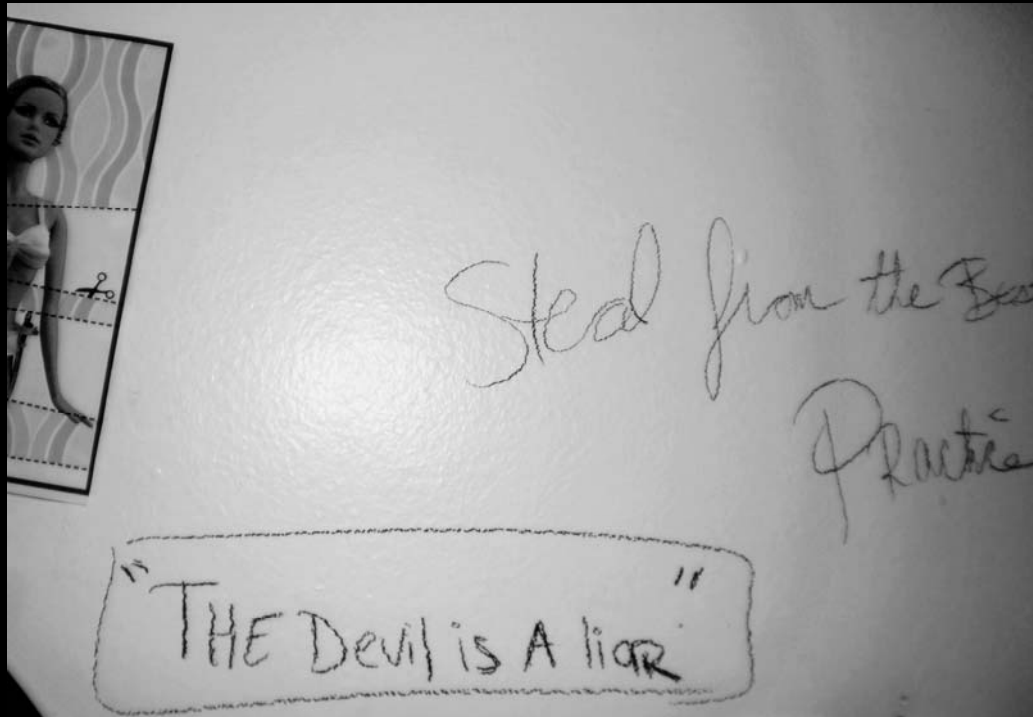So it is Important to Keep Your Surroundings Clean

Kanisha Prima Donna

The Road to Salvation

Teenage Dream

Real Recognize Real

Words of wisdom

There are some who will make you question how you feel. I say,
They are testers, sent by the devil.
If I am confident he will send an intimidator or provoker.
If I am in love, a seducer, testing my relationship.
Forgive them
For they do not know better.
Used by the devil they are not strong enough.
He will send people to do his deeds.
Trust myself for I am doing as I please.
With pride and no harm to another
I shall let no man shatter my path.
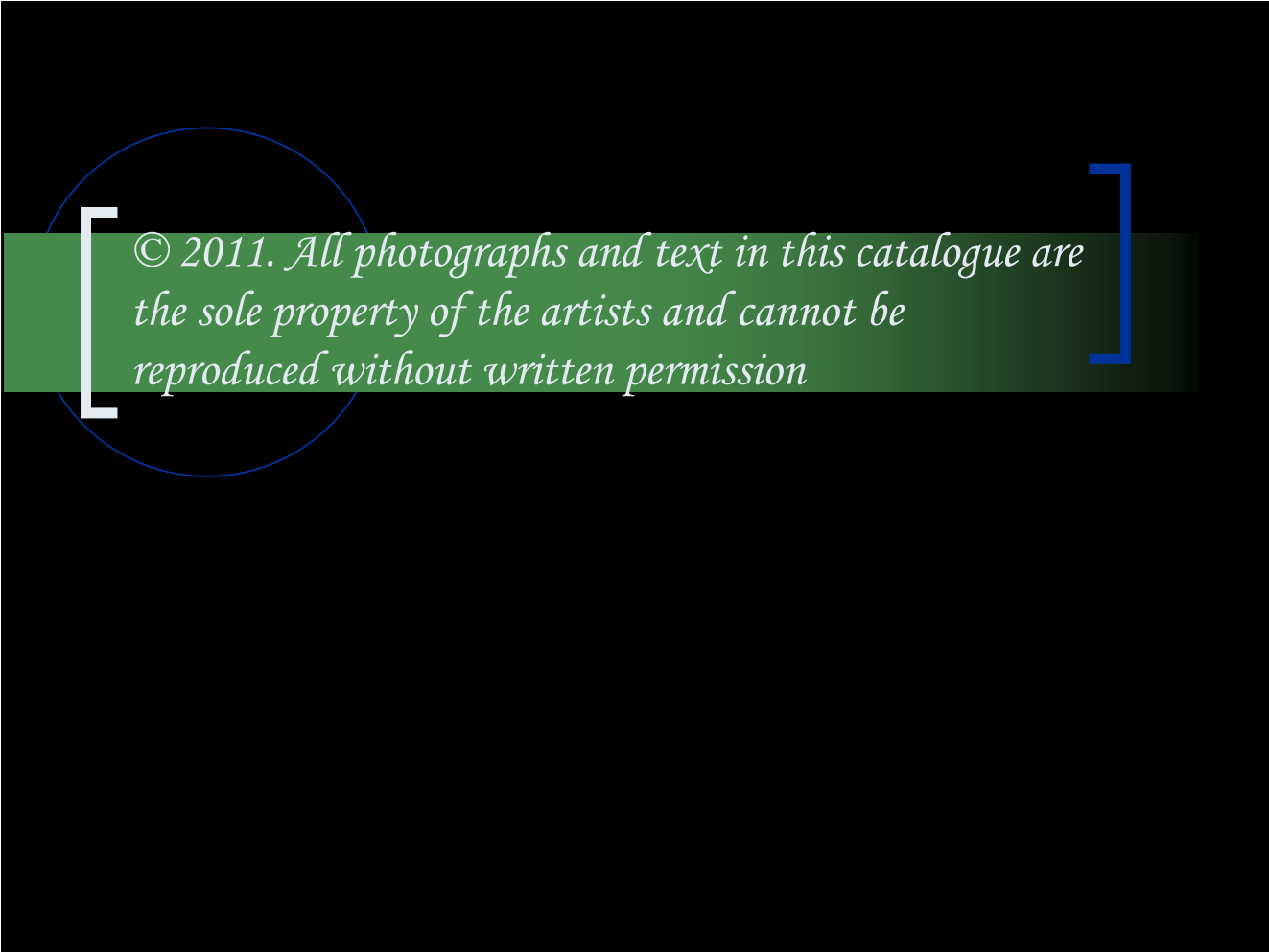
~Kanisha
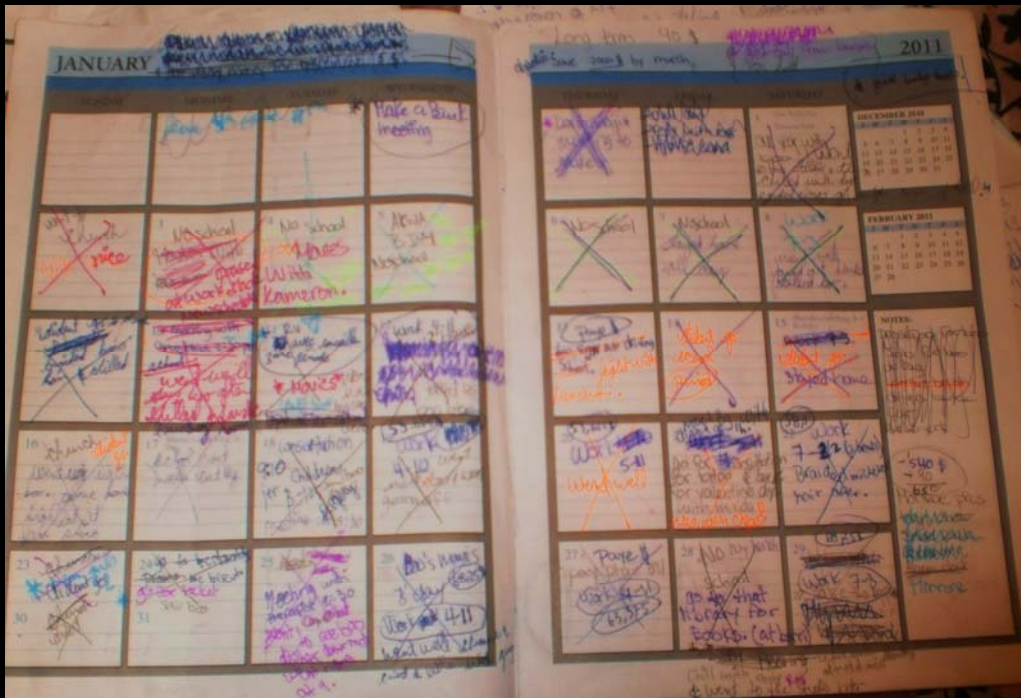
A Busy Girl Has No Time for Nonsense

J-Money

Life of a Giant